

The Perceptions
and Experiences of
Families Dealing
with Substance Use
Disorders:
Implications for
Holistic Employee
Wellness
Programmes

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Background

Substance use disorders (SUDs) impact entire family systems.

Family members often experience emotional, financial, and relational strain.

Support for families is limited within rehabilitation and workplace interventions.

Study Purpose

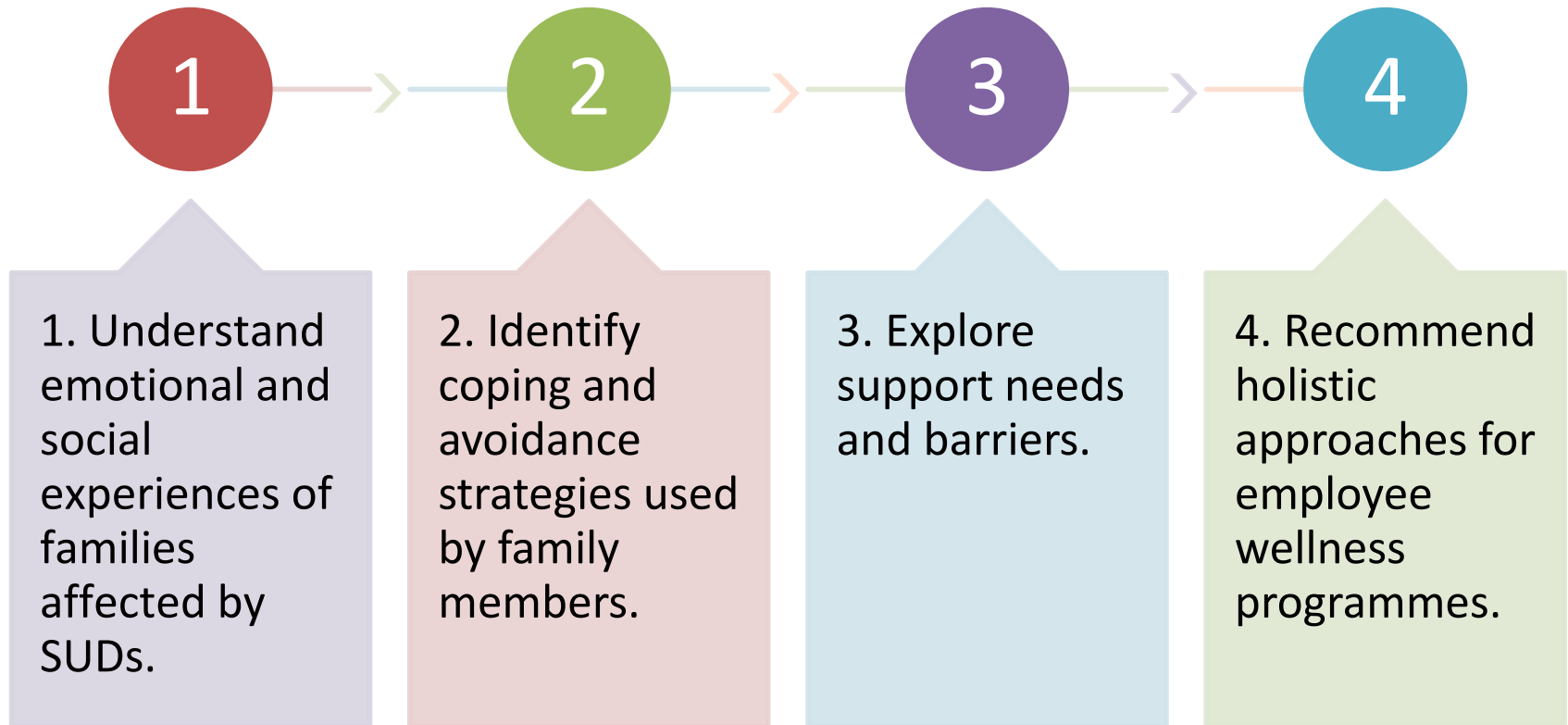


Explore perceptions and lived experiences of family members of people with SUDs.

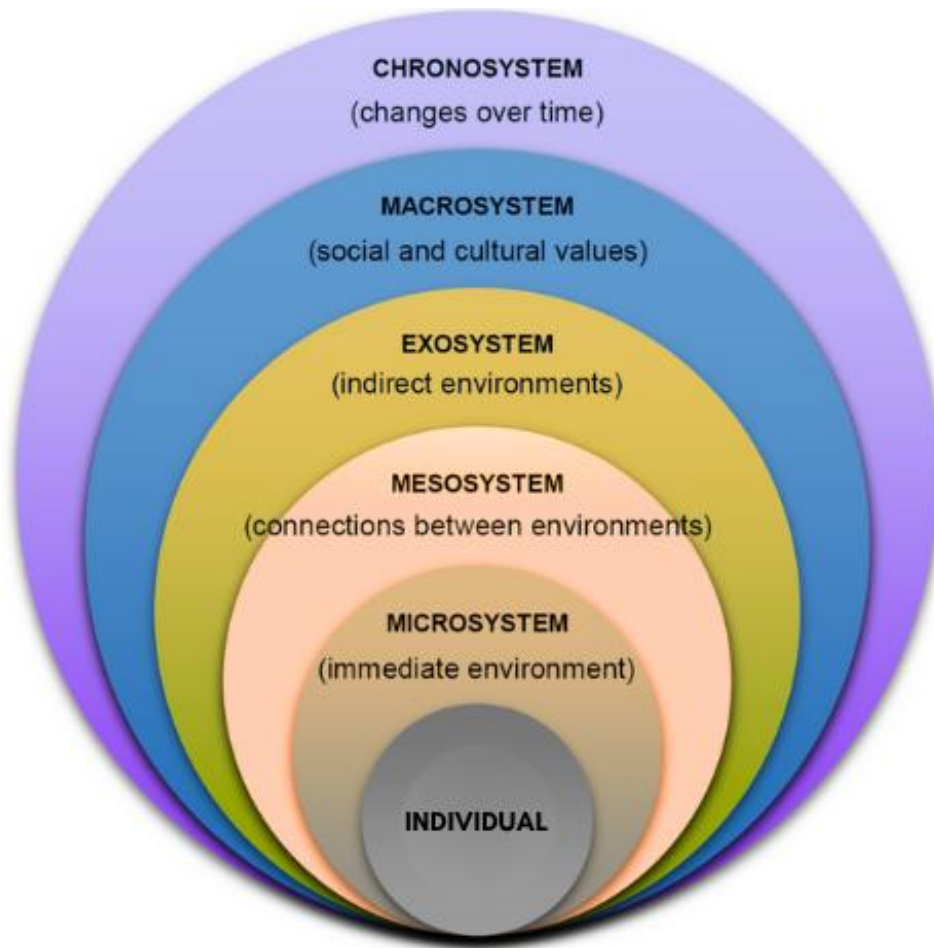


Identify implications for employee assistance and wellness programmes.

Research Aims



Bronfenbrenner's Bio-Ecological Systems Theory



Theoretical Framework

Bronfenbrenner's Bio-Ecological Systems Theory:

- Microsystem – family, workplace
- Mesosystem – family and work interactions
- Exosystem – community and institutions
- Macrosystem – culture, policy, stigma
- Chronosystem – change over time

Methodology

Qualitative, phenomenological design.

Data collected via focus-group discussion with 9 participants.

Participants: parents, spouses, and siblings of people with SUDs.

Setting: Outpatient support group in Kimberley.

Analysis: Thematic analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2006).

Key Themes

1 Emotional Burden

2 Coping and Avoidance Strategies

3 Support Needs of Family Members

Theme 1 – Emotional Burden

Families experienced trauma, guilt, humiliation, and anger.

Many parents felt like failures and withdrew socially.

Quote: “You begin to doubt yourself as a parent ... you tend to distance yourself.”

Theme 2 – Coping and Avoidance

Adaptive and maladaptive strategies used:

- Overworking, distraction, medication, anger displacement.
- Spiritual support and withdrawal from stressors.

Quote: “I try to keep busy ... as soon as I sit still it overwhelms me.”



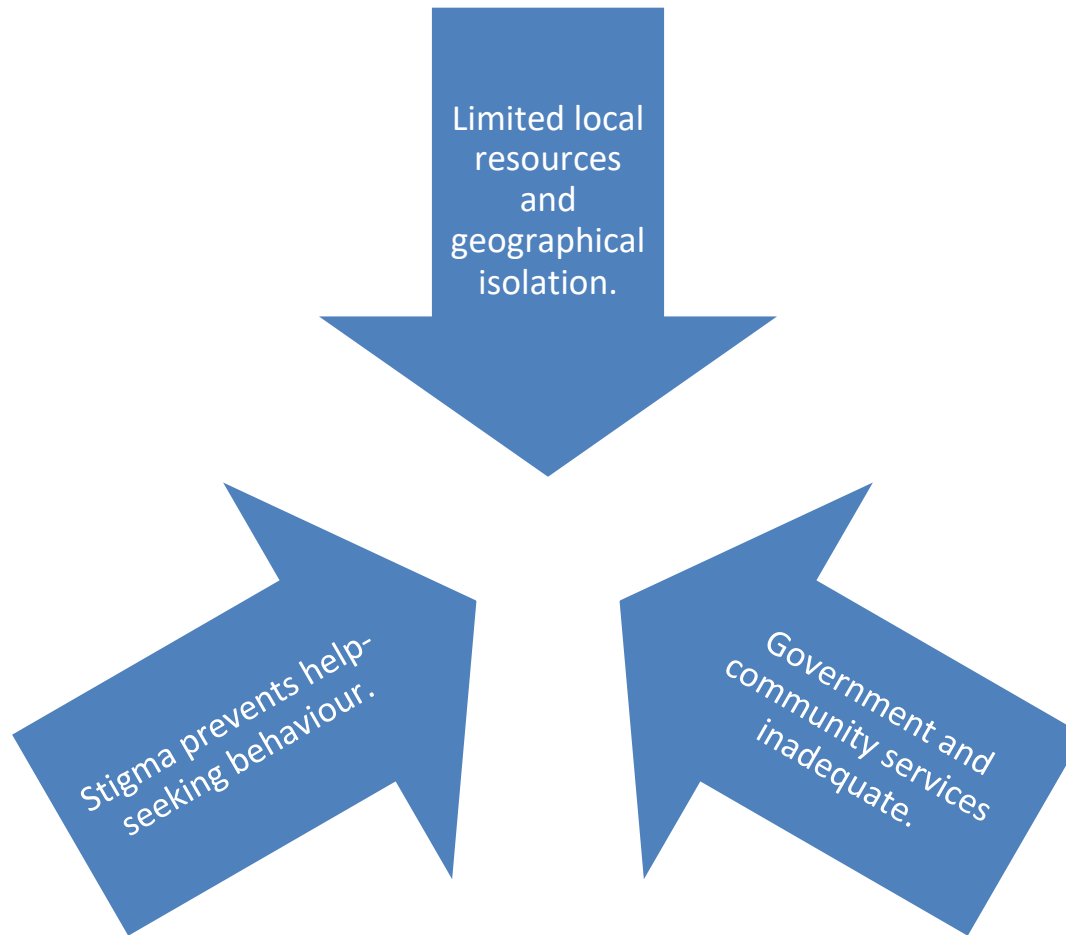
Theme 3 – Support Needs

Families valued group and counselling support.

Lack of accessible services in rural Northern Cape.

Need for home visits, mentorship, and continued support.

Constraints and Barriers



Implications for Employee Wellness

1

Recognize family systems in employee recovery.

2

Create integrated support networks linking work, family, and community.

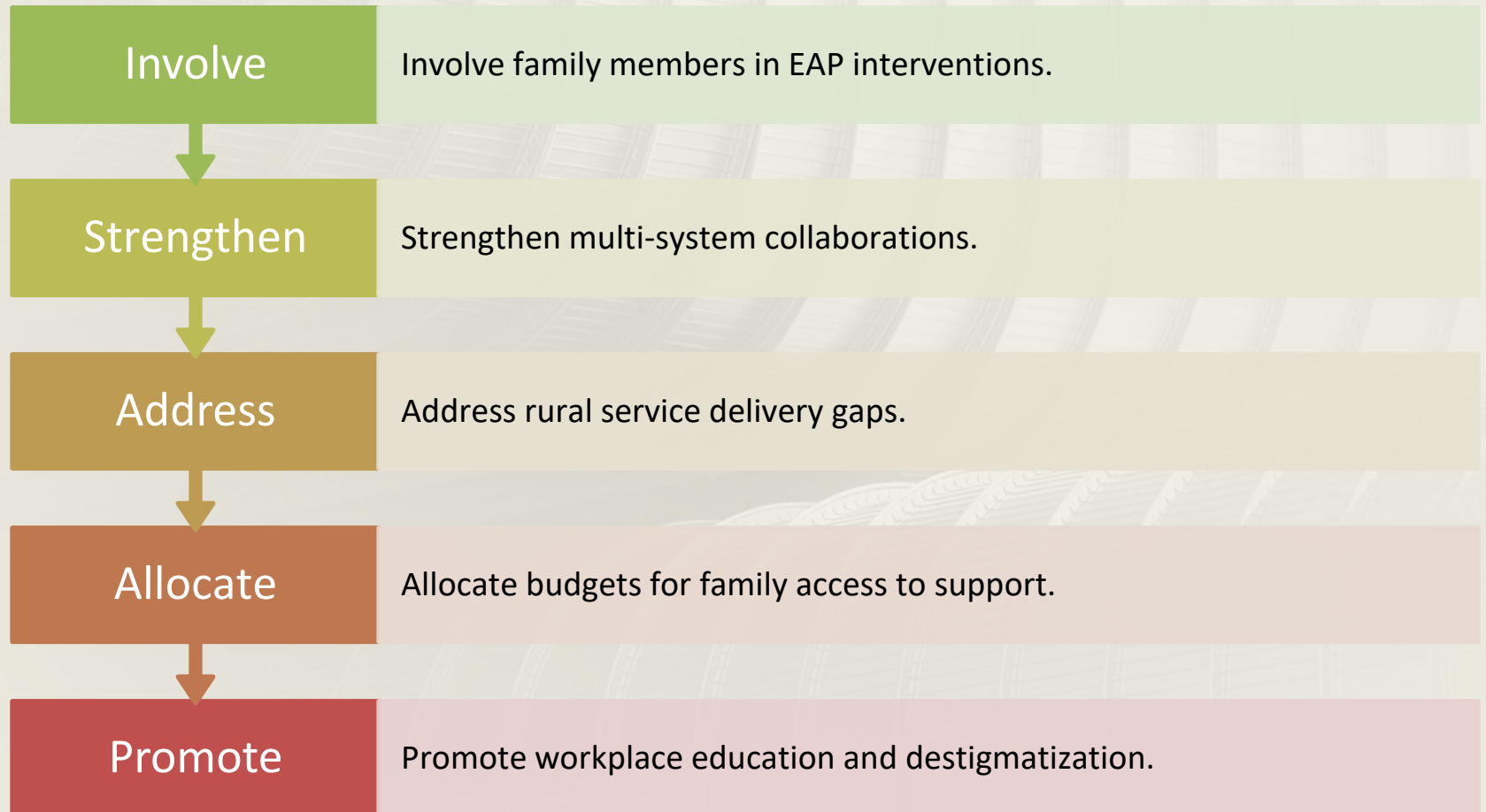
3

Include families in post-rehabilitation interventions.

4

Provide transport, childcare, and counselling resources.

Recommendations Summary



Conclusion

Families experience a heavy emotional and social burden.

Neglecting family needs undermines recovery outcomes.

Holistic, family-inclusive wellness programmes enhance rehabilitation sustainability.

Acknowledgements

