Peer support – building resilience

Project: REACH and Peers to Zero

Grace Ngulube & Lubega Kizza
Peer Support in the clinic

What it is:

• Many definitions (peer supporter, treatment adherence supporters, expert client/s etc)

• YPLHIV are engaged in delivering support services in the clinic to promote retention, adherences, viral suppression and linkage to psycho-social support for their peers

• Peer Support forms part of a package of youth friendly service to make clinic spaces feel safer and more accessible for young people

• Different models –have different levels of meaningful engagement with YPLHIV
• One on one or group counselling on adherence, SRH overcoming self stigma and providing support in disclosure to others

• Health talks, share materials and information, text & WhatsApp communications. Social media for linkage to information & network events.

• Manage clinic flow, triage (weight, height, BMS and BP), filing information, assisting transfer to nurse station, creating safe spaces & adolescent friendly corners.

• Home visits, returning those LTFU, organizing & running teen clubs or camps, support groups & fun activities
Beyond Peer Support

- Expose & sensitize health providers to adolescent concerns, barriers & experiences
- Provide helpful feedback on how service is experienced and how it can be improved
- Link A/YPLHIV to network structures, youth-led activities & other services in the community
How – recruit, train & support

• Criteria
  – Hard working & committed to working with young people
  – 18-25 years, virally suppressed and fully disclosed
  – Selected by health providers and peers

• Need
  – Supportive & interested clinic and /or community partner
  – Enabling environment (training, information and space)
  – Clear job description, scope of work with regular clinic supervision
  – Acknowledgement and recognition, involvement in meetings
  – Remuneration/stipend to support travel and basic necessities
  – Access to opportunities for skills building, personal growth and career development or promotion
Challenges

- How to integrate into health system or community
- Hierarchy in clinic, PS not always a priority (not respected)
- Limited resources to support range of activities requested
- Not accredited in the health system
- Future prospects & opportunities for growth?
- Lots of responsibility with limited support
SUCCESS

• Opportunity to learn new skills, attend meetings & trainings
• Increased levels of disclosure
• Less self-stigma
• Friendlier health providers
• Adolescents more comfortable to speak
• Clinic feels safer for YP

• Improved retention
• Improved adherence
• Increased viral suppression
Any questions?

THANK YOU