Defining and Advancing Gender Competencies for Family Planning Service Providers

IGWG Plenary July 10, 2018
"We can't tell them about birth-control pills or contraceptives until they have had their first baby."

-Health worker in Pakistan
FIGURE 1. GENDER COMPETENCE FOR FAMILY PLANNING SERVICE PROVIDERS

GOAL
Improved Reproductive Health and Gender Equality

- Knowledge
- Skills
- Attitudes
- Reproductive Empowerment
- Supporting Legal Rights and Status Related to Family Planning
- Promoting Individual Agency
- Facilitating Positive Couples’ Communication and Cooperative Decision-Making
- Engaging Men and Boys as Partners and Users
- Using Gender-Sensitive Communication
- Addressing Gender-Based Violence
## Domain: Competency (including knowledge, skills, and attitudes)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Key</th>
<th>Knowledge</th>
<th>Skills</th>
<th>Attitudes</th>
<th>Advanced Level</th>
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<td><strong>1. Using Gender-Sensitive Communication:</strong> The provider transmits information in a way that recognizes unique power structures and promotes equality for all clients in a client-centered manner.</td>
<td><em>a.</em> Understands the role of power differentials that may exist because of gender, culture, education, or other differences that impact access to information and services.</td>
<td><em>b.</em> Provides information to clients to obtain FP services, regardless of barriers created by the client's gender, including literacy, access to media and technology, and ability to attend counseling.</td>
<td><em>c.</em> Maintains relaxed, friendly, and attentive body postures and eye contact, as appropriate, to show respect for the client regardless of gender.</td>
<td><em>d.</em> Recognizes the effects of gender and power as a provider and the potential for bias to interfere with the provision of FP services.</td>
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<td><strong>2. Promoting Individual Agency:</strong> The provider's capacity to promote a client's access to FP information to voluntary and informed decisions about whether, when, and how often to reproduce to follow through with use of a chosen FP method and to access services for healthy pregnancy and delivery.</td>
<td><em>a.</em> Understands the various reasons for method choice, including efficacy, longevity, accessibility, and a range of life effects that may vary by sex, gender, age, and safety and discusses these issues with clients.</td>
<td><em>b.</em> Understands the barriers and preferences of individuals dependent on sex and gender to access, choose, use, and continue to use FP services, and proactively works to increase reproductive autonomy.</td>
<td><em>c.</em> Understands the economic, social, and physical factors that influence reproductive autonomy and the need to be sexually active based on gender, and proactively addresses these issues with clients.</td>
<td><em>d.</em> Discussed both sexual practices that may be applicable to the client's gender identity (e.g., for a male-to-female or male-to-male couple, separate, more appropriate sexual relations, or nonbinary sexual identities, such as the role of a female partner).</td>
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<td><strong>3. Supporting Legal Rights and Statutes Related to FP:</strong> The provider's knowledge, skills, and attitudes in providing information and services to clients, in accordance with rights and legal laws, and without interference of personal bias.</td>
<td><em>a.</em> Understands the client's individual rights.</td>
<td><em>b.</em> Helps the client understand their reproductive rights and offers all FP information and services.</td>
<td><em>c.</em> Restates or translates the rights and policies in comprehensible terms for all clients, when needed, to accommodate different literacy rates and, according to gender.</td>
<td><em>d.</em> Provides equitable information, treatment, and services to all clients regardless of the type of relationship.</td>
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### Domain: Key Competencies (Including Knowledge, Skills, and Attitudes)

- **a.** Understands and can address myths and misconceptions about contraceptive use, including issues of power control and pleasure.
- **b.** Recognizes the power imbalances in relationships and expressions of masculinity and femininity, and encourages male sexual and reproductive practices that respect women's rights and promote individual agency.
- **c.** Encourages positive male participation in medical decision making, including shared responsibility for FP and contraception.
- **d.** Brings up and provides information on male-controlled and cooperative contraceptive methods, and provides referrals when male contraception is not readily available.
- **e.** Pursues opportunities to engage men and boys who may not traditionally seek FP services.
- **f.** Recognizes men as potential users of FP by providing men with information on methods, counseling, and obtaining support, if needed.
- **g.** Recognizes the potential for sexual risk in decision making between partners about FP choices before initiating couples' communication and cooperative decision making.
- **h.** Understands the contraceptive methods that enable or require each partner's cooperation and decision making.
- **i.** Asks the client if his/her partner or family would like to participate in current and future visits, emphasizing that it is the client's choice.
- **j.** Gives equal attention to both partners during couples' counseling.
- **k.** Practices and role plays scenarios to strengthen the client's ability to use his/her chosen FP method and explain or negotiate method choice and use with the partner, if needed.
- **l.** Facilitates dialogue and shared decision making between the partners, as desired by the client.
- **m.** Encourages the client to discuss his/her FP needs with the partner.
- **n.** Can list the common signs and symptoms of GBV or GBV risk factors.
- **o.** Knows and understands the facility protocol for managing GBV, including referral for support services, reporting requirements, and whether the facility meets the minimum conditions for GBV screening.
- **p.** Offers clients compassionate and respectful counseling, including information about their rights to choose the number and time of children, the right to live without sexual or forced sexual relations, and the right to be free from violence.
- **q.** Asks questions about GBV of clients who either disclose that they have experienced violence, or clients who show signs and symptoms.
- **r.** Provides warm and compassionate referral services to a provider trained in GBV.
- **s.** Documents instances of GBV in medical records and protects client confidentiality, consistent with policy and law.
- **t.** Trained, counseled using the WHO UVES approach: Listen, Inquire, Validate, Enhance safety, and Support.
- **u.** Reinforces a client's right to be treated with respect, free from threats, violence, or coercion by a partner, other family members, or others, and to live free from victim blaming and stigma.