

# Newsletter ASDWT

October to December 2023

Hello everyone!

We have finally come to the end of the year and present our activities for the last quarter of 2023 which we hope that you will appreciate. However, while we were able to organise many exciting events, seminars, training workshops and meetings, the overall politico-economic environment in the country has been very challenging, and compounded with the tragic events in Occupied Palestine, have left many of us feeling drained, weary and disappointed with how things are shaping up nationally and internationally. It is also a matter of grave concern that so many of our young professionals are moving abroad because of the current unstable and insecure environment in the country.

In the vacuum created by the absence of tangible government action for support and rehabilitation of persons with disabilities and other marginalized communities, many NGOs have stepped up their efforts of

reaching out to these groups. For example, NOWPDP engaged actively with small towns and villages in throughout the year, facilitating issuance of CNICs for PWDs, organising psychological assessment camps for school children, and expanding the ambit of vocational training and employment programmes. Similarly, Special Olympics Pakistan developed and implemented numerous training and assessment activities for parents under their Health Forum programme.

The ASD Welfare Trust as a partner organisation of NOWPDP and SOP, played an important role in these activities. That is why we believe that all NGOs, specialized schools and government institutions can collaborate successfully for improved outcomes in every field, creating synergy and innovation. In the next year, ASDWT is planning to expand its footprint in the domain of neurodiversity through increased collaboration with other like-minded individuals and organisations both at home and abroad.

That is all for now. Wish you a peaceful and fulfilling New Year!



## Workshops and Webinars



### Workshop at The Learning Hub

ASDWT Lahore hosted a training session on Autism and Interoception at The Learning Hub on 3rd October 2023. The session was attended by parents and professionals. Dr. Husna Albab made an in-depth presentation on Interoception, its importance in the sensory system, and its relationship with gut problems in autism. The presentation concluded with a Q&A session.

### Mental Health Awareness Day. Facebook Live Session

To mark World Mental Health Awareness Day, ASDWT organized a Facebook session on 10th October 2023. Renowned psychiatrist Prof. Dr. Saad Bashir Malik, Chairman Punjab Institute of Mental Health, and Founder & President of Mind organization spoke on this year's UN theme "Mental Health is a Universal Human Right." Dr. Saad explained that mental health remains one of the most neglected areas of public policy although the incidence of mental illness is increasing at an alarming rate in the country. The mass exodus of qualified psychiatrists from Pakistan should be a matter of urgent action by the government. The session was followed by a lively and interactive Q&A segment.

A promotional poster for a Facebook Live session. At the top, it says "ASD Welfare Trust, Lahore Brings Live Facebook Session" with logos for ASD Welfare Trust and Future Trust. The main text reads "Mental Health is a Universal Human Right". Below this is a portrait of Prof. Dr. Sa'ad Bashir Malik, a Psychiatrist, with his title and affiliations: "Chairman, Punjab Institute of Mental Health" and "Founder &amp; President of MIND Organization". The session is scheduled for "Tuesday, 10th October, 2023" from "2:30pm -3:30pm". A Facebook LIVE logo is present, along with the URL "facebook.com/AutisminPakistan".



### Institute of Holistic Rehabilitation & Inclusion (IHRI) Visit and Awareness session at Herbion Naturals.

ASDWT Karachi organized an awareness session at Herbion Naturals on "Autism Spectrum Disorder and Specific Learning Disorders" on 12th October, 2023. Employees from different departments of Herbion attended the awareness session. The session generated a great deal of discussion and a Q&A segment with the participants.

## Sindh Technical Education & Vocational Training Authority (Sindh TEVTA)

ASDWT Karachi organized two separate awareness sessions for Sindh TEVTA on 25<sup>th</sup> & 26<sup>th</sup> October 2023. for the management personnel and teaching staff of different vocational institutes of STEVTA in Karachi. Dr. Salma Khalil, Ms. Maryam Erum and Mr. Moazzaz Ali gave presentations on Autism, Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD) and Specific Learning Disabilities.

Mr. Munawar Ali Mithani, Managing Director, Sindh TEVTA along with his team attended the session and expressed his appreciation of the programme. It was interactive sessions and audience took keen interest in the topics. ASDWT is grateful to Ms. Zarqa Saeed, Additional Director HRD for arranging the event.



## COMSAT University Abbottabad. Zoom Session.

ASDWT, Lahore organized a session on "Understanding Autism Spectrum Disorder" for COMSAT University, Abbottabad on 26th October 2023. The event was held online and the participants included faculty members and students from the Psychology department of the University. Ms. Farah Amanat, Senior clinical psychologist of ASDWT explained the signs, symptoms, prevalence of the disorder along with its severity, and management.

## Step Ahead Workshop

ASDWT Lahore arranged a training session on Autism at Step Ahead on 27th October 2023. The training was on "Autism: the role and challenges for siblings." The session was attended by parents and professionals. Ms. Ayesha Arooj of ASDWT talked about the challenges siblings of people with Autism face, and how the diagnosis impacts siblings and the family at large. She discussed strategies to strengthen the bond between siblings, both with and without autism and concluded with the session with Q&A.



## Special Events

### Silver Jubilee Conference of Psychiatry in Sukkur

On 12th November COO, ASDWT Karachi Dr. Salma Khalil presented a paper "Rising Incidence of Autism and related Neurodevelopmental Disorders in Pakistan" at the Silver Jubilee Conference of Psychiatry held in Sukkur. The event was attended by renowned psychiatrists and psychologists from Pakistan and abroad.

In her paper Dr. Salma Khalil discussed the rise in prevalence of neurodevelopmental disorders and gave recommendations on how the government and we as a community can help people with such disorders. Dr. Mowadat Hussain Rana, Dr. Zeeshan, Dr. Kartar and many others appreciated the work ASDWT is doing in the field of Autism and other related neurodevelopmental disorders.



## General Awareness Sessions

### SZABIST Larkana



On 13th November 2023, ASDWT Karachi held an Awareness Session on Neurodevelopmental Disorders and their Management at SZABIST Larkana. The session was attended by trainers and therapists from STEVTA and DEPD along with doctors from SMBBMU, students and faculty from SZABIST. ASDWT is grateful to Dr. Zahida Abro, Director SZABIST, Larkana and Mr. Danial Mustafa, HOD Marketing, SZABIST for their cooperation in facilitating the seminar.

### Okara Seminar

On 21st November 2023, ASDWT, Lahore organized an Awareness Seminar on Neurodevelopmental Disorders and their Management in district Okara with the participation of more than 80 Special Education Teachers, Professionals and Parents. Ms. Rukhsana Shah gave a presentation on Autism, Ms. Ayesha Arooj discussed ADHD and its management while Ms. Farah Amanat, threw light on SLD and its management. Q&A session was held at the end of the Seminar, followed by a sit-down lunch for parents and professionals. The participants appreciated the efforts of ASDWT for organizing this productive seminar.





### All Pakistan Women Association (APWA)

APWA (All Pakistan Women Association) invited Team ASDWT Karachi on 6<sup>th</sup> November'23 at their Golimar Nazimabad center for an Awareness Session on Mental Health. The session was conducted by Ms. Maryam Erum, and Dr. Salma Khalil. It was very interactive session. Mothers and LHV's highlighted many social issues affecting low-income groups and the need for counselling for stress management.

### Shaikh Zayed Children's Hospital Larkana

On 14<sup>th</sup> November'23 Dr. Shanti Lal invited ASDWT-Karachi to Children Hospital Larkana (SMBBMU) to conduct an awareness session on Neurodevelopmental Disorders. Many Doctors, PGS, House officers, and Lady Health Workers attended the session. The topics ASD, ADHD, SLD and their management were presented by Dr. Salma Kahlil, CoO, ASDWT Karachi, Ms. Maryam Erum & Mr. Moazzaz Ali Clinical Psychologist, respectively.



### Hum Mashal-e-Rah Foundation & Special Olympics Pakistan Camp

ASDWT Lahore conducted a Developmental Screening Pediatric Camp with its partner Organizations Special Olympics Pakistan and Hum Mashal-e-rah on 17 November 2023. Pediatric screening was offered to children with intellectual disabilities ages 2 to 8 years.



### Autism Challenges and Impact on Siblings. (Zoom Session)

On 23<sup>rd</sup> November, a Zoom session was conducted by Ms. Ayesha Arooj of ASDWT. The session focused on an in-depth conversation about the difficulties siblings of people with Autism face, and the ways parents can support them in improving their own lives and maintaining a healthy balance between a neurodiverse and a neurotypical child. The discussion was followed by a Q&A session.



**ASD Welfare Trust, Lahore**  
Free Webinar



**Autism Challenges and Impact on Siblings**



**Ayesha Arooj**  
Clinical Psychologist  
ASD Welfare Trust, Lahore

Thursday, 23<sup>rd</sup> November, 2023  
11:00 – 12:30pm



Please contact for registration:  
03314199945 – 03020491707



### ADHD Session at ACELP

On 25th November, ASDWT was invited by ACELP for a session on ADHD and its management for their diploma students.

The session was conducted by Ms. Maryam Erum, Clinical Psychologist for special educators, speech therapists, and parents of children with special needs. ADHD was discussed in detail and practical techniques about its management in classroom and at home were also talked about.

### Urban Resource Centre, Stress Management for Working Women

Urban Resource Centre (URC) invited ASDWT-Karachi to conduct a training session on "Stress Management for working women" on 4th December 2023. Ms. Maryam Erum and Dr. Salma Khalil, conducted the session in which they discussed daily stressors, coping strategies, stress management and therapeutic techniques.



### NETSOL Technologies Ltd.

ASDWT Lahore conducted an Awareness Session for the team of NETSOL Technologies Ltd. Lahore on 5<sup>th</sup> December 2023. Ms. Farah Amanat highlighted early signs and symptoms of Autism and its management protocols. She stressed the need to introduce an Early Intervention Program for better prognosis. The session was followed by a Q&A segment.

Mr. Ayub Ghauri, Executive Director NETSOL and CEO HospitALL, Ms. Sana Khan, COO & Co-founder HospitALL, and other executives attended the Awareness Seminar, and appreciated the efforts of ASDWT for doing such extensive work for Autism in Pakistan. Mr. Rameez Arshad, Services Manager HospitALL facilitated the session.



## Moriro Markaz School in Sujawal

NOWPDP invited team ASDWT-Karachi to conduct an assessment camp on 7th December 2023. The camp was hosted in Moriro Markaz School in Sujawal now under NOWPDP. Ms. Maryam Erum, Mr. Moazzaz Ali and Ms. Sumaira Sialvi conducted the assessments which showed high prevalence of intellectual disability among the children. Ms. Ghazal Saleem, Remedial Therapist of ASDWT conducted a session with teachers regarding classroom management, capacity building and future trainings.



## Society School of Child Development, Lahore

A Training Session on Sensory Issues Related to Toilet Training for parents was conducted by Dr. Husna Albab, ASDWT Physiotherapist on 14th December'23 at Society School of Child Development in Lahore. The event was organized under ASDWT's MOU with Special Olympics Pakistan. The comprehensive presentation on the sensory issues parents face related to toilet training, toilet training techniques was followed by Q&A.



## Effectiveness of Social Stories in Autism

On 21st December 2023, ASDWT- Karachi conducted an Online Zoom Session on " Effectiveness of Social Stories in Autism". This session was conducted by Ms. Ghazala Saleem, Remedial Therapist & Project Manager ASDWT-Karachi. She informed how social stories can help in dealing with challenges of autism and other neurodevelopmental disorders and how skills can be built through them. She also shared her personal experiences working with her son in modifying his behaviors and in developing social skills. Many of the parents attended the session and participated actively in the Q&A session.



## Visits and Meetings



### Karwan-E-Hayat Institute for Mental Health Care, Karachi

On 10th October 2023 Dr. Salma Khalil, COO ASDWT Karachi attended World Mental Health Day at Karwan-e-Hayat Institute for Mental Health Care. Professionals from psychology and psychiatry fields shared their views on the growing incidence of mental health in Pakistan.

### Dr. A. Q. Khan Institute of Behavioral Sciences, Karachi

On 11th October 2023 Mr. Moazzaz Ali, Clinical Psychologist ASDWT attended seminar organized by Dr. A. Q. Khan Institute of Behavioral Sciences, Karachi. Dr. Iqbal Afridi gave a comprehensive presentation on mental health issues and their treatment. Chief guest of the event Mr. Shabbar Zaidi talked about the impact of the unstable economic situation in Pakistan on the current increase in mental health issues in the country.



### Karachi Citizen's Forum at Pakistan Medical Association House

On 13th October 2023 Mr. Moazzaz Ali of ASDWT attended a seminar by Karachi Citizen's Forum at Pakistan Medical Association House. Prof. Dr. Noman, Dean Faculty of Architecture and Science, NED University gave detailed presentation on different environmental issues of Karachi and the projects that are in progress for restoration of Ecosystem.



### Jashn-E-Nur by Synapse at NAPA Karachi

Team ASDWT-Karachi attended Jashn-E-Nur event on Mental Health. Panel discussions were held in which important topics such as how small changes can make a big impact on mental well being.







## Federation of Pakistan Chambers of Commerce & Industry (FPCCI)

On 20th October 2023 Ms. Maryam Erum of ASDWT conducted an awareness session at FPCCI on Autism, ADHD and developmental delays. She provided an overview on neurodevelopmental disorders and how ABA can help in managing these disorders. Ms. Wajeeha Mujeeb and Ms. Alia Yasir facilitated the session.

## Mental Health Awareness Day, Karachi Psychiatric Hospital (KPH)

On 20th October, Mr. Moazzaz Ali of ASDWT attended Mental Health Awareness Day at KPH Clock Tower Karachi. Chief Guest Dr. Iqbal Afridi gave a comprehensive presentation on Psychiatric illnesses and their treatment.



## Noor Care Rehabilitation (NCR)

On 24<sup>th</sup> October'23 ASDWT team had a meeting with NCR representatives in Lahore. The Noor Care Rehabilitation (NCR) is the brainchild of Dr. Ali Chaudhary, EHS, UAE. It is a 60-bed hospital located in Rajanpur offering primary, secondary and tertiary health care services. ASDWT assured NCR of every support and therapies that they would require in the field of neurodevelopmental disorders.



## Boltay Huroof Conference

On 30th October, Dr. Salma Khalil and Mr. Moazzaz Ali attended a conference organized by Determined Pakistan titled "Boltay Huroof" on Vision Impairment & Blindness. A video message on the topic was given by Guest of Honor Dr. Palitha Gunarathana Mahipala, WHO Head of Mission in Pakistan. The same was replayed in the conference.

## Mehran School Malir Cantt

On 7th November 2023, Team ASDWT visited Mehran Association for Rehabilitation and Special Education Malir Cantonment, Karachi to assess facilities being offered.





### Govt. Special Education Center Nishtar Town, Lahore

Team ASDWT Lahore visited Autism Unit at Government Special Education Center in Nishtar Town, Lahore on 7th November 2023. Ms. Khaula Minhas, Deputy Director of Curriculum, Special Education, Punjab, and Ms. Sobia Asif, Principal GSEC, Nishtar Town received the Team. They conducted a tour of the first Autism Unit set up by Department of Special Education, Govt, of Punjab in the province.

### Dr. Essa Lab Karachi

On 11th November 2023 Team ASDWT Karachi held a meeting with Mr. Sami Haider, Branch Manager of Dr. Essa Lab in Korangi to discuss future Awareness Sessions for Lab employees and residents of Korangi.



### Connecting Hands

Ms. Ghazal Saleem, Remedial Therapist ASDWT, Ms. Maryam, Ms. Sumaira and Ms. Wajeaha, Internee at ASDWT visited Connecting Hands on 11th December'23. Dr. Ayesha, Founder & Occupational Therapist facilitated the visit and explained current programs available at Connecting Hands.

#### Lahore Office

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