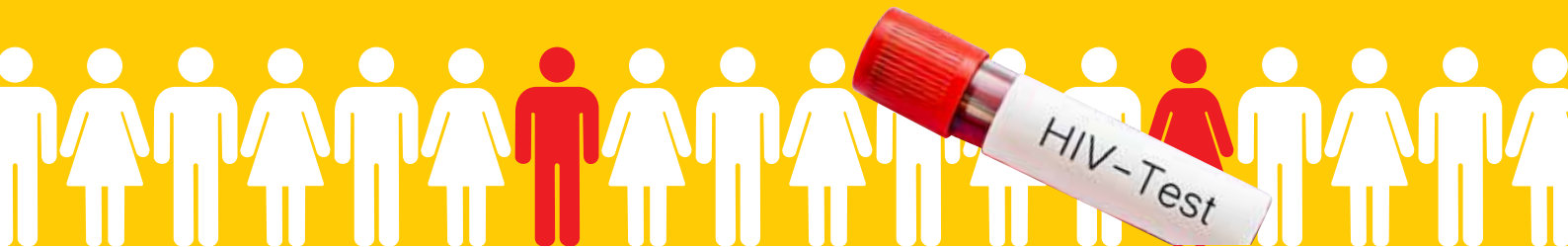


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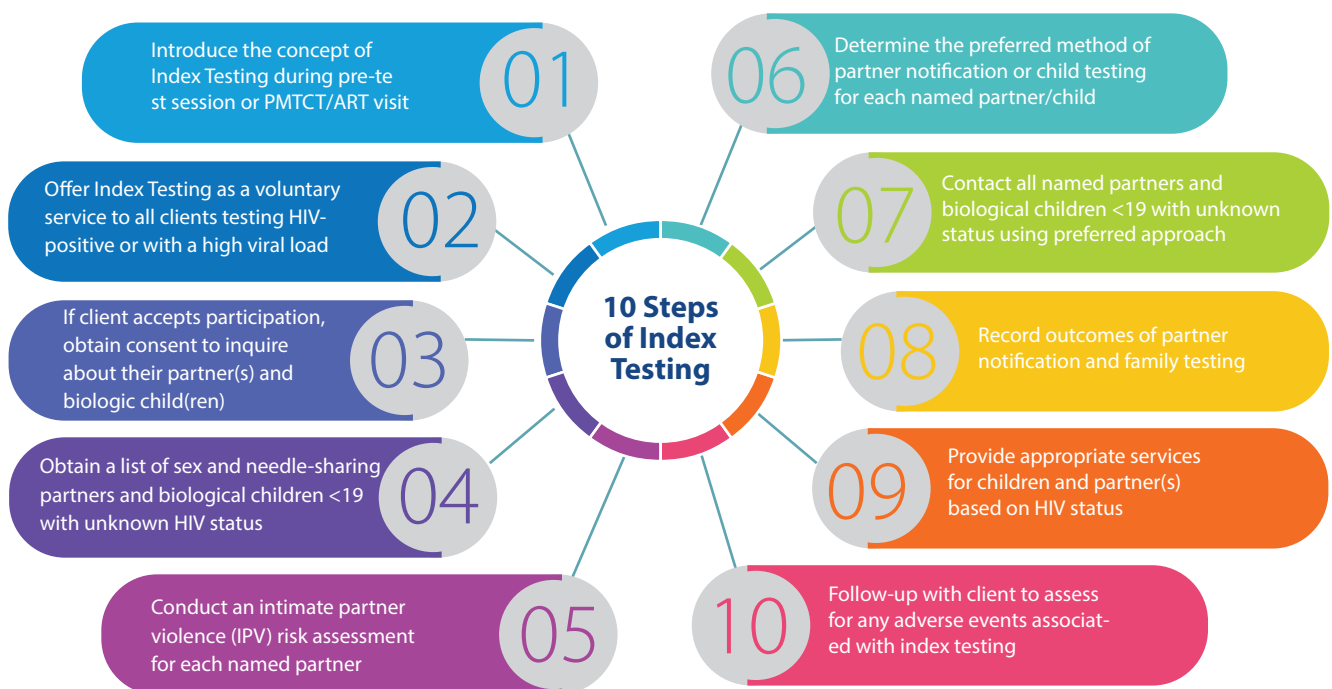
on conducting IPV risk assessment



Part I

Depending on the context, setting, and relationship dynamics, index partner testing services could result in an increased risk of Intimate Partner Violence (IPV). Screening for IPV risk is standard operating procedure for index testing services.

IPV risk assessment is the 5th step among the 10 steps of Index Testing given below.



In the steps of Index Testing, after the index client gives consent for participation, the provider or the counsellor obtains the list of sex and needle sharing partners and the biological child(ren) <19 years with unknown HIV status (Elicitation of partners). IPV risk assessment is carried out for each named partner or contacts.

What is IPV

Intimate Partner Violence (IPV) is behavior by an intimate partner that causes



Physical harm



Sexual harm



Psychological harm

It includes



Acts of physical aggression



Sexual coercion



Psychological abuse



Controlling behaviors.

If someone has Risk of IPV

1. Avoid partner notification services
2. Refer index client to appropriate services (care and support)

Remember DO NO HARM

Why Conduct IPV Risk Assessment?

- Screening for IPV risk and offering an immediate first line response to any disclosure of violence is a SOP for index testing services.
- Goal is to ensure no harm comes to the index client, their partner (s), or family members as a result of index testing services.
- To identify and link PLHIV experiencing violence to IPV services. This can help improve adherence and retention among these clients.

Conducting IPV Risk Assessment

- Clients should be asked about their experience or fear of violence for each named partner
- The script below can be used to introduce the topic:

“Many people experience problems with their spouse or partner, or someone else they live with. This may include violence. Violence from a partner can negatively affect your health and because I care about your health, I want to ask you the following questions before we talk about partner notification. I want you to know that I will keep anything you tell me between us, unless you give me permission to share it.”

Each named partner should be screened for IPV using the 3 screening questions on the Partner Information Form. Recommended screening questions for IPV risk assessment include:



Has [partner's name] ever hit, kicked, slapped, or otherwise physically hurt you?



Has [partner's name] ever threatened to hurt you?



Has [partner's name] ever forced you to do something sexually that made you feel uncomfortable?



Outcome of IPV Assessment (Suggestive questions)

If the client answers “yes” to any of the screening questions, discuss further and assess the risk of harm to the client. Further questions as below may also be asked if emotional violence is suspected:

Has [partner’s name] ever done any of these things to you:

 <p>Insulted, humiliated, or made fun of you in front of others?</p>	 <p>Kept you from having your own money?</p>	 <p>Tried to keep you from seeing or talking to your family or friends?</p>	 <p>Kept track of you by demanding to know where you were and what you were doing?</p>
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The following questions can also be used by the provider to assess the client’s safety:

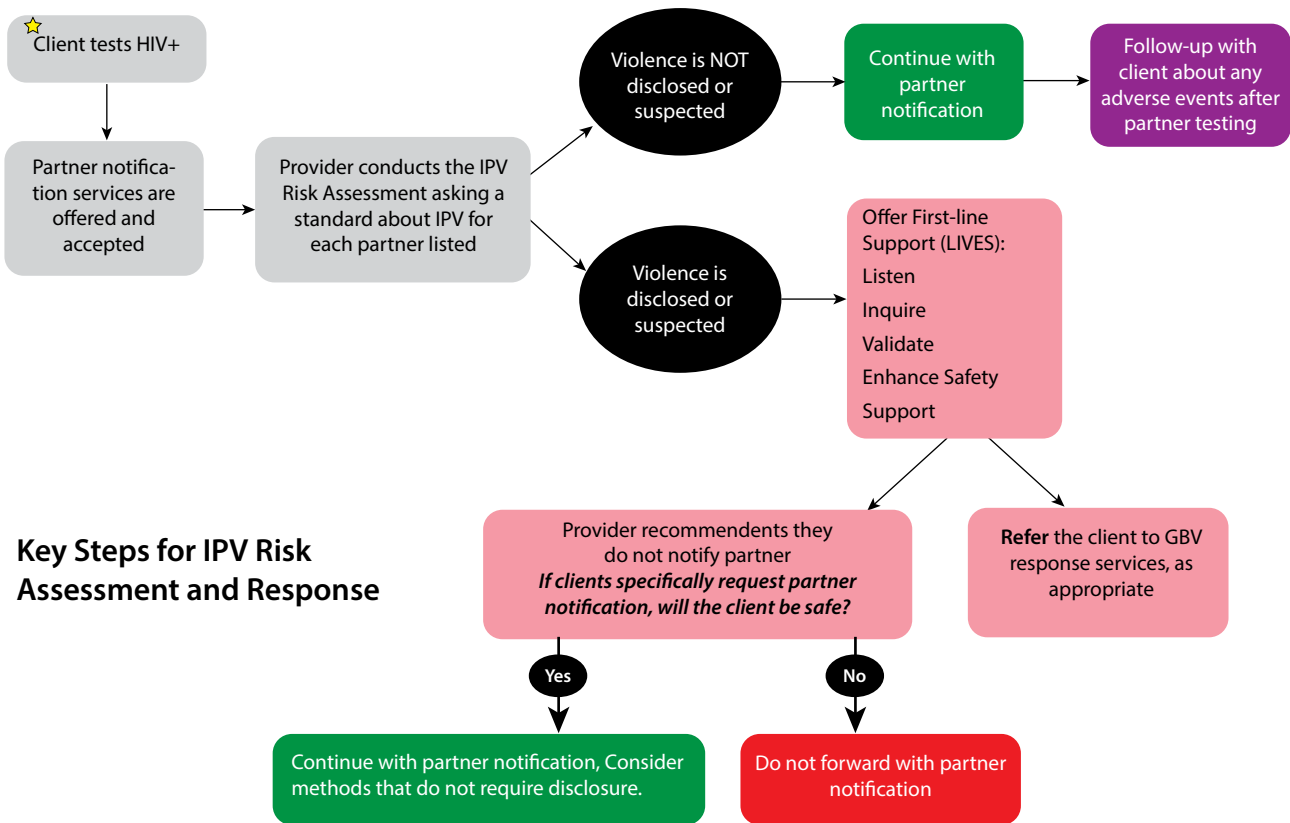
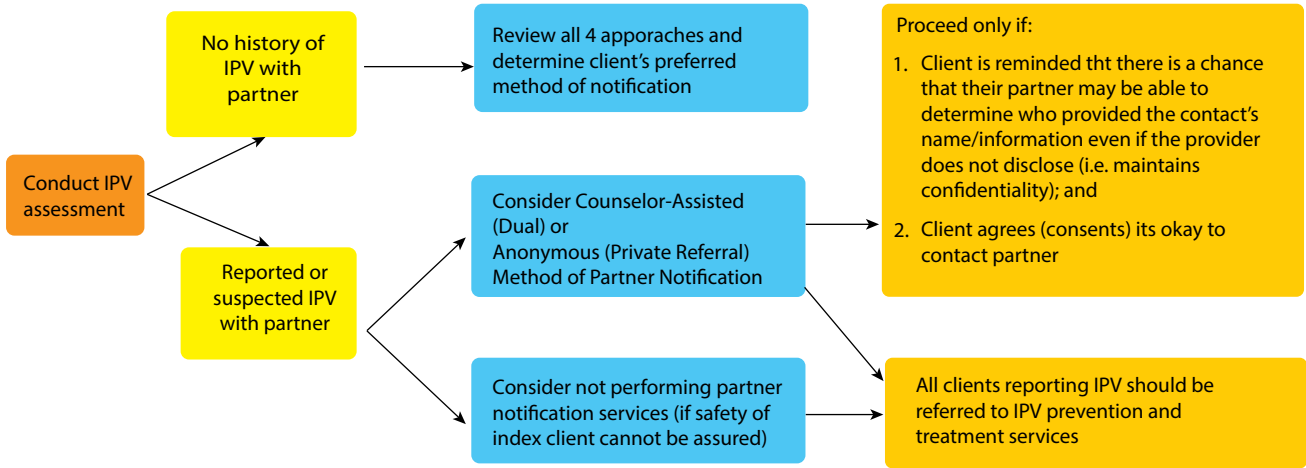
<p>[For female clients], has that person(s) ever beaten you when you were pregnant?</p> 	 <p>Has the physical violence happened more often or gotten worse over the past 6 months?</p>
<p>Do you believe that person(s) could kill you?</p> 	 <p>Has that person(s) ever used a weapon or threatened you with a weapon?</p>
<p>Has that person(s) threatened to kill you?</p> 	 <p>Is that person(s) violently and constantly jealous of you?</p>

Index partner testing may continue unless you have a strong reason to suspect notifying this partner may result in physical, sexual, emotional, psychological, economical or any other harm to the index client. If the safety of the index client cannot be assured, it may not be appropriate to contact this partner at this time. Explore alternatives to partner notification with the index client. Examples include:

- community testing in the area where the partner lives, or
- couples testing, where both partners learn their status together, and a counsellor is available to help mediate any potential tension.

Refer the client to IPV services, where they are applicable.

Use the IPV Assessment to Protect the Safety of the Index Client

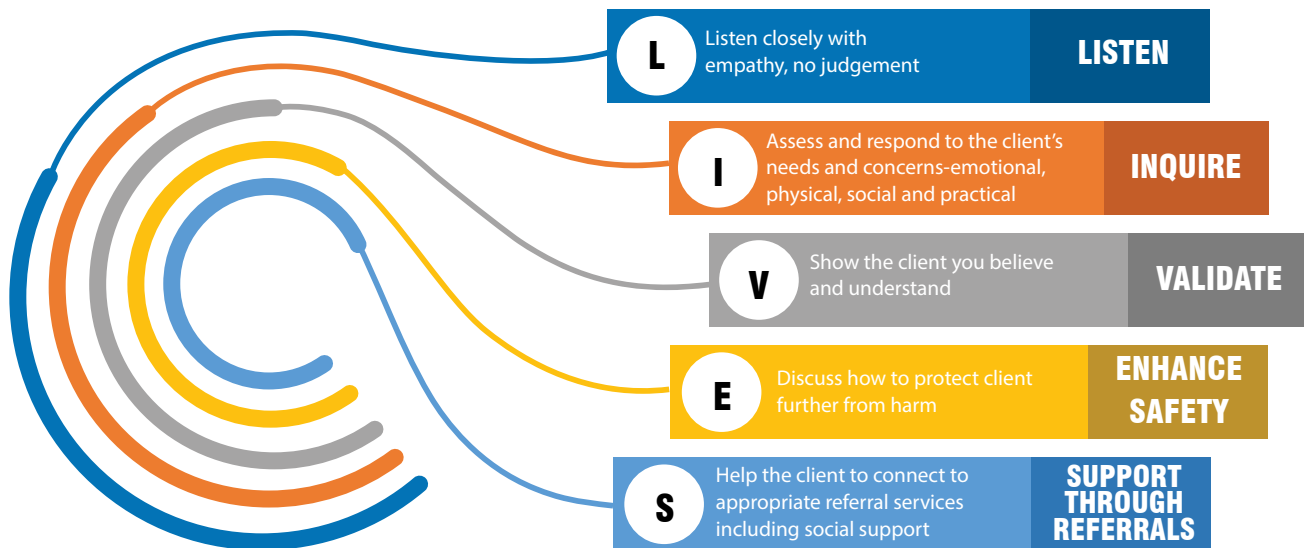


Part II

SOP on ensuring the safety of clients in choosing a partner notification method after identifying IPV risk

For clients answering yes to any of the three questions:







Provide first line of support. WHO defines "first-line support" using the acronym "LIVES" can be followed wherever possible:



Role of the Provider

- Providers should be trained in LIVES and how to ensure respectful, sensitive communication with clients
- The client is the expert on their situation. Explore the client's options and respect their wishes
- Speak to the client respectfully with kindness and empathy, not blame
- Empower the client to ask for support
- Have a list of referral services available to support index clients who have experienced violence
- When possible, include location of referral, proximity to the facility and information on transport support options
- Know the resource a client is being referred to – quality matters

The following questions can be used by the provider to assess the client's safety:

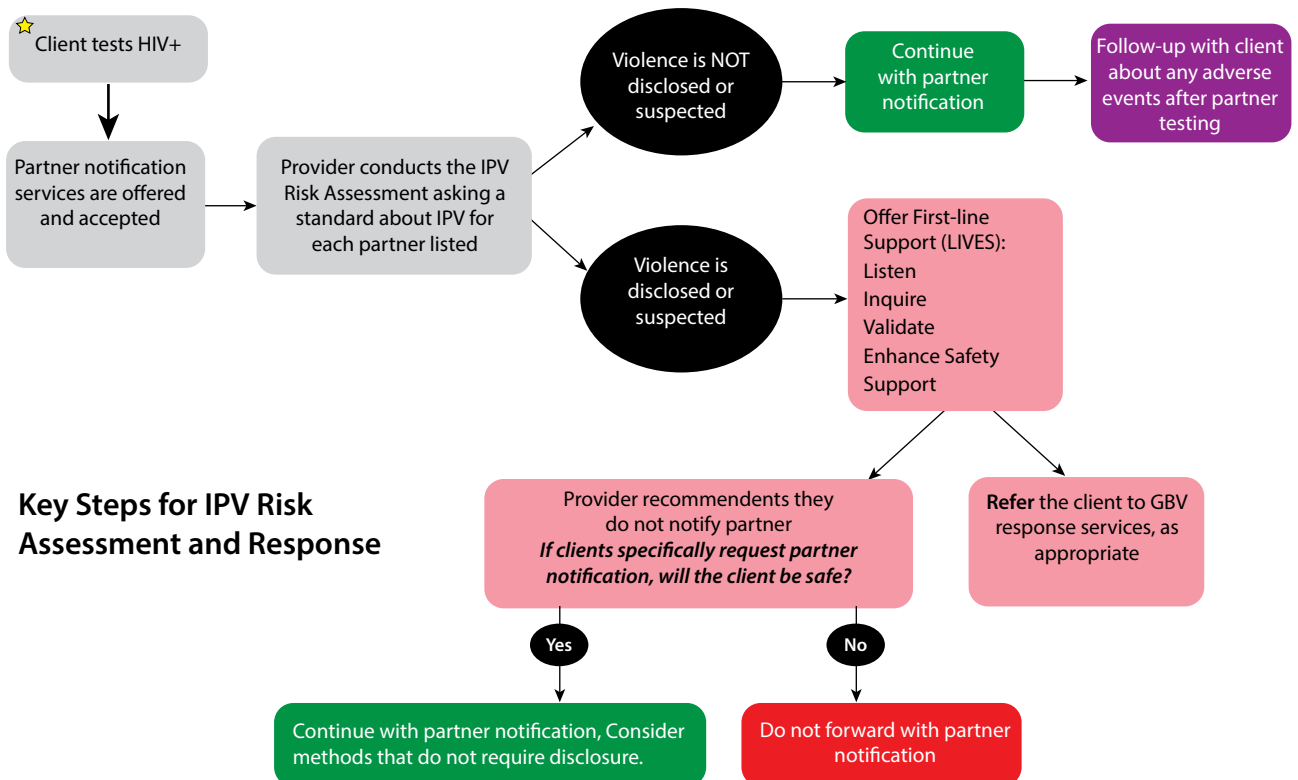
-  Has the physical violence happened more often or gotten worse over the past 6 months?
-  Has that person(s) ever used a weapon or threatened you with a weapon?
-  Is that person(s) violently and constantly jealous of you?
-  Has that person(s) threatened to kill you?
-  Do you believe that person(s) could kill you?
-  [For female clients], has that person(s) ever beaten you when you were pregnant?

- If the client responds yes to any of these question, it may not be safe for the client to return home.
- The provider should make appropriate referrals and help the client to make a safety plan.
- Referrals can include shelter or safe housing.
- The safety plan should include a safe place where the client can go (such as a friend's home, CSO or church).
- The provider's response should not cause further trauma to the client; the client's decision on whether or not to involve the police or accept a referral should be respected at all times.

Minimum requirements for the IPV Risk Assessment include:



If any of these minimum requirements is not met, then the site does not have the ability to conduct the IPV risk assessment and index testing services should not be offered.





Disclaimer: This publication was adapted from PEPFAR and WHO Partner Notification Guidelines, with funding from the U.S. President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief (PEPFAR). Its contents are solely the responsibility of the authors and do not necessarily represent the views of the U.S. Government. This SOP is intended for use by service providers in order to provide information on Index Testing Guidelines. For questions about the contents or use, please contact I-TECH India (www.itech-india.org).

