

PW-ACN-772

**Expanding
Options,
Improving
Access**

**Natural Family Planning
and Reproductive
Health Awareness**

**INSTITUTE FOR
REPRODUCTIVE HEALTH**
GEORGETOWN UNIVERSITY MEDICAL CENTER

The Institute for Reproductive Health at Georgetown University Medical Center conducts research, advances scientific information, and provides policy support in Natural Family Planning (NFP) and Reproductive Health Awareness (RHA).

By providing technical resources and assistance to organizations around the world, primarily in developing countries, The Institute translates research into usable tools for communities, programs, and policy makers. Ultimately, The Institute's work empowers people to make informed, appropriate reproductive health and family planning decisions. Our work increases the ability of those who choose NFP methods to use them successfully.

The Institute is a reliable technical resource for policy planners, government agencies, non-governmental organizations (NGOs), service providers, researchers, educators, and community-based program managers. The information and tools available through The Institute are integral parts of any reproductive health program. Our work expands the range of reliable and cost-effective family planning options.

Grounded In Scientific Research

The Institute's NFP work is grounded in science. And our RHA approach helps individuals and communities participate in their own reproductive health care.

Our scientifically-based and technologically-supported systems can help institutions:

- improve provider knowledge, counseling skills, in-service training, information, education and communication (IEC) materials, and support systems;
- improve service delivery models and strategies for NFP and RHA;
- foster attitudinal changes among providers, aiding with the development of a client-focused NFP model and making it a viable, feasible option for programs and couples.



Complete Service Delivery Systems

Focusing on quality and efficiency, The Institute aids programs that provide NFP. We help them improve service delivery and increase the number of autonomous clients—individuals and couples who are able to understand their fertility and use NFP without further assistance from an NFP teacher or family planning counselor.

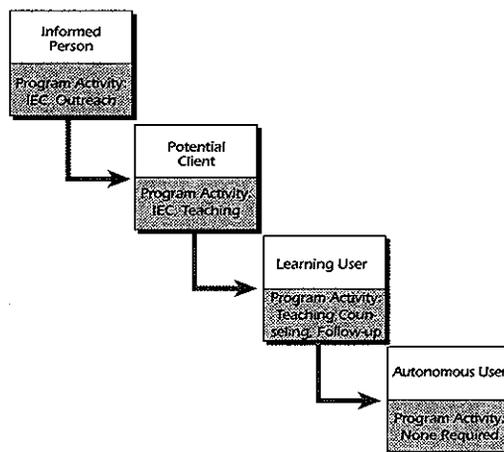
NFP is an “education-based” method of family planning. The Institute develops educational concepts and tools to help service providers offer a complete family planning program—one that includes NFP as an option.

Similarly, our RHA approach helps service providers educate men and women about their bodies and reproductive health. RHA empowers them to make active, informed decisions on their own behalf.

The Institute:

- ensures family planning programs have accurate information about NFP;
- conducts research to develop educational curricula, outreach programs and technology-based tools to improve NFP and RHA services;
- develops international collaborative efforts between institutions and programs with similar goals;
- disseminates information gleaned from field research and successful programs around the world;
- offers technical assistance to institutional managers and policy planners seeking to implement new strategies and policies that broaden family planning options.

Client Learning Model



By following a client's progress through this process and relating program activities to the client's needs, programs can increase service, quality, and efficiency.

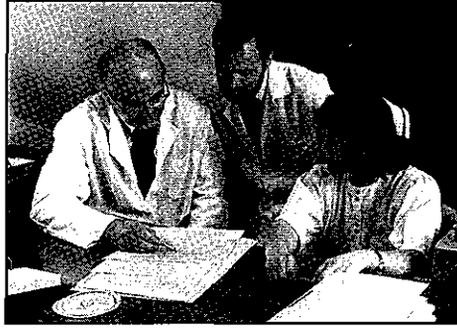
Operations Research

The Institute's Operations Research (OR) studies test strategies for integrating NFP into multi-method family planning programs and other community-based development programs in the public and private sectors.

Programs developed by The Institute are both efficient and user-friendly. Our curricula and materials can be easily incorporated into multi-method programs and have been demonstrated to be:

- easy for clients to understand;
- easy for service delivery personnel to provide;
- easy for service delivery managers to manage;
- easy for trainers to use to train teachers.

The Institute continues to test and refine approaches to simplify the delivery and monitoring of NFP services to individuals and families who choose natural methods. The Institute's work makes NFP a more practical option for

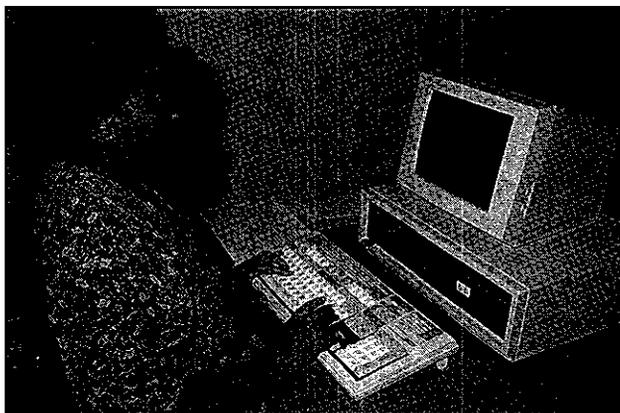


OR studies develop efficient methods for providing NFP and RHA information to clients.

programs to offer and incorporate into their existing service delivery, training, supervision, and information systems. OR studies provide policy makers and program managers with a process for trying new service delivery approaches that will work in their specific settings.

The Institute's OR studies also test methodologies for incorporating RHA into ongoing family planning and other reproductive health services and community-based development programs.

NFP is often a welcomed alternative for women and men who want a method of family planning that involves both members of the couple and has no side effects.



The Institute's MIS is essentially a very simple system that can be adapted to a variety of circumstances. The system is designed to focus on the client rather than the provider or a commodity. The client focus is important in light of the mandates arising out of the recent United Nations sponsored conferences.

Improved Service Delivery

The Institute has developed, tested and implemented a client-focused management information system (MIS) that has been applied in 14 countries to increase quality and sustainability of NFP programs. By using the MIS, participating programs have improved their family planning program management and make improvements such as:

- better targeted outreach resulting in increased number of clients;
- improved mix of clients;
- reduced dropout rate;
- increased ratio of clients to teachers;
- increased rate of autonomous users.

Natural family planning expands options and improves the quality of family planning services.

Statistics indicate that in many countries around the world, periodic abstinence and NFP methods play a major role in people's efforts to control their fertility. The Institute has specific experience helping institutions reach targeted populations—frequently underserved groups with a real need for NFP.

Valuable, Practical Information

Many couples consider NFP knowledge and skills indispensable.

A significant number of women use NFP at some point in their lives—to



In the Philippines, survey respondents indicated the importance and positive aspects of the man's role in the use of NFP.

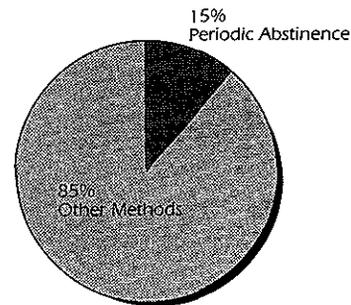
delay a first birth or to space a subsequent birth, when they have stopped using another family planning method or do not have access to contraceptives. Many women—once they learn to use NFP and see how well it works for them—prefer to use it for the rest of their reproductive lives, both to achieve and avoid pregnancy. Although some may choose another method, they have learned valuable and practical information about their fertility.

Significant Advantages

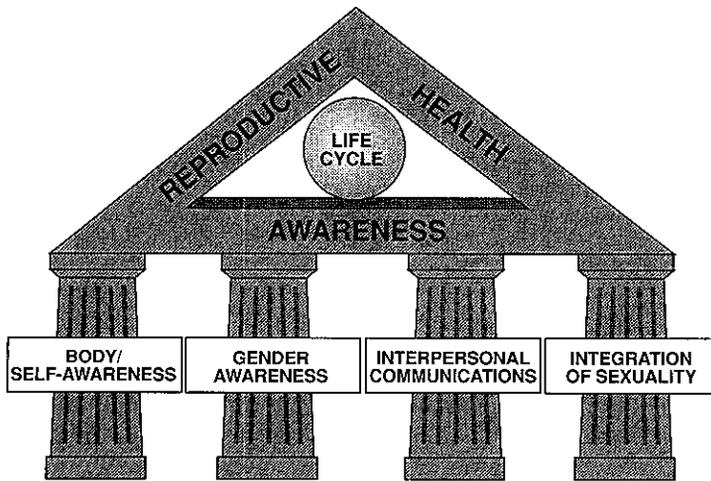
NFP users frequently cite its advantages including:

- increased self-awareness and knowledge of their fertility, signs, and patterns;
- reduced re-supply costs associated with commodity-based methods;
- increased independence from distant medical services;
- increased reliance on the user's own resources rather than a family planning program or other sources of contraception;
- freedom from artificial substances and the side effects or potential medical risks of other methods;
- for some, the ability to adhere to religious and cultural norms.

THE VALUE OF NFP PROGRAMS



Of married women worldwide using some form of family planning, approximately 15% claim to use a form of periodic abstinence. Yet a very small percentage of these couples actually are using a natural method correctly.



Pillars of the RHA Approach

**THE VALUE OF
THE RHA
APPROACH**

Reproductive Health Awareness maintains a focus on helping people learn body awareness addressing a range of issues, including:

- identifying what is healthy and normal for each individual throughout the life cycle;
- identifying behaviors that have a positive effect on their health, and what signs and symptoms indicate the need to seek health care;
- developing positive attitudes towards their bodies;
- cultivating a belief that gender concerns are central to reproductive health;
- developing communication and self-advocacy skills to help them deal effectively with partners and health care providers;

- helping children and adolescents understand their changing bodies and how to protect their own health.

These skills encourage the development and maintenance of healthy behaviors as well as active participation in one's own reproductive health care. RHA is an extension of the client empowerment approach to NFP and fertility awareness. The Institute has experienced success with both adult and adolescent RHA educational programs in several countries.

The Institute provides:

- a core curriculum with lesson plans;
- training materials;
- guides to integrate RHA into existing programs;
- technical assistance to program planners.

RHA has broad application, fitting well into a wide range of programs such as those that deal with:

- family planning;
- sexually transmitted infections (STIs);
- preparations for pregnancy and safe motherhood.

In addition, the approach can be incorporated into: youth-serving organizations, women-in-development initiatives, and men's work and civic associations.



**AWARENESS:
Advancing Worldwide Access to
Reproductive Health and
Natural Family Planning:
Expanding Successful Strategies.**

International mandates arising out of recent United Nations sponsored meetings emphasize the importance of empowering women and men to control their own fertility, placing family planning in a reproductive health framework, and encouraging broad participation in family planning and other reproductive health programs and services.

In 1997, The Institute received a grant from the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) for The AWARENESS Project. This five year project allows us to continue our work in NFP and RHA, furthering the goals of USAID's Population Health & Nutrition Center and addressing the international focus on clients and communities.

The AWARENESS project addresses the needs of people who are using a



Women and men who understand their own fertility and have skills to communicate with each other and with their health care provider can make informed, appropriate decisions about family planning and other aspects of their reproductive health.

natural method to avoid pregnancy but who lack the information and skills to do so effectively. Further, the project undertakes activities to empower women and men to participate in their own reproductive health care and decision making.

**NEW ENDEAVORS:
THE AWARENESS
PROJECT**

The Institute Provides Solid Tools

We invite policy planners, service providers, and researchers around the world to collaborate with us. The Institute's tools, technical assistance and professional affiliations can help programs meet their clients' needs effectively and efficiently.

The Institute's successful programs and research projects have assisted NFP NGOs providing services based on client empowerment with a focus on quality and efficiency. And our work has increased the capacity of programs in many countries to train NFP teachers.

A partnership with The Institute can help you:

- develop institutional policy changes and program level changes to support NFP and RHA;
- develop partners at international and country levels to participate in project design and implementation;
- mainstream NFP and incorporate NFP and RHA into existing programs and services;

- conduct research and baseline assessments at community, client, institutional and international levels to identify needs and evaluate methods, protocols, efficacy and impact;
- provide training and technical assistance including:
 - developing IEC and training materials in NFP and RHA,
 - developing NFP and RHA curricula for training teachers and providers,
 - designing, implementing, mainstreaming and evaluating projects;
- provide reliable information and prepare and disseminate training materials, reports, scientific papers, and policy-development information about NFP and RHA to a worldwide audience.

Contact The Institute for further information.

**FORGE A
PARTNERSHIP WITH
THE INSTITUTE**