



ITEC- TISS Programme
On
“Drug de-addiction and rehabilitation for health workers”

In Collaboration with
Indian Technical and Economic Cooperation Programme, ITEC
Ministry of External Affairs, Government of India

Hosted by
Office for International Affairs
Tata Institute of Social Sciences

Introduction

Substance abuse and drug addiction have emerged as one of the most pressing public health and social challenges globally, with significant implications for individuals, families, and communities. In recent years, the increase in the use of alcohol, tobacco, opioids, synthetic drugs, and other substances has led to a surge in physical and mental health complications, social instability, and economic burdens. The World Health Organisation (WHO) recognises substance use disorders (SUDS) as chronic, relapsing conditions that require comprehensive medical, psychological, and social interventions.

In many low- and middle-income countries, including those in the South and Southeast Asian regions, the health systems are often under-equipped to deal with the complex needs of individuals affected by substance use. Compounding this challenge is the lack of trained human resources, particularly at the community and primary healthcare levels, who are equipped to identify early warning signs, provide brief interventions, offer basic counselling, and refer patients to specialised care when needed.

The stigma surrounding drug use further prevents individuals and families from seeking help, leading to delayed treatment, poor recovery outcomes, and social exclusion. Addressing these issues requires a multi-pronged approach that includes public education, policy reform, community-based support systems, and, crucially, capacity building of health workers.

Health workers are strategically positioned to play a transformative role in the prevention and treatment of substance use disorders. They are often the first point of contact in the healthcare system and are trusted figures within their communities. When equipped with the right knowledge, skills, and attitudes, they can serve as effective agents of change, supporting individuals in their recovery journey while educating families and communities on the importance of compassionate, stigma-free care.

This proposed 14-day training programme responds to this urgent need by providing a structured learning experience that empowers health workers with a nuanced understanding of drug addiction, its biopsychosocial dimensions, and the most effective intervention and rehabilitation strategies. The course is particularly timely given the global and regional push towards integrated and community-based mental health and addiction services. With governments increasingly recognizing addiction as a public health issue rather than a moral failing or criminal act, there is a clear policy momentum that needs to be matched with grassroots-level capacity building.

By strengthening the competencies of frontline health workers, this programme aims to improve access to de-addiction services and foster inclusive rehabilitation ecosystems that prioritise dignity, empowerment, and long-term well-being.

Course Objectives:

1. To equip health workers with essential knowledge on types and effects of substance abuse
2. To develop skills in early detection, screening, and brief intervention
3. To train participants in basic counselling and rehabilitation approaches
4. To build capacity for community outreach, awareness generation, and stigma reduction
5. To encourage ethical and rights-based care for individuals with addiction

Key Modules:

1. Understanding Addiction and Substance Use Disorders
2. Causes, Risk Factors, and Vulnerabilities
3. Identification, Screening Tools, and Referral Pathways
4. Basic Counselling and Communication Skills
5. Psychosocial Interventions and Group Work
6. Rehabilitation and Reintegration Models
7. Community Awareness and Outreach Strategies
8. Legal Frameworks and Ethical Considerations
9. Field Exposure, Reflections, and Action Planning

The modules will focus on different frameworks/models, Pharmacology classification of drugs and their symptoms, Trajectory of drugs in respective countries, Substance use across communities, Decriminalisation (Safe injection sites, cannabis), Impact of Substance abuse on health (blood-borne diseases, Health care workers' stigma and Data collection strategies.

Dates and Duration

Date: 4th March to 17th March 2026

Duration: 14 days

Programme Structure

- Lectures and presentations by faculty and experts.

- Group discussions and case studies.
- Interactive workshops and practical demonstrations.
- Role-playing exercises and simulations.
- Guest speakers
- Exposure visits to agencies working in the field

Evaluation:

Participants will work in groups to prepare a presentation in which they will develop a model that can be implemented in their respective countries, highlighting the lessons learned from the course. They will be assessed based on the presentation at the end of the course.

Eligibility:

Health workers from the medical, healthcare, psychology, or social work fields with an interest in addiction care are eligible for this training.