Counselling Caregivers at a Clinic Visit: A 3-Step Approach – Ghana

English Video Transcript

Narrator

Families want to help their children learn, be happy, and thrive. But parents sometimes need help understanding their young child’s needs, or need support to be responsive to their children. With observation and tactful guidance, you can help families improve how they raise their young children. This video shows how to assess and guide a caregiver during a responsive care counselling visit – demonstrating the 3 steps of: assessing the child’s situation; analysing and identifying areas for improvement; and suggesting actions to help a caregiver be more responsive to her young child.

This mother is bringing her 8 month old daughter to the local clinic. She joins the other parents for the morning health talk. Today the topic is about how loving care helps children grow and develop. Afterward – the mother waits with the other parents until her name is called to see the counsellor.

Step 1: Assess

Greet the mother with kindness and respect. Have her sit at the same level without barriers between you. Introduce yourself; then let her introduce herself and her young daughter. Let her know you’re happy to see them. Explain the purpose of the visit. Tell her you would like to talk with her about her child. Ask if that’s ok. Next – involve the caregiver. Ask her how she and her child are doing today. Then, share something about yourself. For example –You tell the mother that you also have a child of the same age as her daughter. Sharing some personal information helps establish a common bond between the caregiver and the counsellor. Throughout the visit, use your communication skills to establish a friendly open rapport with the caregiver. Structure today’s session by first reviewing the child’s health record. Then ask the caregiver if she has done anything differently as a result of her last counselling visit. Listen closely to the mother to understand her situation. Use eye contact and supportive gestures. Give her time to talk, then add thoughtful responses and questions. The mother tells you she has been introducing more variety in her baby’s foods. The child now eats porridge, mashed vegetables and fruits, and one egg almost every day. Ask how the mother typically interacts with her child? The mother tells you that she’s very busy. She has so much housework and often carries the child on her back. Throughout the visit observe how the mother and child interact. You notice that the mother treats her affectionately but she doesn’t have eye contact with her and doesn’t talk to her baby.

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Step 2: Analyse

Pause to think about what you’velearned from the mother. You identify that the mother is not talking to the child as much as she could. Then, prioritise what you will do next. Based on what you’ve observed and learned from the mother, you choose the Communication counselling card and consider 1 or 2 small, doable actions that the mother can practise at home.

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Step 3: Act

You tell the mother you would like to introduce some ~~i~~deas about communicating with her daughter. Start by praising what the mother is doing well. Let her know that by giving her child a healthy variety of foods, she’s improving her child’s nutrition. She’s doing a great job with her baby. Next, counsel the mother on 1 or 2 small doable actions. First, you recommend talking to her child. You explain that babies begin to understand many words before they can speak, like her name. The mother can talk to her baby all the time. Her baby will learn to talk by listening to her talk. Second, she can observe her baby’s gestures. You explain that babies use facial expressions, sounds, and movements to communicate. Think of an example the mother will know. Explain that while it’s true that babies cry when they’re hungry – that is a late sign. Before babies cry, they have usually been communicating – but parents may not notice or understand. These are the ways babies communicate before they can speak. Watch your baby and you will learn her language. Then you can respond to her messages – and meet her needs sooner, before she cries. Parents can also teach a young child gestures to help her communicate. For example, when she’s giving her food, she can ask her if she wants “more” by using a gesture. And if she’s full, show her this gesture to say “All done.” Summarize the visit by asking the mother to explain what she will do with her child at home. The mother tells you that she will start to notice her child’s gestures and learn what they mean. Then she can respond to her needs better. If she has her hand in her mouth, she will think she is hungry and feed her. She will also talk to her child more often. Encourage the mother. Tell her to try what you discussed each day. With a little practice, this will become natural. Complete the MCH record book and schedule the next meeting date. Then thank the caregiver for her time.

Remember – follow the 3 steps during a responsive care counselling visit. Step 1 – assess the child’s situation; Step 2 – analyse areas for improvement; and Step 3 – suggest actions to help a caregiver be more responsive to her young child.

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