



NEWSLETTER

AUTISM SURVEILLANCE AND MANAGEMENT AUTISM WITHOUT BORDERS



JANUARY TO DECEMBER, 2025



AWB's Impact in 2025: Expanding Awareness, Early Screening, and Inclusion



In 2025, Autism Without Borders (AWB) strengthened engagement with parents, educators, and healthcare professionals through workshops, webinars, and outreach initiatives. AWB conducted free autism screenings and developmental assessments for over 400 children, supporting early identification and timely intervention. Through national and regional collaborations, AWB advanced its mission to foster an informed, inclusive society for individuals on the autism spectrum.

Message from Project Director, Dr AZRA RAFIQ

(Consultant Pediatrician, Community Health Educator, Working in Thalassemia Care Center)

Every child has unique abilities, and differences should never be seen as limitations. Early identification and timely intervention play a vital role in helping children with autism and other developmental challenges reach their full potential. At Autism Without Borders, we stand beside families to ensure they never feel alone. By working together with parents, educators, healthcare professionals, and communities, we continue to build inclusive systems because an inclusive Pakistan is not just a vision, it is our shared responsibility.

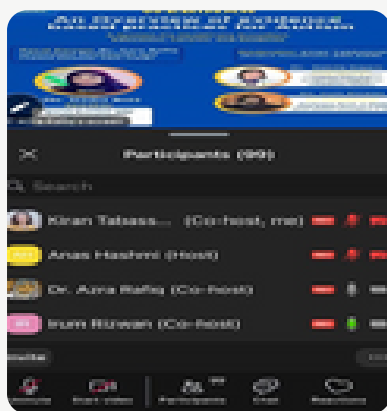
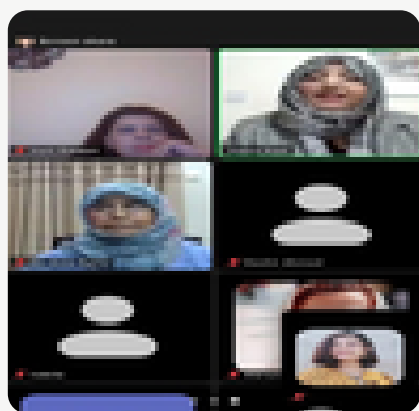


January-05

Webinar On “An Overview of Evidence-Based Practices in Autism”

Speakers: *Dr Azra Rafiq, Ms. Nadia Riaz, Dr Nabila Soomro, Ms. Irum Rizwan*

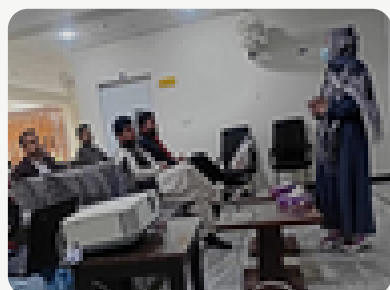
Autism Without Borders organized a free awareness and capacity building webinar, attended by **over 100** professionals, parents, and caregivers. The session emphasized evidence-based autism practices, with a strong focus on early screening, timely intervention, and multidisciplinary collaboration to enhance support for children with autism and their families.



January-05

ASM-AWB Quetta Chapter Session on Impact of Digital Media on Behavior and Brain Function

Speaker: *Ms. Uzma Gilani-Project Coordinator Quetta Chapter*



A session on the “Impact of Digital Media on Behavior and Brain Function” was delivered by Uzma Gilani at Alkhidmat Hospital, Quetta. The session highlighted the physical, mental, and neurological effects of excessive screen time, and discussed evidence-based strategies for balanced media use, generating strong participant engagement and interest in future workshops.

April-19

Webinar on Provinces of Pakistan Supporting Autistic Individuals

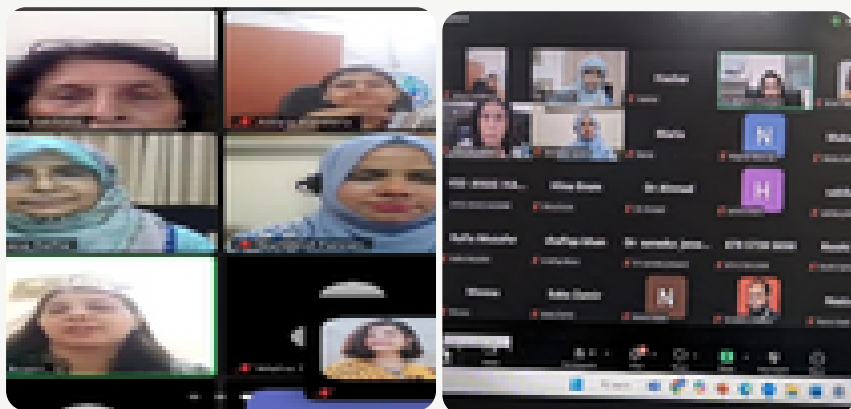
Speakers : *(Dr Azra Rafiq, Ms. Nadia Riaz, Prof Dr Aisha Mehnaz, Ms. Uroosa Ali, Ms. Shams un-Nisa, and Ms. Aliya Batool, Uzma Gilani, Dr Gul Sanam, Eng, Jhamandas Rathi, Hummayun Kamran)*

A webinar on autism support services across Pakistan, attended by participants from diverse professional backgrounds, including children caregiver and healthcare professionals, highlighting regional challenges and future directions. Experts from Punjab, KPK, Balochistan, and Sindh emphasized the need for early intervention, parent support, rural outreach, professional collaboration, and increased awareness to strengthen autism services nationwide.

May-17

Webinar on Caring for Caregivers & Challenges for Caregivers:

Speakers: Dr Azra Rafiq, Dr Mumtaz Lakhani, Dr. Maheen, Ms. Aliya Batool, Ms. Uzma Gilani, Ms. Qundeel Faizan, Ms. Maha Farhan, and Ms. Hina Erum



AWB hosted a webinar on caregiver well-being, self-care, and emotional balance. Experts shared tips on self-care, setting boundaries, and coping strategies, while a panel of

mothers discussed their personal experiences. The session provided a supportive and empowering space for caregivers to learn and connect.

August-09

Webinar on Breastfeeding and Special Needs Children: Benefits of Human Milk in Neurodevelopment:

Speaker : (Dr. Azra Rafiq, Prof. Dr. Aisha Mehnaz, Prof. Dr. Amatuallah Zareen, Prof. Dr. Shumaila Sharif, Dr. Shazia Soomro, and Dr. Farzana Saed)

EVERY CHILD IS SPECIAL

"Every child that is born is a proof that God has not yet given up on human beings." Rabindranath Tagore

THE SCIENCE BEHIND BREASTFEEDING AND BRAIN DEVELOPMENT

Breastfeeding provides many benefits to both mother and baby.

- Breastmilk contains a variety of nutrients, Vitamins, and Minerals vital for early child development, including certain Growth Factors and Hormones that cannot be replicated in infant formula.
- Breastmilk also supports healthy brain development and is consistently associated with Higher performance on intelligence tests among children and adolescents across all income levels.
- Mother-to child touch and nurturing interactions during breastfeeding play an important role in strengthening a child's Sensory and Emotional built up, both of which are important for cognitive and social-emotional development.

A webinar on early nutrition and breastfeeding highlighted the importance of the first 1,000 days and the benefits of exclusive breastfeeding, including for premature and low-birth-weight infants. Experts addressed misconceptions for children with special needs and shared practical guidance, medical tips, and counseling strategies, making the session highly informative for parents and caregivers.

August-15

Independence Day Free Medical Camp at Karachi Medical Complex

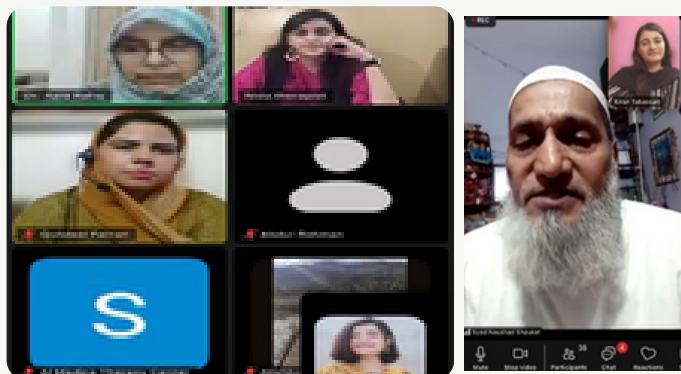
AWB organized a free medical camp at Karachi Medical Complex, offering autism screening, developmental assessments, and consultations. Led by Dr. Azra Rafiq and Kiran Tabbasum, with support from Prof. Dr. Nighat Mannan and Fatima Mahjabeen.



August-17

Webinar on Home-Based Activities for Speech, Language, and Behavior:

Speakers: Ms. Nida Shabbir, Dr. Azra Rafiq, Ms. Qundeel

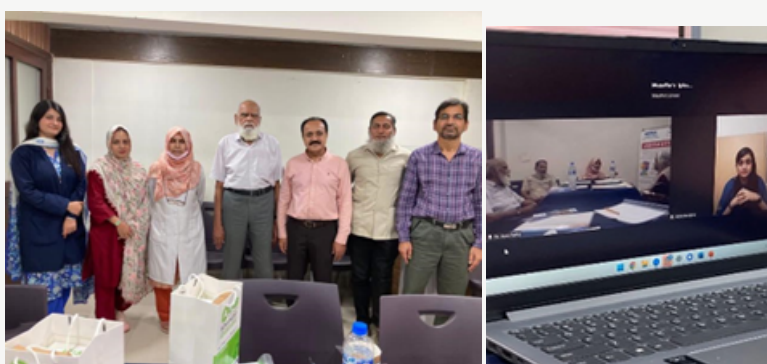


A webinar on Home-Based Activities guided parents on practical, cost-effective ways to support children’s speech, language, behavior, and cognitive skills. Ms. Nida Shabbir discussed strategies for behavioral challenges, Dr. Azra Rafiq highlighted speech and communication support, and Ms. Qundeel shared personal experiences, with additional insights from Sir Naushad Shaukat.

September-09

AWB’s Official Visit to AUN Institute: Fostering Partnership for Special Needs Support

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



September-18

AWB X AUN Institute Collaboration Meeting

(AWB) held an official meeting at its Head Office, Karachi Medical Complex, with the AUN Institute to plan joint initiatives for children with special needs. Key participants included Dr. Azra Rafiq, Mr. M.H. Asif, Sir Naushad Shaukat, and others. Discussions focused on early intervention, community awareness, and training for parents and educators, with plans for early screenings, regular checkups, and collaborative awareness activities.



October-02

AWB-DWA Collaborative Meeting



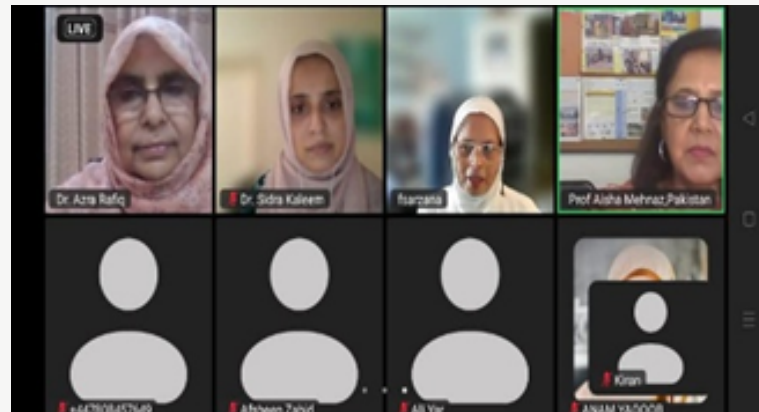
AWB team met with the Disabled Welfare Association (DWA) team at its Karachi Medical Complex office to strengthen collaboration for persons with disabilities. The meeting focused on early intervention, rehabilitation, community awareness, and caregiver support, with both organizations committing to a joint action plan for timely support and empowerment.

October-04

Let's Talk About Autism Updates: Myths and Facts about Nutrition, Supplements, Vaccines, and Medicines

Speakers: Dr. Azra Rafiq, Dr. Sidra Kaleem, Dr. Aisha Mehnaz, Dr. Farzana Saeed, and Dr. Salma Rehman

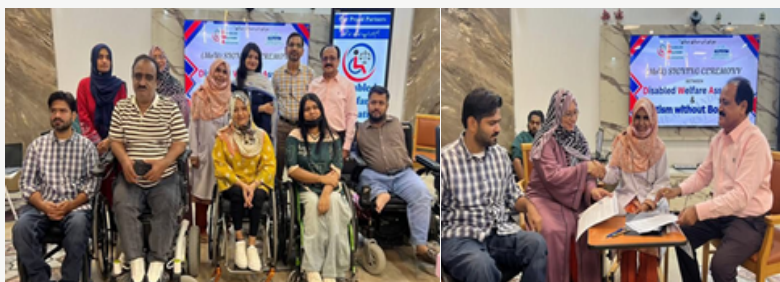
AWB hosted a webinar where Dr. Azra Rafiq and Dr. Sidra Kaleem addressed common autism misconceptions using evidence-based practices. A panel of experts responded to questions from professionals, parents, and caregivers, making the session informative, practical, and engaging.



October-18

AWB X DWA Partnership for Inclusive Healthcare:

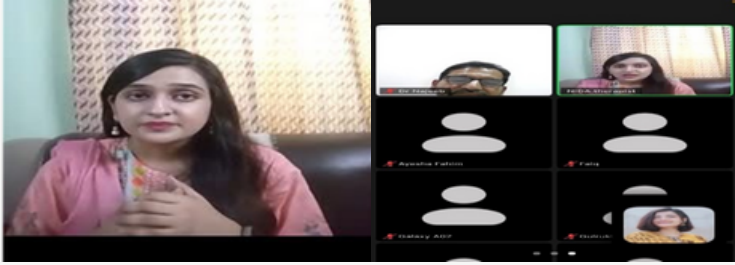
Autism Without Borders, a project of Karachi Medical Complex, signed an MoU with the Disabled Welfare Association (DWA), Pakistan to promote inclusive healthcare and community support. The partnership provides DWA members with discounted lab services, Health Visa facilities, and consultations with AWB doctors, highlighting AWB's commitment to accessible and compassionate care through the Lifetime Health Visa Program.



November-08

Webinar on Preventing Burnout among Mothers of children with special needs:

Speakers: Ms. Nida Shabbir, Dr Najeeb



Awb hosted a webinar on preventing burnout among mothers of children with special needs, focusing on emotional well-being and self-care. Experts discussed signs of burnout, coping strategies, and stress management, providing a supportive and informative space for participants.

December-04

Autism Without Borders celebrates Children's Day 2025 – Free Medical Clinic and Awareness Session at Bright Success Schooling System



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

Awb participated in a consultative workshop on gender-sensitive gaps in the Sindh Disability Empowerment Act, 2018, held at the Pakistan Independent Living Centre on 4 December. Representing AWB, Dr. Najeeb highlighted challenges faced by individuals with autism, including gaps in inclusive education, skill development, and early support.



December-08

Session on Prevention of Disabilities in Children at Markaz-e-Umeed

Speaker : Dr Azra Rafiq



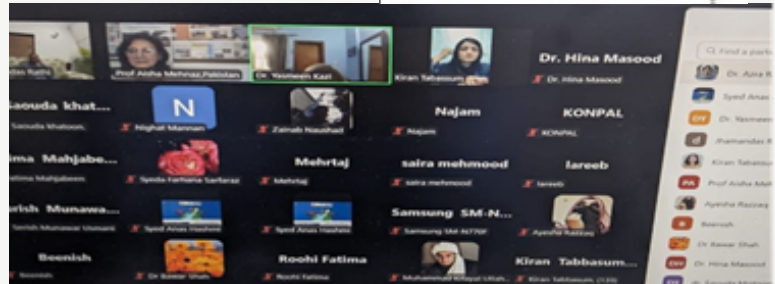
An interactive awareness session was conducted by Dr. Azra Rafiq at Markaz-e-Umeed for staff and parents. She discussed the causes, management, and prevention of disabilities in children in a simple and engaging manner. Participants actively took part, appreciated the session, and encouraged the continuation of such awareness activities, with special thanks to Sir Zeeshan Siddiqui for his support.

December-04

Webinar on Building an Inclusive Society: Equity and Child Disability Prevention: AWB X KONPAL X ASDWT

Speakers: Prof. Dr. Yasmeen Qazi, Dr. Azra Rafiq, Dr. Aisha Mehnaz, Mr. Jhamandas Rathi and Kiran Tabbasum

AWB in collaboration with KONPAL and ASDWT, organized a session for healthcare providers and caregivers, chaired by Prof. Dr. Yasmeen Qazi. The session focused on early identification, prevention of childhood disabilities, and promoting inclusion and children's rights, followed by an interactive Q&A.



Ongoing Free Well-Baby Clinics & Autism Screenings

Autism without border continues its free clinics and autism screenings and plans more webinars and outreach programs to expand support, raise awareness, and promote early identification and inclusive care for children with autism and neurodevelopmental differences.

Get Involved!

Looking to be part of the Autism Without Borders team?
Visit our website or get in touch with us to join and make a difference.



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<http://autismwithoutborders.ca/>