

**Introduction**

*[Bullet points below to be explained in the facilitator's own words]*

- Begin with icebreaker if appropriate
- Remind participants that discussion is confidential, so personal information won't be shared outside of the REACH study
- Remind participants to use pseudonyms during the discussion and identify themselves with their pseudonym
- Purpose of FGD:
  - Hear about participants' experiences in first months of the REACH study
  - Find ways to improve their experiences (clinic, counseling, use of study products, other information)
- Affirm that participants are the experts
- Affirm that all answers are valid: no right and wrong
- Invite differing opinions
- Ask participants to speak one at a time so that the audio recorder can accurately capture what everyone is saying
- Turn audio recorder on and then, ask participants to confirm for audio recorder that they agree to participate in FGD

**Section 1. REACH study participation**

1. Please describe your experience participating in the REACH study.

- **KEY PROBE:** *Thoughts on REACH study procedures (length of visits, clinic procedures, lab work, counseling, surveys, computer interviews, engagement activities)*
- **KEY PROBE:** *Experience in waiting rooms*
- *Challenges getting to the clinic*
- *Timing of visits during the day*
- *Interactions with other participants*
- *Interactions with staff*
- *Challenges from people in the community (rumors, misinformation, distrust of researchers)*

2. Think about when you came for your screening visit. What initially motivated you to join the REACH study?

- **KEY PROBE:** *Any specific event or person that triggered the decision to join the REACH study*
- **KEY PROBE:** *Role of wanting to stay healthy when deciding to join*
- **KEY PROBE:** *What makes her worry about HIV in her life*
  - *Anything that happened that caused participants to worry about HIV*
- *Ability of study products to protect against HIV*
- *Influence of other factors in deciding to join the REACH study*
  - *Peer pressure*
  - *Making friends*
  - *Not wanting to disappoint the REACH study team*
  - *Incentives (money, testing, clinical services)*
  - *Encouragement from others*
  - *Helping others/altruism*

3. When you joined the REACH study, what were your expectations?

- **KEY PROBE:** *How the REACH study has met these expectations*
- **KEY PROBE:** *How the REACH study has not met these expectations*

4. When you joined the REACH study, you were asked to choose a contraceptive method (if you weren't already using one). How has that been for you?

- *Feelings about contraceptive product chosen*
- *Feelings about being required to use a contraceptive to participate in the REACH study*

5. So far, what information have you received about the tablets and the ring?

- *Who provided the education/information*
- **KEY PROBE:** *Level of trust in explanations or information given (what info they trust, what they don't trust)*
  - o *Staff that participants feel comfortable with (and why)*
  - o *Staff that participants do not feel comfortable with (and why)*
- *What they understand about using the study products as they are supposed to (e.g. how often to take the tablet and how to use the ring; what they should do; what they should not be doing)*
- **KEY PROBE:** *What is still unclear about the study products*

6. What did you think about the video you saw about the REACH study, the tablets, and the ring?

## Section 2. Social context

7. In your social circle (partners, parents, friends, other family, neighbors, etc.), who knows about the REACH study?

- **KEY PROBE:** *How they found out*
  - o *What they know about her being a participant*
  - o *What they know about the study products that participants are using (clarify: general knowledge of tablets/ring vs. study product she has been assigned)*
- *Feelings around disclosure*
- *Reasons/motivations for disclosure*
- *Others' reactions to the REACH study*
- *Others' reactions to study products*
- *Probe specifically about disclosure, knowledge or reaction of sex partner(s) if not discussed spontaneously*

8. Who are the people you decided not to tell about your participation in the REACH study?

- **KEY PROBE:** *What kept participants from disclosing*
- *How participants hide their participation or study product use, at home or with people outside of home*

## Section 3. ACTIVITY: Study product acceptability and experience with use

- Give each participant a pad of sticky notes and a pen/marker. Give all participants who used the ring the same colored sticky notes, and all participants who used the tablets sticky notes of the same color (i.e., all ring users would have blue sticky notes and all tablet users would have yellow sticky notes).
  - Paste two flip charts on the wall, or draw a line down the middle of a white board
  - On one flip chart or one side of a white board, draw a ☺ and on another flip chart or the other side of the white board, draw a ☹
- A. [Tell participants that the group will now do an activity about their experiences so far with the study products they were assigned (ring or tablet). Instruct each participant to think of 2 positive things and 2 negative things about their experience with their study product so far. Write or draw each of these four things (2 ☺ and 2 ☹), on a sticky note.]
- Allow time for participants to fill out sticky notes – walk around. If participants are having difficulty, offer help writing/drawing.
- B. [Ask participants to come up to the wall and put the positives under the ☺ and the negatives under the ☹. Participants should be close enough to the whiteboard/flip charts that they can see and read the sticky notes – ask them to come closer if they are far away. Go through sticky notes and describe what is drawn/read aloud what is written, ask for clarification if necessary, but it is not required that a participant must “claim” her sticky note.]
- C. [If participants have questions/comments at any point throughout this activity, this should be a natural beginning point for the discussion points in the below probes]
- If there are groups of sticky notes that are similar (i.e., dislikes around swallowing tablets or size of ring), rearrange the sticky notes to put similar sticky notes together
- D. [Ask participants to add more sticky notes if they have thought of other things]
- E. [Ask participants to go up to the sticky notes, and put a tick mark next to all the sticky notes that they agree with]
- F. [Note taker (or Interviewer) **must** take a picture of the white board/flip charts with the sticky notes to append to the debriefing report]
9. Probe participants to expand on what they wrote on sticky notes.
- Common topics
  - Topics that are different from the majority
  - **KEY PROBE:** Things that make it easier to use the study product you have been given
  - **KEY PROBE:** Things that make it harder to use the study product you have been given
    - Side effects
    - Size of tablets and the ring
    - Any worries about study product use
  - Where the tablets were stored
    - Usefulness of small zipper bag and keychain container given to participants at beginning of the REACH study
  - Where the ring was stored if removed- where /how was it stored

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**10.** Tell me about your interactions with the adherence counselors so far.

- *Experiences with counseling about barriers and facilitators to study product use*
- *Experiences with counselors around disclosure (REACH study participation, study product use)*
- *Suggestions for how to improve counseling*
- *Importance of seeing the same counselor over time*
- *Ease of access to the counselor when a problem or question comes up*
- *How study staff (not just counselors) could help with use of study products*

**11.** Before this discussion, you have discussed your tablet or ring use drug results with a counselor. How did you feel about getting these results?

- **KEY PROBE:** *What has been their understanding of the results*
- *What could be done to make the results easier to understand/more helpful for the participants*

**12.** If there is one thing that you would like to change in the REACH study, what would it be?

**13.** If there is one thing you really like about the REACH study, what is it?

- *Ask each participant to come up with a word that describes how they currently feel about the REACH study*

**Closing: thank participants for time and responses**

**14.** Are there any final questions, comments or opinions you would like to share with the group?

Thank you for your time and sharing your experiences and opinions today.