

Key Training Issues

Remember that the overall objective of introducing the female condom is to increase **protected** sex acts, not to switch use from male condoms.

- Use of FC requires that women become accustomed to touching their genitalia, as it is usually the woman who inserts the device. Some women may be uncomfortable touching themselves at first.
- Some women may need to negotiate FC use with their partners; they may need help in how to approach the subject with their partners.
- There may be myths, or misinformation, that has been spread about FC, and trainers will need to be aware of them and ready to deal with them.
- FC may prompt curiosity, embarrassment and humour; educators need to be sensitive and prepared to assist potential and existing users become familiar and comfortable with FC
- It is important to provide ample opportunity for people to see, feel and practice with FC. An adequate supply of samples should be easily accessible to potential users.
- A key trainer/leader/champion should be identified who can co-ordinate training, facilitate problem solving and mobilise community outreach.
- Training need not be confined to traditional health settings and health providers. Depending on the distribution strategy, it may be important to train clinic staff, health promotion staff, retail traders, peer educators and/or community-based distribution agents. The basic principles remain the same, no matter who is being trained.
- As with potential users, identify and address any existing biases amongst trainers. Some potential trainers may think the method is too complex, doubt its efficacy or assume the product will not be widely accepted or just not like the method. These biases must be addressed up front. One outcome may be that such a person is not an appropriate trainer and advocate for FC.
- FC should be introduced as one of a range of methods for pregnancy and/or STI prevention. The decision for a client to try FC should be made by the client. If the client decides that FC is not the right method for her, providers should provide adequate information about use and availability of supply of other methods.
- Training for providers in skills associated with FC provides a good opportunity to update their skills and knowledge in other areas of primary and reproductive health care.