



## ANNUAL REPORT 2025 – Autism Surveillance and Management, Autism Without Borders (ASM AWB)

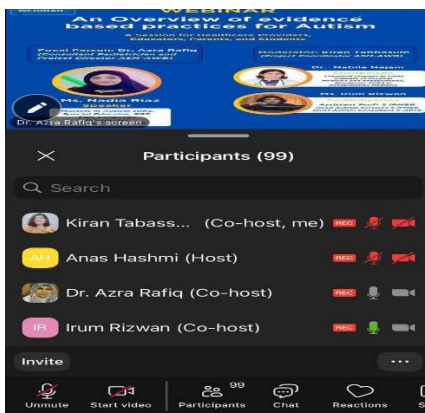
In 2025, Autism Without Borders (AWB) continued its impactful work by engaging parents, educators, healthcare providers, and communities through workshops, webinars, training programs, and outreach initiatives. 400 children benefited from free autism screenings and developmental assessments at well-baby clinics in Karachi, facilitating early identification and tailored interventions for children at risk of autism and other neurodevelopmental conditions. Through national and regional collaborations, AWB advanced its mission of fostering a well-informed, inclusive society that supports the growth, rights, and potential of individuals on the autism spectrum.

### AUTISM Key Events & Milestones in 2025

#### ➤ JANUARY

#### ***January 05 – An Overview of Evidence-Based Practices in Autism: (Dr Azra Rafiq, Ms. Nadia Riaz, Dr Nabila Soomro, Ms. Irum Rizwan)***

Autism Without Borders conducted a free awareness and capacity-building webinar attended by 100 professionals, parents, and caregivers. The session focused on evidence-based practices in autism and the importance of early screening and intervention. Dr. Azra Rafiq emphasized early identification and timely support, while Ms. Nadia Riaz discussed autism overview, early signs, and individualized, neurodiverse-affirming strategies. Dr. Nabila Soomro and Ms. Irum Rizwan shared expert insights on multidisciplinary care addressing the physical, emotional, and social needs of individuals with autism, highlighting the need for future collaborative initiatives to support children and families.



**January 11- ASM-AWB Quetta Chapter Session on Impact of Digital Media on Behavior and Brain Function: (Ms. Uzma Gilani-Project Coordinator Quetta Chapter)**

A session was delivered by Uzma Gilani at Alkhidmat Hospital, Quetta, on the “Impact of Digital Media on Behavior and Brain Function. The session highlighted the physical, mental, and neurological effects of excessive screen time in children and adults, including obesity, sleep disturbances, anxiety, and reduced cognitive functioning. Evidence-based strategies for balanced media use were discussed, such as screen time limits, physical activity, co-viewing, and tech-free zones. The interactive session encouraged participant engagement and generated interest in follow-up workshops on media literacy and parenting.



➤ **APRIL**

**April 19- Provinces of Pakistan Supporting Autistic Individuals: (Dr Azra Rafiq, Ms. Nadia Riaz, Prof Dr Aisha Mehnaz, Ms. Uroosa Ali, Ms. Shams un-Nisa, and Ms. Aliya Batool)**

Autism Without Borders organized a webinar on autism support services across Pakistan, highlighting regional challenges and future directions. Moderated by Ms. Nadia Riaz, the session featured Dr. Azra Rafiq and experts from Punjab, KPK, Balochistan, and Sindh, who shared insights on existing services, government initiatives, and service gaps. Panelists emphasized parent support, child-centered care, rural outreach, early intervention, professional collaboration, and awareness as key priorities for strengthening autism services nationwide.





➤ **MAY**

***May 17- Caring for Caregivers & Challenges for Caregivers: (Dr Azra Rafiq, Dr Mumtaz Lakhani, Dr. Maheen, Ms. Aliya Batool, Ms. Uzma Gilani, Ms. Qundeel Faizan, Ms. Maha Farhan, and Ms. Hina Erum)***

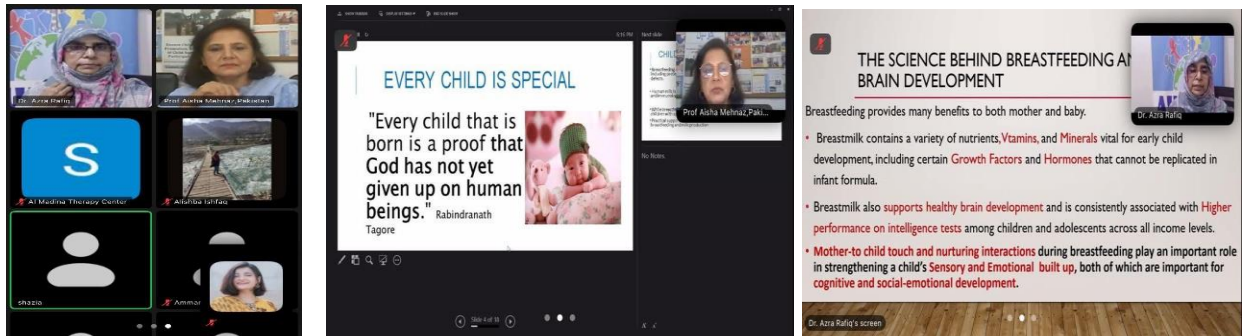
Autism Without Borders hosted a webinar focused on caregiver well-being, self-care, and emotional balance. Dr. Azra Rafiq highlighted AWB's objectives, Ms. Aliya Batool spoke on self-care and boundaries, Dr. Maheen addressed psychological challenges and coping strategies, and a panel of mothers Ms. Uzma Gilani, Ms. Qundeel Faizan, Ms. Maha Farhan, and Ms. Hina Erum shared personal experiences. The session provided an empowering space for guidance and support.



➤ **AUGUST**

***August 09-Breastfeeding and Special Needs Children: Benefits of Human Milk in Neurodevelopment: (Dr. Azra Rafiq, Prof. Dr. Aisha Mehnaz, Prof. Dr. Amatuallah Zareen, Prof. Dr. Shumaila Sharif, Dr. Shazia Soomro, and Dr. Farzana Saeed)***

In a webinar on early nutrition and breastfeeding, Dr. Azra Rafiq highlighted the importance of the first 1,000 days and benefits of exclusive breastfeeding for all children, including premature and low-birth-weight infants. Prof. Dr. Aisha Mehnaz addressed misconceptions for children with conditions like cerebral palsy, Down syndrome, and autism. A panel of experts Prof. Dr. Amatuallah Zareen, Prof. Dr. Shumaila Sharif, Dr. Shazia Soomro, and Dr. Farzana Saeed shared guidance on counseling, medical precautions, and practical strategies, making the session highly informative and beneficial.



**August 15- Independence Day Free Medical Camp:**

On Independence Day, Autism Without Borders organized a free medical camp at Karachi Medical Complex, providing autism screening, developmental assessments, and consultations. Led by Dr. Azra Rafiq and Kiran Tabbasum, with support from Prof. Dr. Nighat Mannan and Fatima Mahjabeen, the camp highlighted AWB’s commitment to early detection and family support.



**August 17- Webinar on Home-Based Activities for Speech, Language, and Behavior: (Ms. Nida Shabbir, Dr. Azra Rafiq, Ms. Qundeel)**

A webinar on Home-Based Activities guided parents on practical, cost-effective techniques using household items to support children’s speech, language, behavior, and cognitive skills. Ms. Nida Shabbir shared strategies for behavioral challenges, Dr. Azra Rafiq highlighted speech and communication disorders, and Ms. Qundeel shared personal experiences. The session also included insights from Sir Naushad Shaukat.



➤ **SEPTEMBER**

***September 09- AWB's Official Visit to AUN Institute: Fostering Partnership for Special Needs Support: (Dr. Azra Rafiq, Kiran Tabbasum, Dr. Muzaffer, and Dr. Najeeb, Chairperson Muhammad Hafeezuddin Asif and Administrator Ms. Shabana)***

The Autism Without Borders (AWB) team including Dr. Azra Rafiq, Kiran Tabbasum, Dr. Muzaffer and Dr. Najeeb, visited the AUN Institute of Special Education, Khuda Ki Basti, led by Chairperson Muhammad Hafeezuddin Asif and Administrator Ms. Shabana. AWB presented its Autism Surveillance & Management (ASM) Project, while AUN showcased its inclusive education model with free admissions and comprehensive services. The visit highlighted AUN's impact in an underprivileged area and established plans for future collaboration.



***September 18 – AWB X AUN Institute Collaboration Meeting: (Dr. Azra Rafiq, Mr. M.H. Asif, Sir Naushad Shaukat, Dr. Muzaffer, Dr. Najeeb, Ms. Nida Shabbir, and Ms. Nazia)***

Autism Without Borders (AWB) held an official meeting at its Head Office, Karachi Medical Complex with the AUN Institute to plan collaborative efforts for children with special needs. Key participants included Dr. Azra Rafiq, Mr. M.H. Asif, Sir Naushad Shaukat, Dr. Muzaffer, Dr. Najeeb, Ms. Nida Shabbir, and Ms. Nazia. Discussions focused on early intervention, community awareness, and training for parents, caregivers, and educators, with agreements to conduct early screenings, regular checkups, and joint awareness activities to support timely care.



➤ **OCTOBER**

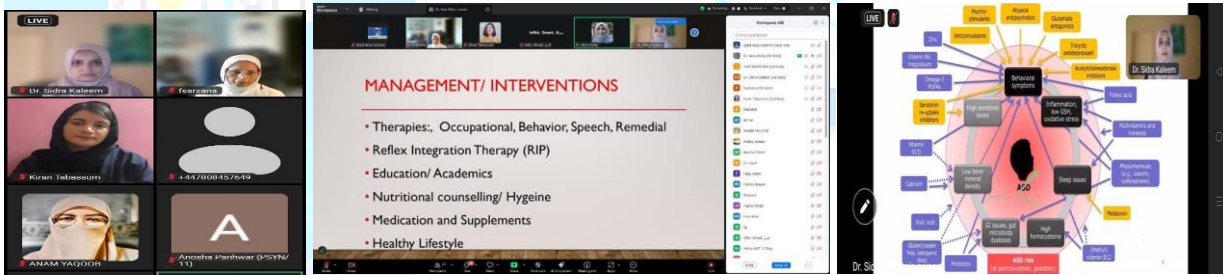
***October 02 AWB–DWA Collaborative Meeting:***

Autism Without Borders (AWB) convened a meeting with the Disabled Welfare Association (DWA) at its Head Office, Karachi Medical Complex to strengthen collaboration for the welfare of persons with disabilities. Representatives from both organizations discussed early intervention, rehabilitation services, community awareness, and capacity-building for parents and caregivers. Both AWB and DWA committed to a joint action plan to ensure timely support, inclusive opportunities, and empowerment for individuals with disabilities.



***October 04 - Let's Talk About Autism Updates: Myths and Facts about Nutrition, Supplements, Vaccines, and Medicines: (Dr. Azra Rafiq, Dr. Sidra Kaleem, Dr. Aisha Mehnaz, Dr. Farzana Saeed, and Dr. Salma Rehman)***

Autism Without Borders organized a webinar featuring Dr. Azra Rafiq and Dr. Sidra Kaleem, who addressed common autism misconceptions using evidence-based practices. The panel, including Dr. Aisha Mehnaz, Dr. Farzana Saeed, and Dr. Salma Rehman, responded to participants' questions from professionals, parents, and caregivers. The session was informative, engaging, and practical, providing valuable insights for daily practice and care.



***October 18 AWB X DWA Partnership for Inclusive Healthcare:***

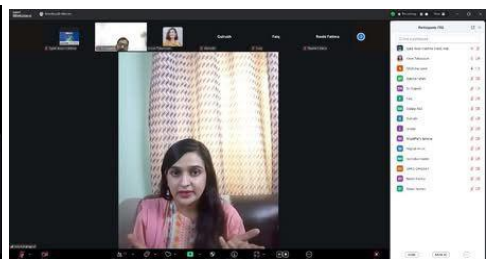
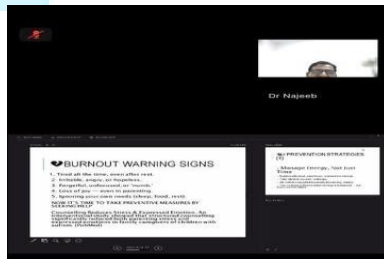
Autism Without Borders (AWB), a project of Karachi Medical Complex, signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with the Disabled Welfare Association (DWA), Pakistan to enhance inclusive healthcare and community support for persons with disabilities. Through this partnership, registered DWA members will access discounted laboratory services via Advanced A Lab, Health Visa facilities, and consultations with AWB doctors, including the Chief Medical Officer, ENT specialist, and Pediatrician. The collaboration underscores AWB's commitment to accessible, compassionate care and improved well-being through the Lifetime Health Visa Program.



➤ **NOVEMBER**

***November 08 - Preventing Burnout among Mothers of children with special needs: (Dr. Najeeb, Ms. Nida Shabbir)***

Autism Without Borders held a webinar on preventing burnout among mothers of children with special needs, focusing on emotional well-being and self-care. Dr. Najeeb discussed causes, signs, and impacts of burnout, while Ms. Nida Shabbir shared strategies to build self-esteem, resilience, and stress management. The interactive session provided a supportive space for learning and reflection.



## ➤ DECEMBER

### ***December 04- Autism Without Borders celebrates Children's Day 2025 - Free Medical Clinic and Awareness Session at Bright Success Schooling System: (Dr. Najeeb and Kiran Tabbasum)***

A webinar on preventing burnout among mothers of children with special needs, focusing on emotional well-being and self-care. Dr. Najeeb discussed causes, signs, and impacts of burnout, while Ms. Nida Shabbir shared strategies to build self-esteem, resilience, and stress management. The interactive session provided a supportive space for learning and reflection.



### ***December 04- Participation in Disability Legislation Workshop***

Autism Without Borders participated in a consultative workshop on gender-sensitive gaps in the Sindh Disability Empowerment Act, 2018 at the Pakistan Independent Living Centre on 4th December. Dr. Najeeb, representing AWB, contributed to the Education and Skill Development session, highlighting challenges for individuals with autism, gaps in inclusive education, limited skill opportunities, and the need for early support and practical inclusion programs.





***December 08-Prevention of Disabilities in Children at Markaz-e-Umeed (Dr. Azra Rafiq)***

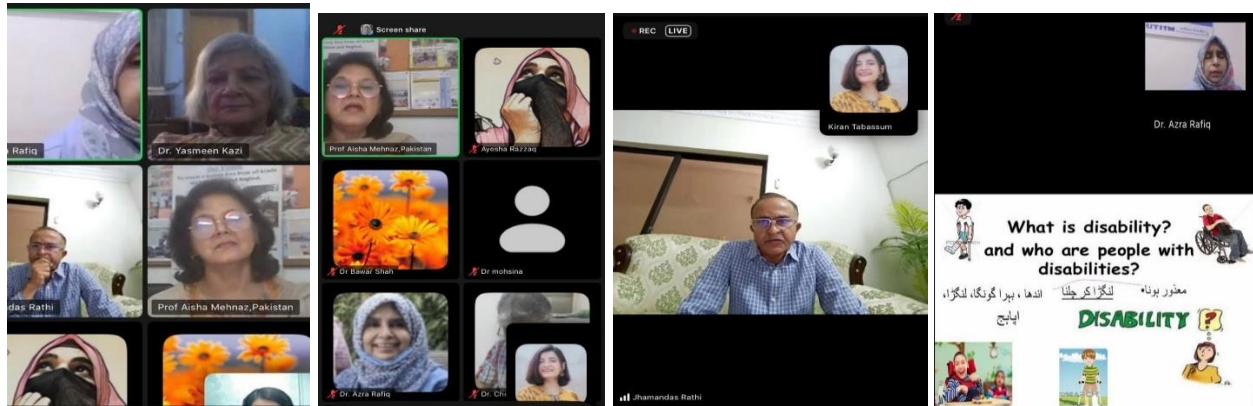
An interactive session for staff and parents at Markaz-e-Umeed by Dr. Azra Rafiq. she discussed the causes, management, and prevention of disabilities in children in an easy-to-understand way. Participants, including several mothers, actively engaged, and the article “100% of the World’s Population is Special” was shared. Special thanks to Sir Zeeshan Siddiqui for his support. Participants appreciated the session and encouraged continuation of such awareness activities.



***December 20 – Building an Inclusive Society: Equity and Child Disability Prevention: AWB X KONPAL X ASDWT (Prof. Dr. Yasmeen Qazi, Dr. Azra Rafiq, Dr. Aisha Mehnaz, Mr. Jhamandas Rathi and Kiran Tabbasum)***

A session organized by Autism Without Borders in collaboration with KONPAL and ASDWT for healthcare providers and caregivers, chaired by Prof. Dr. Yasmeen Qazi, with expert talks by Dr. Azra Rafiq, Dr. Aisha Mehnaz, and Mr. Jhamandas Rathi. The session highlighted the causes of childhood disabilities, levels of prevention, the importance of early identification and

management, and the collective role of healthcare professionals and society in promoting equity, inclusion, and the rights of children with diverse abilities, followed by an interactive Q&A session.



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## Ongoing Free Well-Baby Clinics & Autism Screenings

Beyond its major initiatives, Autism Without Borders (AWB) continues to offer free well-baby clinics and autism screening services at Karachi Medical Complex for children from birth to 5 years and older. These clinics provide autism screening, growth monitoring, developmental assessments, parent guidance, and referrals for early intervention, ensuring timely identification and support.

Over the year, AWB conducted more than 50 webinars and educational sessions, engaging parents, teachers, and healthcare professionals across a variety of settings. This work reflects AWB's ongoing commitment to expanding outreach, strengthening support systems, and raising awareness, with the goal of fostering a more inclusive and supportive society for children with autism and neurodevelopmental differences.