WHATSAPP PRE-REMINDERS & YOUTH CARE CLUBS SPOTLIGHT ON RETENTION

Gauteng | Tshwane | 22 Siyenza (POPS) Sites



Restrictive COVID-19 regulations prevented adolescents and youth living with HIV (AYLHIV) from accessing Youth Care Clubs (YCCs) activities which led to a decline in care retention. When open, the YCCs offered a group-based clinical and psychosocial HIV management approach, a mix of newly initiated, virally suppressed, and unsuppressed AYLHIV.

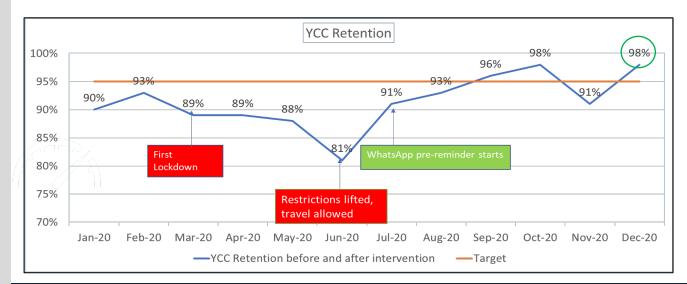
The aim was to increase retention of AYLHIV among YCC members from a baseline of 81% in June 2020 to 95% by December 2020 and to foster peer learning.



A WhatsApp group pre-reminder system was created to strengthen access to care and treatment for AYLHIV during the COVID pandemic. The groups were established by YCC facilitators and split by age (12–15, 16–19, and 20–24 years). Participants received a standardized WhatsApp message 2–3 days before their YCC visit and were required to respond confirming attendance. Calls were made to those who did not respond or had undelivered messages to trace missing participants. For those who confirmed attendance, their patient files were then pre-retrieved for their clinic visit. During the implementation period, multi-month scripting was also used to decrease visit frequency.



The WhatsApp pre-reminder system was put in place and by July 2020, the retention rate started to steadily increase to 91%. By October 2020, the retention rate had peaked to 98% surpassing the target of 95%. Social cohesion and clinical discussions with facilitators and clinicians proved beneficial. The approach enabled a sense of belonging and peer support for the AYLHIV.



STEPS TO IMPLEMENT

PRE-IMPLEMENTATION

- □ YCC Facilitator obtains consent according to age (12–17 years: caregiver, 18-24 years: self).
- □ YCC Facilitator creates WhatsApp groups.
- □ The YCC team designs pre-reminder texts.

IMPLEMENTATION

- 2–3 days before clinic visit, the YCC Facilitator:
- Pre-retrieves files for all booked YCC members.
- Sends pre-reminder texts to members regarding appointment.
- D Member confirms attendance using a "hands up emoji."
- If member is unable to make it, will respond with a \ and arrangements will be made with the Facilitator for a more convenient date for the member.
- □ Follows-up with those who did not respond to the text telephonically.
- □ YCC Facilitator informs Clinician of those who have confirmed their appointments.

After the clinic visit:

- □ YYC Facilitator makes 3 follow-up calls to those who confirmed but did not come (within the 5-day grace period, as per integrated clinical services management (ICSM).
- UWBPHCOT physically trace YCC members who could not be reached through telephonic tracing.

FACILITATORS

- YCC Facilitators and Love Life Facilitators worked in tandem.
- Buy-in and support from Department of Health Clinician, facility staff, and WBPHCOT streamlined patient flow.

CHALLENGES & ADAPTATIONS

- Facility ownership (YCC facilitation, clinical support) \rightarrow It was a challenge to get buy-in from Counsellors, especially in relation to YCC facilitation which is a major enabler to implementation.
- Network coverage and access to mobile data \rightarrow This was a challenge for the patients, especially those who were residing in informal settlements. Data costs were also a challenge.

This is just a reminder for your YCC appointment Date : 20.05.2021 Time : 09:00 Venue : TB side If you'll be attending just reply with this If you'll not be attending just reply with" 🌳 "and give a reason why and let us know which date you'll be available This way we can make necessary arrangements in case I may not be at the clinic that day 🙏 Those who started treatment in the month of May, do attend for Blood 🍐 Cheers, looking forward to seeing you STANZA BOPAF CHC YOUTH CARE CLUB FILES: STANZA BOPAPE CHC YOUTH CARE CLUB FILES: 1B (16-19) 2D (12-15) da f lab

🕤 Lion fighters 🥹

Hey guys

18 May 2021

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ABBREVIATIONS

- ✓ AYLHIV– adolescent and youth living with HIV
- ✓ ICSM integrated clinical services management
- ✓ POPS Pepfar Operation Phuthuma Support
- ✓ WBPHCOT ward-based primary health care outreach team
- ✓ YCC youth care club

RESOURCES

- ✓ Smartphones
- ✓ Airtime/Data
- ✓ YCC Register
- ✓ Process measure Tools

STAFFING

- ✓ YCC Facilitator
- ✓ Clinician

RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended that process measures be monitored effectively. This can be done through development of a monitoring and evaluation plan with clear indicators before implementation to enable monitoring of the intervention impact.

IDEA INSPIRATION

The idea was a collaborative effort that involved YCC clients clearly articulating their needs and the AYFS Team responding.

Disclaimer: This Spotlight was developed and implemented by WHRI and DoH staff, with support from OPIQ South Africa. This resource can be freely used and distributed, with acknowledgement of WHRI and DoH, so long as it does not result in commercial gain. The findings and conclusions in this Spotlight are those of the authors and do not necessarily represent the official position of the funding agencies: this project has been supported by the President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief (PEPFAR) through the Centers for the Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) under the terms of grant number: 6 NU2GĞH002227.