

Methodology for SALT Team Visits

SALT is a way of thinking and relating ourselves to a situation.

Foundational principles

S is for Support, Stimulate
A is for Appreciate, Analyse
L is for Listen, Learn, and Link
T is for Transfer

A SALT visit contains

1. Invitation or opportunity to visit, in teams of 3-5 people, each with a 'bridge' person, who will link the team to the situation. The bridge person is someone who is known in the situation.
2. Preparation to visit, by hearing something of the context, and reviewing the approach
3. A visit, in which the team introduces itself as people who are there to learn, and each member introduces themselves as a person, not by title.
4. Reflection as a team after the visit, about what was learned, what might be next steps, and how the team could improve its practice of SALT.

Appreciate

The foundational attitude is **APPRECIATION** of what people in a community are already doing, and their lives. So as a team enters a community, the first attitude is not one of looking for all the problems and weaknesses, but rather one of appreciating what is working.

Learn

The second foundational attitude is **LEARNING**. The visiting team is in the community to learn, to understand, and again to appreciate, the strengths of people to manage their own lives.

Support

The third foundation is **SUPPORT**, not by bringing material or technical things, but by encouraging people. As the visiting team appreciates and learns more about the strengths, it is possible to encourage people by mentioning the strengths to them. Often people are not aware of their own strength, and this is true for all of us!

A team develops these foundations by observation and conversation in the community. Conversation will focus on the hopes and concerns of people, and the way they already work together on those hopes and concerns. The team works to identify and name strengths.

The other attitudes and practices of SALT will come next:

Stimulate

Specific themes emerge through the concerns, and the team is able to **STIMULATE** reflection by community members, on the connections between their concerns and the major issues affecting the community. The team listens carefully in order to **ANALYSE** what is heard, and asks questions to encourage community members to **ANALYSE** as well. For example, if a concern is expressed about young people being 'careless', it is possible to ask questions to explore how that is connected to risk issues of HIV, or other specific issues.

Probing

Here it is important for the **TEAM** to **LEARN**, and **SUPPORT** each other, to ask questions about the connections, rather than point them out or

attempt to 'enlighten' the community about the connections as the team sees them. This phase of the process is very important, to keep the responses in the hands of the community and not take over as 'knowledgeable' persons.

Analyse

The team will continually **ANALYSE** and **STIMULATE** analysis as the community gradually opens up discussion on significant issues, and acknowledges the underlying roots, such as HIV. It will become natural to reflect on what the community itself can do in response.

SALT should normally happen as a series of visits, not only one.

Link

The **LINK** function will be expressed when the team begins to ask themselves the question, 'who is not in this discussion?' For example, if discussion happens mainly with elders in a first visit, the team will find a way to meet youth. If discussion happens with the 'upright' citizens of a place, the team can seek a way to talk to 'troublemakers'. If men are the first to discuss, then the team will want to discuss with women. This does not happen by criticising those who are already active, but by always including others. And as discussion opens with different people in a community, the team will help to create opportunities to **LINK** the different conversations together.

Transfer

TRANSFER is a function of the team members, to take something back to their own communities and organisations, and apply the approach there. **TRANSFER** also happens when community members link to others outside their own community, and influence change in other places. For example, as stigma is reduced in one neighbourhood, the idea that it is possible to live well with HIV will be shared to other places, through extended family links, and sometimes more systematically as well. The SALT team can encourage **TRANSFER** from one community to another.

SALT team visits are a method which is learned by doing it.

Once people have the general idea, it is possible to go and try.

However, it is important to do this within an **ACTION-REFLECTION** cycle.

Action & Reflection

Action-reflection means that the team should prepare by remembering what SALT means, and the main topics of discussion, which are:

Strengths,

Concerns,

Hopes,

Ways of working: how do the family and community now respond to the concerns and hopes mentioned? How could they respond?

During a SALT visit, the team should help each other to follow the SALT approach.

After a SALT visit, it is very important that the team immediately (before going home) discuss what they have learned from the experience, and how they could do better as a SALT team.