

# Newsletter ASDWT

January to March 2025

Hello everyone!

Eid Mubarak and Season's Greetings to all of you !

Recently I came across a post on Facebook by a mother whose son has profound Autism. She said that according to a 2023 CDC study, 27% of children (1 in 4) on the Autism Spectrum have a profound condition. Yet, social and mainstream media paint them as just different geniuses and savants—the Rain Man, the Good Doctor, Young Sheldon, Temple Grandin— and no one talks about Autists who cannot speak, cannot communicate, cannot control their physical and emotional lives and need care 24/7.

The Facebook is full of parents groups which provide useful information and advice to parents. But it seems that this is just not enough. I quote from her: "...I left many autism-related Facebook groups. The conversations there weren't about the kind of autism my son has. Instead, I often felt belittled—made to feel small, like an inadequate parent.

The moms of (these) groups share incredible stories of overcoming barriers, of achievements, of ambitions that feel like distant dreams for us."

She goes on to say that not only society, but science also has failed children with profound autism as the research continues to focus on therapies and teaching methodologies for higher functioning children on the Spectrum.

Autism advocates also concentrate on mind-boggling self-analysis as was evident in this year's Neurodiversity Week celebrated online in March. Please do Google these discussions just to understand how great the chasm is within the Spectrum.

And next time you meet someone whose child has a profound condition, be kind. Open your mind and heart and embrace the caregiver.

Rukhsana Shah



## Seminars, Workshops and Webinars

### Child Welfare Centre, University of Punjab

In partnership with Special Olympics Pakistan (SOP), ASDWT Lahore held a workshop on "Mindful Parenting" at the Child Welfare Centre, University of Punjab, Lahore, on January 6, 2025 for parents of children with special needs and CWC teachers.



### Dar-ul-Shafqat, Anjuman Himayat-e-Islam

On January 7, 2025, ASDWT Lahore held an Awareness Workshop on Neurodevelopmental Disorders at Dar-ul-Shafqat, Anjuman Himayat-e-Islam, Lahore. Their management team, students, and caregivers were



### AGA Khan School Mirpur Sakro

On January 15, 2025, Team ASDWT Karachi conducted an interactive workshop at Aga Khan School, Mirpur Sakro, Sindh, focusing on Parenting Styles and Behavior Management. The sessions were facilitated by Mr. Aashique Ali at the Aga Khan School Vur campus and Mr. Moazzaz Ali at the Mirpur Sakro campus.





## Heaven Welfare Organization and the Health Environment Literacy Organization (HELO) Alipur, Muzaffargarh

An Awareness Zoom session on Neurodevelopmental Disorders was held on January 16, 2024, by ASDWT Lahore for the teachers of Heaven Welfare Organization and the Health Environment Literacy Organization (HELO) Alipur, Muzaffargarh. The diagnosis, symptoms, prognosis, and treatment of Autism, ADHD, and learning disabilities were covered in presentations by Ms. Sunehra Zaidi, health psychologist, and Ms. Ayesha Arooj, clinical psychologist ASDWT. A Q&A session and discussion on the significance of awareness in educational settings followed the session.



## Aga Khan School Kharadar, Karachi

On 18th January, 2025 Team ASDWT conducted a workshop at Aga Khan School Kharadar, Karachi. Mr. Moazzaz Ali delivered an interactive presentation on "Behavior Management of School-Age Children and Time Management for Structured Life Style". We extend our thanks to Ms. Misbah Noor, Coordinator Student Counselor, for inviting ASDWT to share its expertise in promoting the well-being of students.



## Abdullah Shah Institute Sehwan

ASDWT Karachi, conducted an awareness session on Neurodevelopmental Disorders on January 21, 2025, at the Syed Abdullah Shah Institute of Medical Sciences, (SASIMS) in Sehwan. The session was hosted by Mr. Sirajuddin Siddiqui from Future Trust and Dr. Moinuddin Siddiqui, Director of SASIMS.

The ASDWT team, including Dr. Salma Khalil, Mr. Irshad Ali, Mr. Moazzaz Ali and Mr. Aashique Ali, delivered comprehensive presentations on Autism Spectrum Disorder, Specific Learning Disorders, and ADHD. The audience included faculty and students of SASIMS, IHHN-JS, public and private colleges and schools in Sehwan, parents, and the United Medical and Allied Health Sciences Institute.



## Ghazali Foundation School Chak 78 JB, Faisalabad

On January 22, 2025 ASDWT Lahore held an Awareness Workshop on Neurodevelopmental Disorders at Ghazali School in Faisalabad. Presentations on Autism and Learning Disabilities along with classroom management were delivered and discussed at the Workshop.





## Polytechnic College Dadu

ASDWT Karachi, conducted an Awareness session on Neurodevelopmental Disorders on 22nd Jan.2025, hosted by Polytechnic College Dadu. The ASDWT team provided an overview of the prevalence, signs, symptoms, and management of Autism Spectrum Disorder, Specific Learning Disabilities, and ADHD. Importance of early diagnosis, management strategies, referral pathways, and opportunities for future collaboration was also shared with the audience which included representatives from Polytechnic College, DEPD Dadu, MERF Dadu, IHHN, IRC, KJK Organization, CDI, Government Boys Main Primary School, Government Girls Higher Secondary School, and the Social Welfare Deptt. of the Government of Sindh. Participants included teachers, social workers, humanitarian aid workers, students, lady health workers, parents, and teams from national and international NGOs.



## Gung Mahal Government Training College for Teachers of the Deaf

On February 10, 2025, Ms. Rukhsana Shah, CEO ASDWT, visited the Gung Mahal Government Training College for Teachers of the Deaf, Lahore to conduct a session on Understanding Autism. Teachers, BS Psychology students, Speech-Language Therapists, and Clinical Psychologists engaged in a meaningful discussion about autism, learning strategies, and inclusive support for neurodivergent individuals. .



## Govt. In-service Training College for the teachers of Disabled Children

ASDWT, Lahore was invited by Govt. In-service Training College for teachers of Disabled Children, on 10<sup>th</sup> February, 2025. Ms. Sunehra Zaidi gave a one-day SCERTS Model training that covered the fundamental framework, developmental stages, visual supports for communication skills and social interaction in the model with hands on practice.



## Fountain House, Lahore

ASDWT Lahore conducted a session on "Management of Challenging Behaviors" at Fountain House in Lahore on February 19, 2025. Parents of children with special needs as well as Fountain House personnel attended the session. Ms. Ayesha Arooj, Clinical Psychologist, discussed strategies for dealing with challenging behaviours in children and how the home environment can be modified to support children with special needs.

## DAMEN Pakistan Smart School

ASDWT Lahore held an awareness session on 13<sup>th</sup> February'25 at DAMEN Pakistan Smart school for underprivileged children in Chung, Lahore. Ms. Ayesha Arooj gave information about Autism spectrum disorder, discussing its challenges and support strategies. Special Educationist Mr. Muhammad Akhtar provided insight into learning disabilities by talking about classroom tactics and interventions. Ms. Sunehra Zaidi led an informative session on ADHD, highlighting behavioral patterns and management techniques. Parents and educators voiced their concerns and received expert advice during the lively Q&A that followed the lecture.





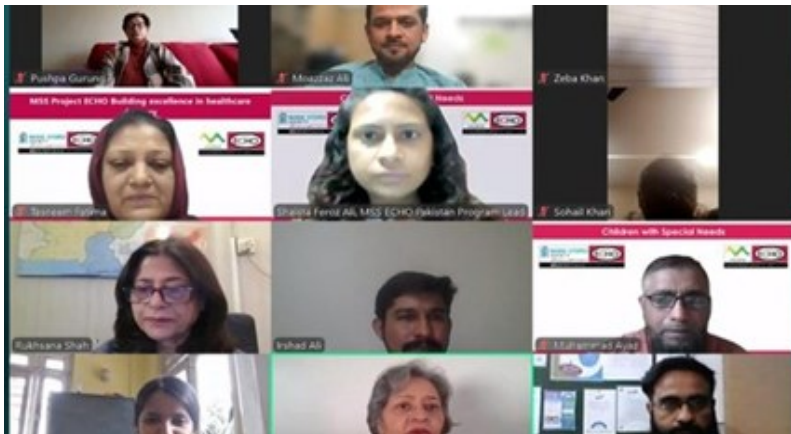


## Shah Ali Colony Tando Allahyar, AKU School Sultanabad

On 27th February 2025, a session on Parenting Styles and Structured Lifestyle was conducted at Shah Ali Colony, Tando Allahyar, for the parents of AKU School Sultanabad. The session was led by Mr. Aashique Ali of Team ASDWT Karachi.

## Autism Point Therapy Center

On February 27, 2025 ASDWT team Visited Autism Point Therapy Center, Lahore. Ms. Shakeela Sharif facilitated the visit and explained about their work. The center is providing need based therapies and remedial services.

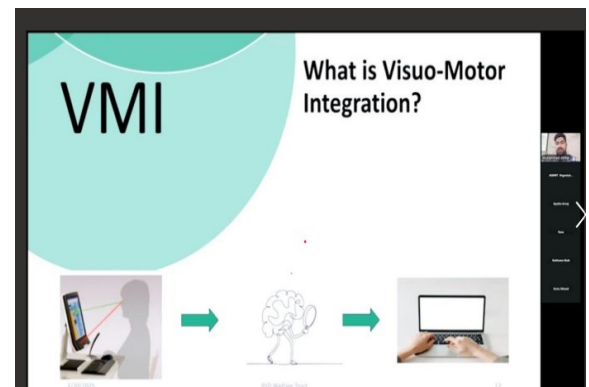


## Session with Echo

On March 7<sup>th</sup>, 2025, ASDWT held a session on Introduction to Reproductive Health for Persons with Disabilities, presented by Mr. Irshad Ali. Project ECHO is a global initiative that uses technology to connect experts with front-line health providers, empowering them with knowledge to impact their communities.

## Role of Motor Integration in Special Education- Zoom Session

On March 20, 2025, ASDWT hosted an insightful session on "Role of Visuo-Motor Integration (VMI) in Special Education" presented by Mr. Muhammad Akhtar (Special Educationist). The session focused on how VMI enhances learning and physical development in children with special needs. We extend our heartfelt gratitude to all the committed parents who joined us and made the session meaningful with their questions and inputs.



## Speech Lingua Spot

ASDWT team visited Speech Lingua Spot Lahore on 4<sup>th</sup> February review the facilities being provided especially for adults. Mr. Faizan and Mr. Hammad facilitated the visit and briefed about the organisation.



## Down Syndrome Association (PDSA)

On 24<sup>th</sup> March, 2025 team ASDWT Karachi visited Pakistan Down Syndrome Association (PDSA) in Block 13, Gulistan e Johar, Karachi. They provide formal assessment services along with therapies including, speech, occupational, Arts, Physiotherapy and Behavior and therapy free of cost. We are grateful to Mr. Shiraz Saleem (Director PDSA) for our visit.

## Means School System Bahria Town

On March 24, 2025, the ASDWT Karachi team visited The Means School System Bahria Town Karachi. The center provides formal assessment services and offers various therapies, including speech therapy, occupational therapy, physiotherapy, behavioral therapy. Additionally, they are working on vocational training as well along with educational support.



## Event at SHIFAAM

ASDWT Karachi team attended an event on Empower Ability, organized by Shifaam, a Therapy Services Centre in Karachi on February 2, 2025, to promote well-being and services for neurodivergent individuals. The event provided a good opportunity for networking with other organizations and special schools regarding future collaboration.



## National Dialogue on Inclusion

ASDWT Karachi team attended the National Dialogue on Disability Inclusion on February 20, 2025. During the event, they engaged with various organizations working for Persons with Disabilities (PWDs) and distributed ASDWT's branding materials.



## Event at Habib University

Dr. Salma Khalil and Mr. Moazzaz Ali attended the Khidmat Konnect event held at Habib University on February 8, 2025. We express our sincere gratitude to the Khidmat Committee of the Computer Science Program at the Dhanani School of Science and Engineering for extending the invitation to participate in this exhibition that provided ASDWT with an opportunity to collaborate with HU volunteers for improving our data base management capability. We look forward to further engaging with the exceptional students of the university and fostering meaningful partnerships.



## Capacity Building

On February 18-20, 2025, Team ASDWT Lahore participated in a three-day "Autism Awareness and Training Workshop" held at the Gulmohar Trade Centre organised by Ms. Fatima Shah on behalf of Organisation for Medical & Psychological Assistance Overseas (OMPACO). American academics Drs. Nilofer Naqvi and Veronica Kang gave various presentations on behavioral evaluation and intervention, classroom-based therapies, speech and language development, etiology, and assessment tools for ASD.

Ms. Ayesha Arooj completed a 6 months Speech Therapy Course from Fatima Hope and Psychological Center, Lahore in March 2025. The training was funded by ASDWT.



## Annual Conference 2025

### Training and Employment of Adults with Autism & Neurodiverse Disabilities

#### ARE YOU A DISABILITY-INCLUSIVE EMPLOYER?

##### Issues:

- Solutions for Independence & Empowerment
- Sheltered & Assisted Employment
- Talent-Support & Customized Employment
- Independent Employment
- Self-Employment
- SAP (India)
- Microsoft, Hewlett Packard
- Spelsterne
- Tele companies
- Shopping Malls
- Libraries
- Banks and Corporate Sector

##### Agenda:

- Inclusive HR policies of employers
- Current opportunities for Vocational Training in Pakistan
- Pre skills Assessment & Capacity Building
- Employability Skills Training (EST) programmes
- Training of Job Coaches
- Role of Employers in Job Placement and Sustainability
- Way forward for All Stakeholders

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION, PLEASE CONTACT ASDWT LAHORE

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