# Contraceptive Counseling Process Guide

## Process

### Beginning (and throughout)

**Establish and maintain rapport with the client**
- Warmly greet the client by name and introduce yourself
- Be genuine, showing respect and empathy
- Ask about the client’s reason(s) for today’s visit, plan and prioritize visit
- Explain private and confidential services
- Ask open-ended questions
- Respectfully affirm what you see and hear (showing interest, support and cultural awareness)
- Show that you care by listening (verbally and non-verbally)
- Reflect on what you observe and hear, to gain a deeper understanding
- Summarize key points throughout with a focus on the client’s goals
- If using EMR, position the monitor to keep eye contact

### Middle

**Assess the client’s needs and personalize discussions accordingly**
- Review and update the medical, sexual and social history
- Explore client preferences regarding method characteristics: frequency of use, effectiveness, how to use, menstrual changes, side effects, and benefits
- Ask about client knowledge and experience with birth control methods
- Address pregnancy and parenting intention/ambivalence along with STD/HIV protection
- Respectfully explore client beliefs and feelings, including ethnic, cultural, and/or individual factors that may be relevant to their birth control method decisions and method use

**Work with the client interactively to establish a birth control method plan**
- Ask open-ended questions about concerns or possible barriers relevant to method choice
- Explore the client’s method preferences, and if appropriate, offer additional information about the most effective methods
- Help the client to optimize method choice by assisting the client in aligning their preferences with their method selection
- Reflect back important thoughts or feelings you hear from the client and/or feelings you sense from the discussion
- Clarify partner involvement and the role of others who may be important to the client’s decision making and method use
- Affirm and support the decision making process with a respectful, nonjudgmental approach in helping the client make a plan

**Provide information that can be understood and retained by the client**
- Provide balanced, unbiased, tailored information about method characteristics in an interactive conversation
- Provide accurate information (correct use, effectiveness, benefits, side effects, potential risks, STD/HIV protection)
- Use clear, understandable words, images, materials, models and/or sample methods
- Use numbers and comparisons that are easy to understand
- Assess and address myths and misinformation in a respectful and affirming way
- Include information about STD protection and emergency contraception

### Closing

**Confirm client understanding**
- Ask the client to tell and show what was learned (teach-back) and provide additional information, as needed
- Address any possible barriers to a successful plan and method use
- Confirm the client’s plan for correct method use and follow-up, including what to do if dissatisfied with the method, back-up method, and emergency contraception, as needed
- Provide contact information and future opportunities for follow up, other methods or services
- Summarize with key points and provide a friendly close