



Project Report: 2024 Vocational Training Institute
Project Name: Diploma in Family Mental Health
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A Vocational Training Institute offering a Diploma in Systematic Family Mental Health was created in 2019 by the Society for Pre and Post Natal Services (SPANS). The goal of this program is to provide graduates with both the skills and knowledge essential to work as qualified family therapists. The effectiveness of the diploma, the changes it has brought about, its benefits, and its influence on families, communities, and the health system are all assessed in this paper.

The ultimate objective of the Diploma in Systemic Family Therapy and Family Developmental Counselling in Maternal, Paternal, and Child Mental Health program is to generate graduates who are capable of working with a wide range of clients, self-assured, and well-versed in Counselling theory and practice. In close partnerships, systemic family therapy and family developmental Counselling facilitate mutual understanding and support. It makes it possible for people and family members to safely express and explore challenging ideas and feelings, to comprehend one another's perspectives and experiences, to recognize one another's needs, to capitalize on the strengths of the family, and to collaborate to create positive, long-lasting changes in their lives and relationships. It has been discovered that Systemic Family Therapy and Family Developmental Counselling are beneficial for children, adolescents, adults, couples, and families dealing with a wide range of issues and situations throughout the life course.

This year, a number of students managed to graduate; the initiative's effectiveness was demonstrated by the fact that the institute was able to send 68 students on attachment in the country's ten provinces between January and September 2024, in accordance with the memorandum of understanding signed between SPANS and the Ministry of Health and Child Care.

Students in the course attended intensive tutorials for many weeks at a time, followed by periods of individual study, all of which were performed on a block release basis during the academic year. The training program lasts for two years. Along with notes to help them study, students were evaluated in class, through assignments, through group projects, and at the conclusion of each session with block exams. The tests were designed in order to gauge the students' proficiency in using Counselling approaches to address various mental health concerns.

Benefits of the Diploma Program

Specialized Training: The program contains modules specifically centered on maternal and perinatal mental health, giving therapists the skills they need to handle problems including anxiety, postpartum depression, and trouble bonding.

Holistic Approach: The program places a strong emphasis on a family-centered approach, acknowledging that the mental health of mothers impacts the entire family, not just the mother.

-Effective counselling strategies designed specifically for expecting and new moms are taught to graduates, equipping them with the knowledge and empathy needed to offer supportive guidance to these vulnerable individuals.

Impact on Perinatal Mental Health

Informed Caregiver Support

Extensive Training: The diploma program offers a thorough education on the importance of perinatal mental health, including subjects such as the psychological changes that take place throughout pregnancy and the postpartum phase. With this knowledge, therapists are better equipped to identify the unique emotional and mental health issues—such as, distress, sadness, and mood disorders and other common mental health problems—that expectant moms may experience.

Tailored Support Strategies: In order to develop individualized support programs, therapists must first learn to evaluate the particular needs of every woman and her family. This could include postpartum adjustment techniques, birth-related anxieties, and stress management techniques during pregnancy.

Partnership with Healthcare Professionals: To guarantee a comprehensive approach to prenatal treatment, licensed therapists frequently collaborate with paediatricians, midwives, and obstetricians. This partnership makes it easier to communicate about the mother's mental health, ensuring she receives comprehensive care that addresses both physical and emotional well-being.

Promoting Healthy Relationships

Partner Involvement: By focusing on family dynamics, therapists can help improve relationships between partners, creating a more supportive environment for the mother and fostering emotional stability.

Conflict Resolution: Therapists are trained in conflict resolution techniques, equipping families to navigate disagreements in a constructive manner, thereby reducing stress.

Resource Provision

Connecting Families to Services: Graduates often play a key role in connecting families with additional resources, such as support groups, educational workshops, and community services, enhancing overall perinatal mental health.

Referral Networks: They establish referral networks with healthcare providers and community organizations, ensuring families have access to comprehensive support.

I am pleased to present this report, which highlights our ongoing initiatives and partnerships aimed at improving perinatal mental and health education, with a particular focus on perinatal period for mothers during their routine antenatal and post natal check-ups. I am the Team Leader of the SPANS (Society for Pre and Post Natal Services) program. Our goal is to meet the physical and mental health needs of expectant mothers and their families by offering them all-encompassing care throughout this time.

Mental Health and Health Education

Integrating health education, with a focus on mental health in particular, into prenatal care is one of our main goals. It is critical that we address the psychological difficulties that many mothers face during pregnancy and the postpartum period. We provide moms with knowledge and coping mechanisms by providing focused mental health education during regular check-ups, empowering them to more effectively manage the psychological and emotional strains of this crucial period.

Counselling for Social Issues

In addition to mental health support, our program recognizes the importance of counselling for social issues that arise within the perinatal period and for women of reproductive age. Many mothers face social challenges such as domestic violence, financial instability, and lack of support systems. Our trained family therapists provide a safe space for these mothers to discuss their concerns, facilitating access to ongoing family therapy sessions coupled with subsequent sessions and make timely referral and continued support after other mental health professionals refer the clients back to family therapists and support networks that can significantly improve their well-being.

Partnership with the National AIDS Council

A key aspect of our program is our partnership with the National AIDS Council, which has been instrumental in our efforts to combat the spread of HIV. Through this collaboration, SPANS has been provided with HIV self-testing kits, making it easier for mothers to get tested and know their status. This initiative aligns with our goal of achieving the 95-95-95 targets: 95% of people living with HIV knowing their status, 95% of those diagnosed receiving sustained antiretroviral therapy, and 95% of those on treatment achieving viral suppression. We believe that by integrating HIV education and testing into our program, we can significantly reduce the stigma surrounding the disease and encourage more individuals to seek testing and treatment.

Incorporating Nutrition into Mental Health

Finally, our commitment to holistic health includes the integration of nutrition into our mental health initiatives. We understand that proper nutrition plays a vital role in both physical and mental well-being. Through joint participation with nutritionists and mental health professionals, we are developing programs that educate mothers on the importance of a balanced diet and its direct impact on mental health. This collaborative approach not only supports the physical health of mothers and their children but also promotes emotional resilience and stability.

In conclusion, the SPANS program is dedicated to enhancing health education, providing essential counseling, and fostering valuable partnerships to support mothers

during the perinatal period. Our family approach that is holistic approach, which encompasses mental health, social issues, HIV awareness, and nutrition, positions us to make a significant impact in the lives of mothers and families. We are committed to continuing our efforts and expanding our reach to ensure that every mother receives the comprehensive care and support she deserves.