

Algorithm for Using the Balanced Counseling Strategy

Pre-Choice

1. Establish and maintain a warm, cordial relationship. Listen for the client's contraceptive needs.
2. Rule out pregnancy using the counseling card with 6 questions.

If client answers:	Then:
"Yes" to any of the questions and she is free of signs and symptoms of pregnancy	1) Pregnancy is unlikely. 2) Continue to Step 3.
"No" to all of the questions	1) Pregnancy cannot be ruled out. 2) Give client a pregnancy test if available. 3) Ask her to return when she has her menstrual bleeding. 4) Provide her with a back-up method, such as condoms, to use until then. 5) End the session.

3. Display all of the counseling cards. If the client wants a particular method, go to Step 7.
4. Ask all of the following questions. Set aside counseling cards based on the client's responses.
 - a) Do you wish to have children in the future?
If "Yes," set aside vasectomy and tubal ligation cards. Explain why.
If "No," keep all cards and continue.
 - b) Are you breastfeeding an infant less than 6 months old?
If "Yes," set aside the combined oral contraceptives (the Pill) and combined injectable.
If "No," or she has begun her monthly bleeding again, set aside the LAM card. Explain why.
 - c) Does your partner support you in family planning?
If "Yes," continue with the next question.
If "No," set aside the following cards: male condom, female condom, Standard Days Method, and TwoDay Method. Explain why.
 - d) Are there any methods that you do not want to use or have not tolerated in the past?
If "Yes," set aside the cards the client does not want.
If "No," keep the rest of the cards.

Method Choice

5. Give information on the methods that have not been set aside. Indicate their effectiveness.
 - a) Arrange the remaining cards in order of effectiveness (number on back of each card).
 - b) In order of effectiveness (lowest number to highest), read the 5 to 7 features of each method not set aside.
6. Ask the client to choose the method that is most convenient for her/him.
7. Using the brochure, determine if the client has any condition for which the method is not advised.
 - a) Together with the client review section under "Method not advised if you" in the brochure of the method chosen.
 - b) If the method is not advisable for the client, ask the client to select another method from the cards that remain. Repeat the process from Step 5 (Step 4 if client already had the method in mind).

Post-Choice

8. Inform the client about the method chosen using the brochure of the method as a counseling tool.
9. Determine the client's comprehension and reinforce key information.
10. Make sure the client has made a definite decision. Give her/him the method chosen and/or a referral and back-up method, depending on the method selected.
11. Complete the counseling session. Invite the client to return anytime. Thank her/him for the visit. End the session.