

Guidance for Clinics Supporting Young People taking their HIV medicine: What do young people say they need?:

Amanda Ely: July 2015.

This guidance for clinics on supporting young people taking HIV medicine were provided by young people living with HIV as part of the “Treat me like this” Youth Guidelines Group Project.

- Making young people aware of the consequences of not taking medication is important, but you should avoid using fear, threats, and applying pressure.
- Understand the lifestyle experiences of young people. This does not necessarily fit with what is being expected of them in terms of their medication regime. Aim to work collaboratively with the young person to establish a regime that is manageable for them in relation to their lifestyle.
- Provide a letter with the medication which explains what possible side effects the young person should look out for. Offer help to the young person with monitoring any side effects experienced. For example a chart which the young person can fill in if they experience side effects.
- Make it clear to the young person that they can ask about changing their medicine if they experience side effects.
- It is very important to understand that taking medication can be emotional for many young people- “it is not just taking a pill”. It is critical to convey empathy and appreciate the challenges of HIV medication adherence.

This guidance should be read alongside:

- **Young Peoples Guidance on Managing Taking HIV Medicine**
- **Guidance for parents and Carers supporting their children with taking their HIV medicine.**