

Factors influencing the success of wellness clinics in rural areas

Monty Nyakane, Marga Vintges

KHUTŠO KURHULA support centre for HIV and AIDS care and ART roll out in Primary Care Mopani district, Limpopo

Background

Khutšo Kurhula supports the Department of Health with implementation of Wellness and ART programs in rural primary care. A mobile team of facilitators and nurses visits 61 (67%) of the 91 facilities to help with Wellness programs and support groups.

On our clinic visits we monitor the performance, using a register. A well performing clinic has many clients whose CD4 and WHO stage is taken at least 6-monthly. The clients are timely referred for ART. There is an active support group where HIV education and counseling takes place. Children and pregnant women are included in the program.

What makes a good wellness clinic

Based on personal observations during four years of visiting Wellness clinics, the following key factors for a successful program are identified.

Organization

Clinics who are well organized have a 'sissy hulu', the organizer of the day. Stationery and equipment prepared, room and chairs ready, and allocated workers ready to start when the clients arrive.

Teamwork

In clinics where staff members communicate, give each other report, feedback and updates, the wellness program is running well.

Training

Nurses who have attended a 'Wellness workshop' show more confidence in running the program.

Commitment

Committed nurses run good wellness programs. Some nurses come on their off-day out of love for the program and their clients.

Lay counselors

Clinics with lay counselors perform better.

Clients participation

Active support groups, clients who are acknowledged for taking responsibilities in the program, PLWHA who share knowledge and experiences, groups where open discussions take place... key factors for a good program.

Managers

The manager of one of the sub-districts is very committed to the program. Wellness has become a norm in all her clinics. One can see how well these clinics are performing compared to other sub-districts.



Conclusion

Wellness care programs can be successfully implemented in rural primary care clinics, despite limited resources. Involving PLWHA and PHC managers as well as training of nurses are crucial elements for implementation. It's amazing how many basic clinics are doing a very good job.