

# SDM<sup>®</sup> and CycleBeads<sup>®</sup>: Reaching Clients with Fertility Awareness Methods

## Participant Notebook



## **SDM and CycleBeads: Reaching Clients with Fertility Awareness Methods**

### **Training for Healthcare Professionals**

This training workshop is designed to offer a comprehensive orientation to the Standard Days Method® (SDM), a simple fertility awareness-based method of family planning. The SDM was developed and tested by researchers at the Institute for Reproductive Health at Georgetown University, with support from the U.S. Agency for International Development. More than 95% effective when used correctly, the SDM meets the need for a natural method that can be integrated easily into a variety of service delivery programs.

#### **Workshop Objectives**

After this workshop, participants will be able to:

- Describe how the SDM works
- Screen clients to determine SDM eligibility
- Explain to clients how to use CycleBeads
- Identify key issues in SDM service delivery

#### **Workshop Content**

- Welcome and introduction to the workshop
- What is the scientific basis underlying the SDM?
- What is involved in SDM counseling?
- For whom is this method suitable? Method Eligibility Criteria
- How are the criteria for the method applied? Case Analysis
- How is the SDM used with CycleBeads?
- How can the SDM contribute to couple communication?
- What are key issues that may arise during a follow-up visit?
- What have we learned about SDM service delivery?
- Evaluation and Closing



# Participant Handout **SDM Screening: Case Studies**

**Instructions:** Please analyze two case studies and apply the SDM eligibility criteria. When solving these case studies, use the *Screening Checklist for Initial Visit* located in the *SDM Job Aids Packet*. Spend 5 minutes solving the case study assigned to you and answering the following questions:

- Can she use the Standard Days Method? Why or why not?
- If the method is suitable for her, when could she start using it?
- What are your recommendations to this client?

Read the case information and answer the questions for each case.

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## **Case 1 — Lori**

Date of last menstrual period: April 8

Date of visit to the clinic: April 14

Note: Lori says she is very regular. Her periods come each month, when she expects them. (She looks at a calendar and points to April 8, the first day of her last period. Lori and her husband are both interested in this natural method. She is not breastfeeding and has never used a hormonal method of family planning.

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## **Case 2 — Maggie**

Date of last menstrual period: Beginning of the month (does not remember exact date)

Date of visit to clinic: May 20

Note: Maggie and her husband are very interested in the SDM because it is natural and there are no side effects. She does not know the exact day of her last period. However, she says her periods always come when she expects them. Her periods come about a month apart, around the same time each month. She has not been using a family planning method and has been married only a few months.

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## **Case 3 — Gaby**

Date of last menstrual period: Does not know

Date of visit to the clinic: February 14

Note: Gaby has heard of CycleBeads. Her older sister has a string of these beads and likes the method very much. Gaby does not remember the first day of her last period. She does not know when to expect her next period. She does not usually pay attention to when her period comes and doesn't really know if she is regular or not. She would like to start using CycleBeads right away.

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## **Case 4 — Pat**

Date of last menstrual period: March 31

Date of visit to the clinic: April 15

Note: The first day of Pats last period was March 31. There are times when her periods come about the same time each month. However, usually she does not know when to expect her period. Sometimes her periods come about every month and a half. Sometimes two months or more go by and she still has not had her period. Her periods have always been irregular. She and her husband communicate well and agree that they do not want to have children at this time.

### Case 5 — Anne

Date of last menstrual period: April 2  
Date she expects next period: Next month about the same time  
Date of visit to the clinic: April 15

Note: Anne knows the first day of her last period was April 2, because it was the day before her daughters 4th birthday. But usually she doesn't keep track. She thinks she expects her next period at the beginning of the next month, but is not sure. Her periods are pretty regular. More or less, she says, I think I'm regular. She has come to the city for family planning and lives far away from any health services. She and her husband communicate well and want to use a natural method.

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### Case 6 — Vicki

Date last menstrual period: October 25  
Date of visit to clinic: October 30

Note: Vicki stopped using oral contraceptives a couple of months ago. Her cycles prior to using the pill were regular every month, and they are regular now.

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### Case 6 — Emma

Date last menstrual period: May 19  
Date of visit to clinic: May 28

Note: Emma has been breastfeeding her son for the last 15 months, and she started getting her period regularly about eight months ago. Emma's husband travels often, at least twice a month and for several days at a time. They have been using condoms for the last several months, but don't like having to use them all the time. They both have decided to use a natural method.

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### Case 7 — Martha

Date last menstrual period: October 14  
Date of visit to clinic: November 29

Note: Martha has used the 3-month contraceptive injection for about 2 years. Her injection was due about 6 weeks ago. Her period is often very light and sometimes doesn't come at all. However, before she began using the 3-month injection, her period came each month. She wants a natural method because she is overweight and thinks it is because of the injection. She also doesn't like that she doesn't get her period regularly.

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## Answer Sheet for Problem-Solving Case Studies

	Case 1 Lori	Case 2 Maggie	Case 3 Gaby	Case 4 Pat	Case 5 Anne	Case 6 Vicki	Case 7 Emma	Case 8 Martha
1. Can she use the Standard Days Method?								
2. If the method is suitable for her, when could she start using it?								
3. What are your recommendations to this client?								

## Teaching: Case Studies for Role Playing SDM Counseling

### Instructions:

Select one case and play the role of a counselor discussing the SDM with a client to:

- Help the client decide whether this method is appropriate for her and her partner.
- Explain to her how CycleBeads work.

When providing information to the client, use the following guidelines.

- Use simple sentences and short words.
- Use language the client can understand.
- Use pictures and printed material, if available.
- Show the CycleBeads right from the beginning and let the client touch and hold them.
- Stop from time to time to check that the client understands.
- Ask questions to make sure the information you have given her is clear.
- Repeat instructions and key messages, especially at the end of the session

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### Case 1.

Leonor is 33 years old, is married and has three children. She heard a health educator in her community talk about a new family planning method. She heard this method can help her know when she's fertile and it does require taking pills or using any devices. She came to the clinic on June 18 to learn more about it.

Leonor tells the counselor that her period comes every month and her last one started on June 8. Her youngest daughter is 20 months old. Leonor is no longer breastfeeding, and she is not using any family planning method at the moment. Her husband is using withdrawal. Neither she nor her husband wants to have more children, but neither wants to use contraceptives.

When the counselor asks, she tells the counselor that she gets along fairly well with her husband—they bicker but they don't have serious arguments. He is a hard worker, a good father and doesn't drink or smoke. She feels that she can talk to her husband in general, but they don't discuss sex.

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### Case 2.

Rosa has been using the 3-month contraceptive injection. Her next injection was due 2 weeks ago. She comes to the clinic on November 14 to ask for the Standard Days Method. She tells the counselor that her period is very sparse and sometimes doesn't come. Last month, her period came October 21. Before using injections, her period came every month. She and her partner would like to plan a pregnancy for next year. She wants to use a family planning method but doesn't wish to take pills or go back to using injections.

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### **Case 3.**

Isabel has a partner, although they don't live together. She came to the clinic on February 27. After using the pill for nearly a year, she stopped taking her last pack of pills last week. She decided to stop using this method because she has been having headaches and was concerned about side effects. Also, her partner travels and they don't see each other for a month at a time. Before using the pill, she used condoms, but as they are a stable couple, she stopped using them when she started the pill.

She wishes to try the natural method of family planning the clinic is offering. Isabel doesn't keep track of when her period starts but she is sure they've always come every month, even before she started taking the pill. Her last period started February 16. When the counselor asks about her sexual life, she says that she is not seeing anyone else and thinks her partner is faithful and is careful, although sometimes he drinks too much.

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### **Case 4.**

Laura is 26 years old, married and has a 2-year-old daughter. She learned about CycleBeads from her sister, who has been using them for about 2 months. Since her daughter was born, she had an IUD inserted but wishes to have it taken out because of the bleeding. She wants to have a break for a while to see whether the bleeding stops. Before she had an IUD, her period lasted 4 days. But now with the IUD she bleeds heavily during her period and often has spotting at other times.

Her last period was June 13. Today, June 19, she is not menstruating and wants to know whether she can use another method.

When the counselor asks how she and her husband would deal with protection during the white-bead days, she says that since she has been using the IUD, she hasn't bothered to use anything. Also, with so much bleeding, having intercourse bothers her.

## Supporting the Couple

### Video Case Studies

#### Discussion Questions

#### **Maggie and John's case** – Recent use of Emergency Contraception

- What are ways in which you could engage this couple in discussing how to handle their fertile days?
- What questions would you ask Maggie and John to help them figure out how they will handle the fertile days?
- How would you feel about this couple using the SDM?
- If they decide to start using the method, would you schedule a follow-up visit? Why or why not?

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#### **Linda's case** – A woman with Couple Communication issues

- How would you feel asking these kinds of questions to a client in a similar situation?
- Is there something else you would do as a counselor?

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#### **Tracy's Case** – A woman at Risk of a STI

- Talk over this situation and continue with the counseling.
- Be prepared to share with other participants specifics on how you handled Tracy's case.

# SDM Workshop

## Participant Post-Test

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ (Required only if applying for CEUs)

Instructions: Read the question and circle the correct answer.

1. A woman is more likely to get pregnant:
  - a. At the beginning of her cycle
  - b. Midway through the cycle
  - c. Ten days before menstruating
2. A woman who is breastfeeding can consider using the Standard Days Method(SDM):
  - a. As soon as her baby is 6 months old
  - b. As soon as she starts menstruating again
  - c. Once she has had four consecutive regular periods
3. To use the SDM correctly:
  - a. The couple needs to be able to discuss when to avoid unprotected intercourse
  - b. The woman should move the ring every day so she knows on which days she is most likely to get pregnant
  - c. The woman and her partner should avoid unprotected sex on white-bead days when she can get pregnant
  - d. All the above conditions should be met
4. Which of the following IS NOT a characteristic of the SDM?
  - a. It doesn't protect couples against STIs
  - b. It is natural, it doesn't have any side effects
  - c. Several people can use the same CycleBeads
  - d. It can foster good couple communication
5. A woman who was taking the pill can use the SDM
  - a. While taking the pill
  - b. After last 3 periods are about a month apart (26-32 day cycles)
  - c. As soon as she starts her period after stopping the pill
  - d. Three months after she stops taking the pill
6. To use the SDM the woman must have menstrual cycles lasting:
  - a. 5 to 7 days
  - b. 20 to 30 days
  - c. 26 to 32 days
  - d. 28 days
7. How long does the woman's menstrual cycle last if the first day of her period is October 2, she has menstrual bleeding for 3 days and her period starts again October 31?
  - a. 3 days
  - b. 29 days
  - c. 30 days
  - d. 5 to 7 days
8. What should a SDM client do every time she gets her period?
  - a. Move the ring to the first white bead
  - b. Move the ring to the red bead and mark her calendar
  - c. Move the ring to the red bead and see a provider
  - d. See a provider

9. What do the brown beads represent?
  - a. Days when the woman can get pregnant
  - b. Days when pregnancy is very unlikely
  - c. Days when the man and woman can have intercourse without worrying about pregnancy
  - d. b. and c.
  
10. What do the white beads represent?
  - a. Days with menstrual bleeding
  - b. Days when the woman can get pregnant
  - c. Days when the woman cannot get pregnant
  - d. Days when the couple can have intercourse without worry of getting pregnant
  
11. If the woman does not start her period the day after she places the ring on the last brown bead, what should she do?
  - a. Move the ring to the red bead
  - b. Use the calendar to count the days
  - c. Continue having unprotected sex without worrying about getting pregnant
  - d. See her provider
  
12. If the woman starts her period before
  - a. placing the ring on the dark brown bead, what should she do?
    - a. Continue having unprotected sex without worrying about getting pregnant
    - b. Move the ring to the red bead and see the provider
    - c. Continue to move the ring until she gets to the last brown bead
  
13. It has been shown that the effectiveness of the SDM is:
  - a. 70%
  - b. 95%
  - c. 75%

# Workshop Evaluation Form

Your Credentials (RN, NMW, MD, SW, etc.)

or job title: \_\_\_\_\_

Please complete this form using the following rating:

**1 – VERY WELL    2- ADEQUATELY    3 – SOMEWHAT ADEQUATELY    4 – POORLY**

Listed below are the educational objectives for this workshop.

Please rate the extent to which you were able to meet each of the objectives:

Objectives	Rating
1. Understand the scientific basis for the Standard Days Method.	
2. Describe the multi-site research that demonstrated method efficacy.	
3. Describe method eligibility criteria for the SDM.	
4. Describe how to use CycleBeads with the SDM	
5. Understand how to teach the method to clients desiring a natural method of family planning.	
6. Feel prepared to offer counseling in the SDM.	
Please evaluate the faculty in terms of content and presentation:	
7. Feel able to use the job aids during a counseling session..	
8. Feel confident to introduce the SDM to key audiences.	
9. Understand critical implementation issues.	

Please evaluate the faculty in terms of content and presentation.

10. Instructors were knowledgeable of the topic.	
11. Instructors had an effective presentation style.	
12. Content was relevant tot he objectives.	
13. Teaching methods were effective.	
14. Handout materials were useful.	
15. Counseling tools and job aids were helpful.	
16. The physical environment was conducive to learning.	
17. The amount of time allotted for this workshop was: About right _____ Too short _____ Too long _____	

## Workshop Evaluation Form *(continued)*

18. What topic or aspect of this workshop was the most valuable for the work you do?

19. And what topic/aspect was the least valuable for the work you do?

20. What suggestions do you have for future training workshops?

21. Is there any additional information you need in order to be able to integrate the Standard Days Method in your program?

22. Other comments

Thank you for your input!  
Your comments will be used to improve this program course.

# Answer Sheet for Case Studies

	Case 1 Lori	Case 2 Maggie	Case 3 Gaby	Case 4 Pat	Case 5 Anne
Can she use the Standard Days Method?	Yes	Yes	Not at this time	No, because she has irregular cycles	Yes
If the method is suitable for her, when could she start using it?	Immediately	Wait until her next period starts.	Not yet	The method is not suitable for her.	Immediately!
What do you recommend for this situation?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Give standard advice.</li> <li>• Reinforce monitoring cycle length over time. Make sure she knows how to check for short or long cycles.</li> <li>• Confirm that both partners can avoid unprotected sex on her fertile days.</li> <li>• Place ring on the correct bead.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Tell her to put the ring on the red bead on the first day of her next period.</li> <li>• Give standard advice.</li> <li>• Reinforce monitoring cycle length over time. Make sure she knows how to check for short or long cycles.</li> <li>• Confirm that both partners can avoid unprotected sex on her fertile days and agree how to handle these days.</li> <li>• If she has already had sex during this cycle, explain that she may already be pregnant.</li> <li>• Abstain or use another method until the first day of her next period, when she starts the SDM.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Show her how to track her cycles (with a calendar or CycleBeads)</li> <li>• Advise using another method of family planning or abstaining until she has determined that her cycles are 26 to 32 days long.</li> <li>• If her cycles are within this range, she can begin using the SDM on the first day of her next period. (Or, advise her to return to the clinic once she has two periods about a month apart. Then teach her how to use the method.)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provide other family planning options or refer.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Give standard advice.</li> <li>• Reinforce monitoring cycle length over time. Make sure she knows how to check for short or long cycles.</li> <li>• Confirm that both partners can avoid unprotected sex on her fertile days and agree how to handle these days.</li> <li>• Place the ring on the correct bead.</li> <li>• If she has already had sex during this cycle, explain that she may already be pregnant.</li> </ul>

<sup>1</sup> If the provider (or woman) is concerned that her cycles may not be within the 26 to 32 day range, or if home visits are an option, the provider can first teach the woman how to track her cycle length. Then, once the woman has a 26 to 32 day cycle she can begin using the SDM on the first day of bleeding.

# Answer Sheet for Problem Studies

	Case 1 Vicki	Case 2 Emma	Case 3 Martha
Can she use the Standard Days Method?	Yes	Yes	Not at this time
If the method is suitable for her, when could she start using it?	Immediately	Immediately	Not yet
What do you recommend for this situation?	<p>Standard Advice.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Monitor cycle length over time. Make sure she knows how to check for short or long cycles.</li> <li>• Confirm that both partners can avoid unprotected sex on her fertile days.</li> <li>• Place the ring on the correct bead.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Emphasize discussing the method with her partner and agreeing in advance how to handle her fertile days.</li> <li>• Place the ring on the correct bead.</li> <li>• If she already had sex during this cycle explain that she may already be pregnant. Emphasize explanation on checking for short or long cycles.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Wait for her periods to resume and to have a cycle within the 26 to 32-day range.</li> <li>• Use another method of family planning in the meantime.</li> </ul>

