

Challenges in Implementing an Effective Prevention Program

**SOBIA AFTAB, PhD,
FULBRIGHT POST DOC FELLOW, USA
Professor**

Institute of Clinical Psychology
University of Karachi-Pakistan

**Consultant Clinical Psychologist
Board Certified Instructor of Hypnotherapy, NGH, USA
NLP Trainer, USA**

**UNODC Substance Use Prevention Master Trainer
Internationally Certified Addiction Professional-II**

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

- ▶ To understand the **Challenges** that Prevention Specialists face in successfully implementing Substance Use Prevention Intervention Programs in Pakistan
- ▶ To understand **Strategies** to circumvent these challenges



SUBSTANCE USE WORLDWIDE

**296 million people
worldwide**

**Ages 15 and 64 had
used drugs in 2021**

**11.2 million were
injecting drugs**

**Around half were
living with hepatitis C**

**4 million were living
with HIV**

**1.2 million were living
with both**

[World Drug Report 2022 by the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC)]

SUBSTANCE USE IN PAKISTAN



SUBSTANCE USE IN PAKISTAN



Substance Use Disorder

(UNODC, 2013)



WHY PREVENTION INTERVENTIONS?

- ▶ **Prevention Strategies** are anticipated to **yield significant cost savings** through reduced utilization of social and health services, treatment requirements, and **productivity losses** (NIDA, 2022)
- ▶ Even when there is substantial evidence pertaining to beneficial effects, **It can be challenging to put Substance Use Prevention Interventions into practice**

CHALLENGES IN IMPLEMENTING AN EFFECTIVE PREVENTION PROGRAM



NOT AVAILABLE

Indigenous Prevention Intervention Programs



Barriers to Evidence-Based Prevention Programs



Prevents substance use prevention interventions from being implemented



Role
Ambiguity

Role Ambiguity: Prevention Specialist Or Treatment Specialist



Fragmented Prevention Programs and Lack of Coordinated Efforts



INDIGENOUS PREVENTION INTERVENTION PROGRAMS – NOT AVAILABLE

- ▶ Prevention programs must to be sensitive to cultural differences and equip the targeted population with the skills and knowledge necessary to prevent and manage substance use in everyday circumstances.
- ▶ Integrating Indigenous worldviews, values, languages, and beliefs into the prevention programs improves the suitability, effectiveness, and sustainability of preventative initiatives.
- ▶ There is dearth of Indigenous Prevention Intervention Programs since the field of Prevention is in its infancy in Pakistan.

BARRIERS TO EVIDENCE-BASED PREVENTION PROGRAM

- ▶ Hundreds of programs, interventions, and policies that have been evaluated and ranked for their efficacy in lowering substance use and related problems are included in a number of current registries.
- ▶ There are **certain barriers that challenged implementation** of substance use interventions in Pakistan



Barrier# 1: Lack of Financial Resources

- ▶ The majority of evidence-based prevention programs are highly paid, copyrighted programs that are too expensive.
- ▶ Hence, their non-affordability pose a significant Challenge.



Barrier # 2: Cultural Relevance

- ▶ The majority of evidence-based drug use prevention programs are customizable to meet the cultural requirements of the target group.
- ▶ The implementing teams need to prepare for it such that adaptations are fidelity-consistent to the program



Barrier # 2: Cultural Relevance....

- ▶ Adaptation of Intervention is time taking and hectic.
- ▶ It also requires training, monitoring and supervision and human and financial resources





Barrier# 3: Human Resource

- ▶ There is lack of Certified Substance Use Prevention Specialists
- ▶ The Preventions Specialists who are already in in field may not be trained in evidence-based prevention or interventions.
- ▶ The efforts of UNODC are highly commendable in this regard.

- Climate of Acceptance is vital to effectiveness of any Prevention Program
- One major obstacle that prevents substance use prevention interventions from being implemented in Pakistan is stigma.
- The stigma associated with substance use has its roots in the historical categorization of substance use as a moral failing and character flaw.





ROLE AMBIGUITY: PREVENTION SPECIALIST OR TREATMENT SPECIALIST

- ▶ In the field of addiction science, the Prevention Specialist credential is one of the rapidly growing area in Pakistan.
- ▶ The majority of those who stepped into the field of prevention science are also the treatment professionals or providers.
- ▶ Therefore, the field of prevention is moving slowly due to job ambiguity brought on by wearing two hats, namely that of a substance use prevention specialist and a substance use treatment specialist

FRAGMENTED PREVENTION PROGRAMS AND LACK OF COORDINATED EFFORTS

- ▶ There is lack of coordination and integration of Prevention Programs Implementation Initiatives across multiple sectors of non-governmental and government organizations
- ▶ Concerned Organizations have their own fragmented Prevention Programs



STRATEGIES TO CIRCUMVENT THESE CHALLENGES

- ➔ Stigma Reduction through Advocacy promoting the provision of substance use prevention - Substance Use Is a Public Health Problem
- ➔ Schools and colleges can play a vital role in creating awareness and implementing drug prevention initiatives.



STRATEGIES TO CIRCUMVENT THESE CHALLENGES

- ➔ Inter-organizational coordination among Ministry of Education, Finance, Health, Narcotics Control, School, Colleges, Universities Social Work Departments etc.



STRATEGIES TO CIRCUMVENT THESE CHALLENGES

- Capacity Building of Workforce, Prevention Team, etc.
- Local Challenge Fund





THANK YOU

YOU MIGHT