

Taking care of our clients and staff: delivering excellent client-centred care

KEY LEARNINGS

In 2019, MSI Zambia undertook a holistic approach to delivering client-centred care by implementing the *Client-Centred Care Package*, a global suite of tools that support country programmes to evaluate and improve the client experience.

This new approach highlights that to deliver excellent care, we need to walk in the shoes of our clients to truly understand their needs, worries, and preferences in accessing safe sexual and reproductive health services.

However, we can only deliver consistent, high-quality care if our frontline staff, including non-medical providers, feel they are supported, recognised, and encouraged to deliver their best.



THE CHALLENGE

High-quality client experiences

At MSI, the aim of our client-centred care philosophy is to put the client's interests first and respect the role of our clients as active partners in their own care. High clinical standards are not enough to ensure client-centred experiences of care. Clients' needs and life choices must be clearly understood to ensure an informed choice of health care. If a client feels they are not treated with respect and dignity, this can lead to mistrust, poor health outcomes, and pursuit of unsafe care elsewhere.

WHAT WE DID

A holistic client-centred approach

In 2019, MSI Zambia (MSZ) implemented the Client-Centred Care Package in their centres. This package contains a suite of tools that support programmes to deliver client-centred care services. It includes training modules for frontline staff, an observational client experience checklist, routine client feedback tools, and action planning guidance to help staff and supervisors implement improvements.

Using MSI's annual Client Exit Interviews, we measured the impact of MSZ's client-centred care activities on client experience, including satisfaction with the service environment, interpersonal care, and quality of service delivery.

WHAT WE DID

A holistic client-centred approach

The Client-Centred Care Package helped MSZ's frontline staff to view the care they provide through their clients' eyes. Using the package, MSZ focused on **three key strategies** that led to notable improvements in client experience (see graphs on Figures 1 and 2 on the next page):

Improving key client touchpoints. MSZ identified waiting times, privacy and counselling quality as key areas of focus, and implemented targeted interventions to optimise client flow and improve privacy features and job aids.



Responsive to client feedback. Centre teams reviewed and actioned client feedback daily and as part of monthly performance reviews. Actions taken were displayed using "You Said, We Did" boards in waiting rooms.



Sharing client insights across the client journey. As the Contact Centre has direct conversations with clients, MSZ held meetings for these insights to be shared with centre staff.



WHAT WE FOUND

To take care of our clients, we need to take care of our staff

To sustain client-centred care behaviours, MSZ's management team prioritised creating an enabling environment for staff to deliver excellent care by:

Taking the time to mentor and develop team members.

Supervisors initiated honest two-way conversations to better understand each team member's strengths, as well as development needs.



Championing peer-to-peer support.

Staff members were encouraged to share best practice tips with each other, which improved staff engagement and strengthened support networks.



Giving space for reflections. Service providers can sometimes be faced with challenging cases and giving them the space to share this with colleagues helped reduce their stress and increase motivation.

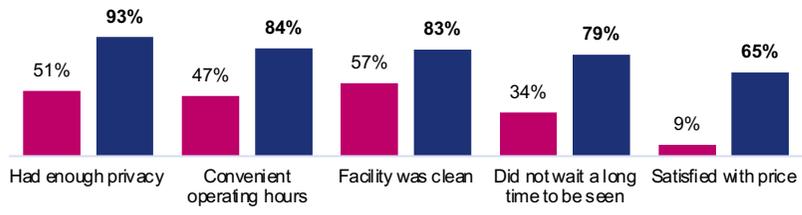


Recognising team achievements, however small. Management strived to recognise all team members who were actively putting clients at the heart of what they do.



Figure 1. What MSZ centres' clients thought of the service environment?

■ 2018 ■ 2019



% strongly agreeing, from MSI Client Exit Interview Data

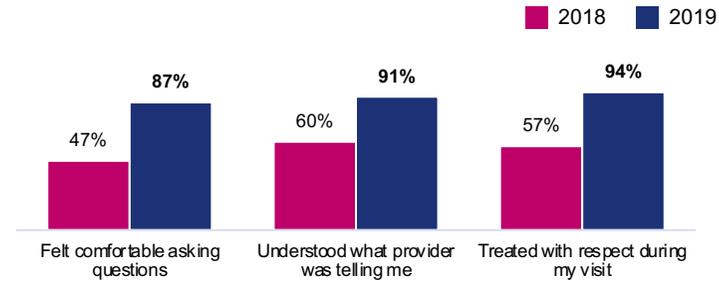
WHAT THIS MEANS

The power of empathy and support

A holistic approach to delivering client-centred care is key to ensuring all clients have access to and receive high-quality sexual and reproductive health services. Word of mouth referral is the most common way clients with unmet health needs hear about MSI, so delivering a client-centred experience for our clients is crucial in increasing access.

Training frontline staff, responding to client feedback, sharing insights across the client journey, while motivating and recognising staff success can drive organisational behaviour change to embed the client-centred care values of empathy and support.

Figure 2. What MSZ centres' clients thought of their interaction with their MSI provider?



% strongly agreeing, from MSI Client Exit Interview Data

Our clients are experts in their own experience, and we must serve them with dignity and respect, and ensure they are always in control of their care without judgement or discrimination.



MORE INFORMATION

For more information on MSI Reproductive Choices and the work that we do, please contact:
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