



IPSI
India Primary Health Care
Support Initiative

Sathi Mentoring Program

Strengthening Primary Health Care Team Dynamics in Bhavnagar, Gujarat

As part of the India Primary Health Care Support Initiative (IPSI), the Sathi mentoring pilot was implemented in Bhavnagar by the Indian Institute of Public Health Gandhinagar (IIPHG) and Johns Hopkins University (JHU) with support from the district health administration.

Anchored in the principles of the Ayushman Bharat initiative for Comprehensive Primary Health Care (CPHC), the program adopts a team-mentoring approach to strengthen team functioning within the sub-Health Centre (SHC-AAM) teams, with an aim of improving service delivery. This 12-month intervention was implemented in 20 AAMs across four blocks of Bhavnagar district, Gujarat - Gogha, Sihor, Mahuva, and Vallabhipur.

Rationale

While public health initiatives have traditionally emphasized cadre-specific technical skills, the coaching program focuses on strengthening team processes through a coaching model that enhances the team's knowledge and skills, motivation and ability to strategize to deliver people-centred comprehensive primary health care.

Key features

- Global literature^{1,2} along with stakeholder consultation formed the conceptual basis of the intervention.
- Mentors selected from within the existing public health system to ensure sustainability.
- Mentors are trained in four phases, on 12 modules, equipping them with skills and tools to facilitate mentoring sessions. These modules are developed using adult learning principles.
- This is a first of its kind hybrid model of team mentoring where an in-person and virtual mode is used.
- Modules cover key aspects of effective team functioning, such as - teamwork, effective communication, shared responsibility, conflict resolution, understanding indicators and data, problem-solving, leadership, and wellbeing.
- Each module also integrates one clinical skills relevant to the team's work.

¹ Song H, Chien AT, Fisher J, Martin J, Peters AS, Hacker K, et al. Development and Validation of the Primary Care Team Dynamics Survey. *Health Services Research*. 2015 Jun;50(3):897–921. DOI: 10.1111/1475-6773.12257

² Hale R. Conceptualizing the mentoring relationship: An appraisal of evidence. *Nurs Forum*. 2018 Apr 25. doi: 10.1111/nuf.12259. Epub ahead of print. PMID: 29691870.

Implementation approach

1. Who

- Each mentor pair comprises of an AYUSH Medical Officer and a nurse faculty from Bhavnagar Government Nursing College.
- The mentees comprise of CHOs, ANMs, MPWs, and ASHAs.

2. Mentoring sessions

- Structured, in-person sessions delivered by mentors, are referred to as in-person touchpoints.
- Virtual touchpoints are expert-led sessions, attended by the mentors as well as the mentees.

3. Monitoring and feedback

Regular monitoring and feedback mechanisms, to assess implementation fidelity and mentor engagement, were established. These mechanisms include Kobo tool-based session details, observation visits by IPSI and IIPHG teams, pre- and post-session calls with mentors. This has enabled critical course correction in real time.

4. Stakeholder engagement

Frequent stakeholder engagement, with regular meetings District Administration, Government Nursing College faculty, and other officials to ensure buy-in and alignment.

Core team competencies as focused on

- Effective team communication -internal and external
- Shared responsibility and conflict resolution
- Understanding and using data
- Problem-solving techniques for AAM teams
- Developing leadership and collaborative competencies
- Techniques for promoting self-care and wellbeing among health workers



A sathi mentoring session in progress in Bhavnagar, Gujarat

What next?

Evaluation is underway, and the Sathi intervention is in the process of being scaled up across the state by the Government of Gujarat.

³ KoboToolbox is an open source software used to collect, analyze, and manage data for surveys, monitoring, evaluation, and research.

