

Substance Use Disorders: Raising Awareness Amongst Nurses

Evelynn Githiiyu, DNP(c), RN



Background

- Substance use disorders (SUD) are conditions generated by repeated use or misuse of legal or illegal substances resulting to quantifiable impairment of personal, social, and occupational duties (Salani et al, 2022).
- Unwritten social prohibition of associating nursing with SUD and absence of transparent conversations on its prevalence among nurses underestimates its effects leaving it undetected and underreported (Nyhus, 2021; Stewart & Mueller 2018).
- SUD are associated with drug diversion from hospitals and the opioid epidemic.
- Research shows approximately 10% of nurses have SUD (Stewart, & Mueller, 2018).
- A recent study on the impact of COVID-19 pandemic on Nurses revealed 19% increase of alcohol use and 3% increase of substance use (Griffith et al. 2021).

Project Purpose

The purpose of this project was to create awareness amongst nurses working at our organization on the:

- Prevalence of SUD among nurses.
- Availability of non-punitive or alternate to discipline nurse-nurse peer support programs.

Description of the Project

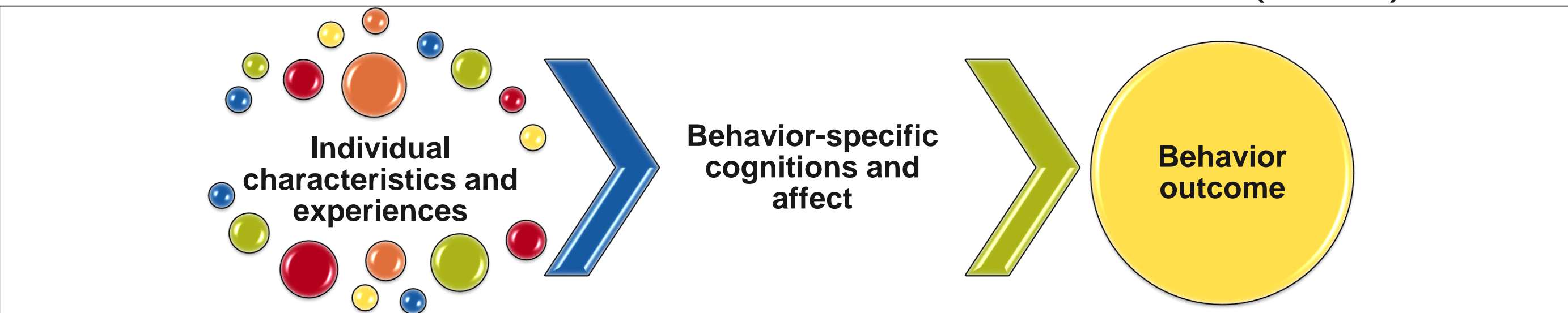
Studies and knowledge gap analysis indicated:

- Insufficient awareness of SUD and its prevalence among nurses.
- Deficiency in identifying signs of SUD.
- Lack of guidance on what to do if SUD is suspected.
- Inadequate understanding of existence and purpose of Nonpunitive or alternative-to-discipline (ATD) peer programs.

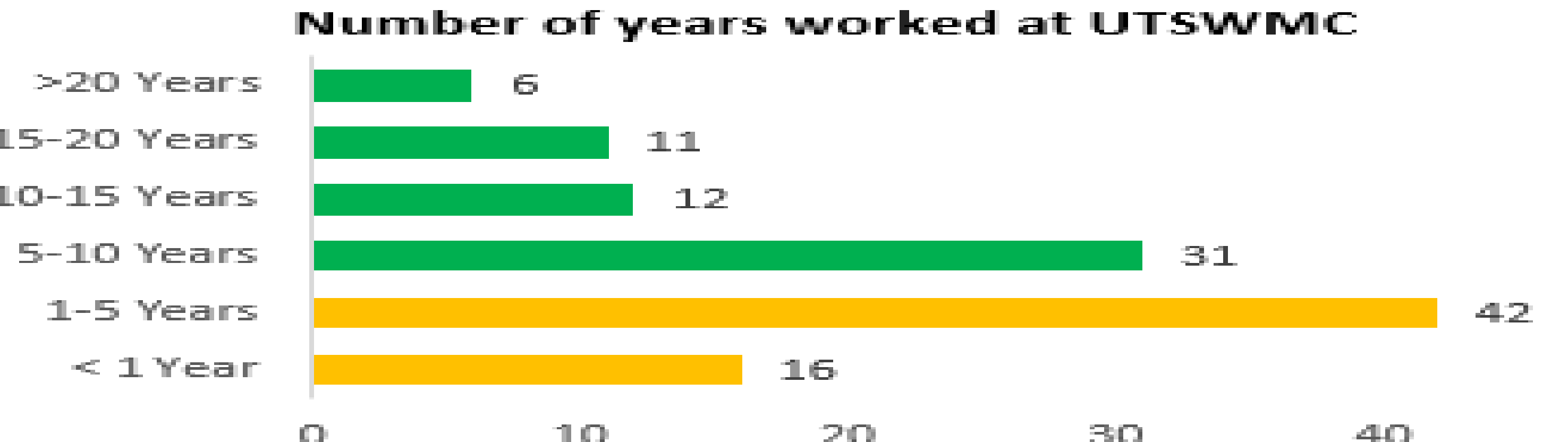
To narrow or close these knowledge gaps, a 90-minutes nursing educational event was organized in collaboration with:

- Organizational executive nursing leadership.
- The Texas Board of Nursing (TX BON).
- Texas Peer Assistance Program for Nurses (TPAPN).

The Event

- Founded on Nola Pender's Health Promotion Model (HPM).
- 
- Attendance was encouraged through:
 - Rigorous advertising through flyers circulation and announcements.
 - Attendance options: live in-person or virtually and recorded webinar.
 - Approved 1.5 nursing contact hours.

Topic Assignment	
Presenters	Topics
Host	Theoretical and research perspectives of SUD
Nursing AVP and CNO	Relevance to UTSWMC nurses and employee support resources
TX BON Reps	SUD prevalence among Texas nurses, TX BON's SUD prevention and support
TPAPN Reps	ATD nurse-nurse peer assistance program
All Presenters	Question-and-answer session



Years	Count
>20 Years	6
15-20 Years	11
10-15 Years	12
5-10 Years	31
1-5 Years	42
< 1 Year	16

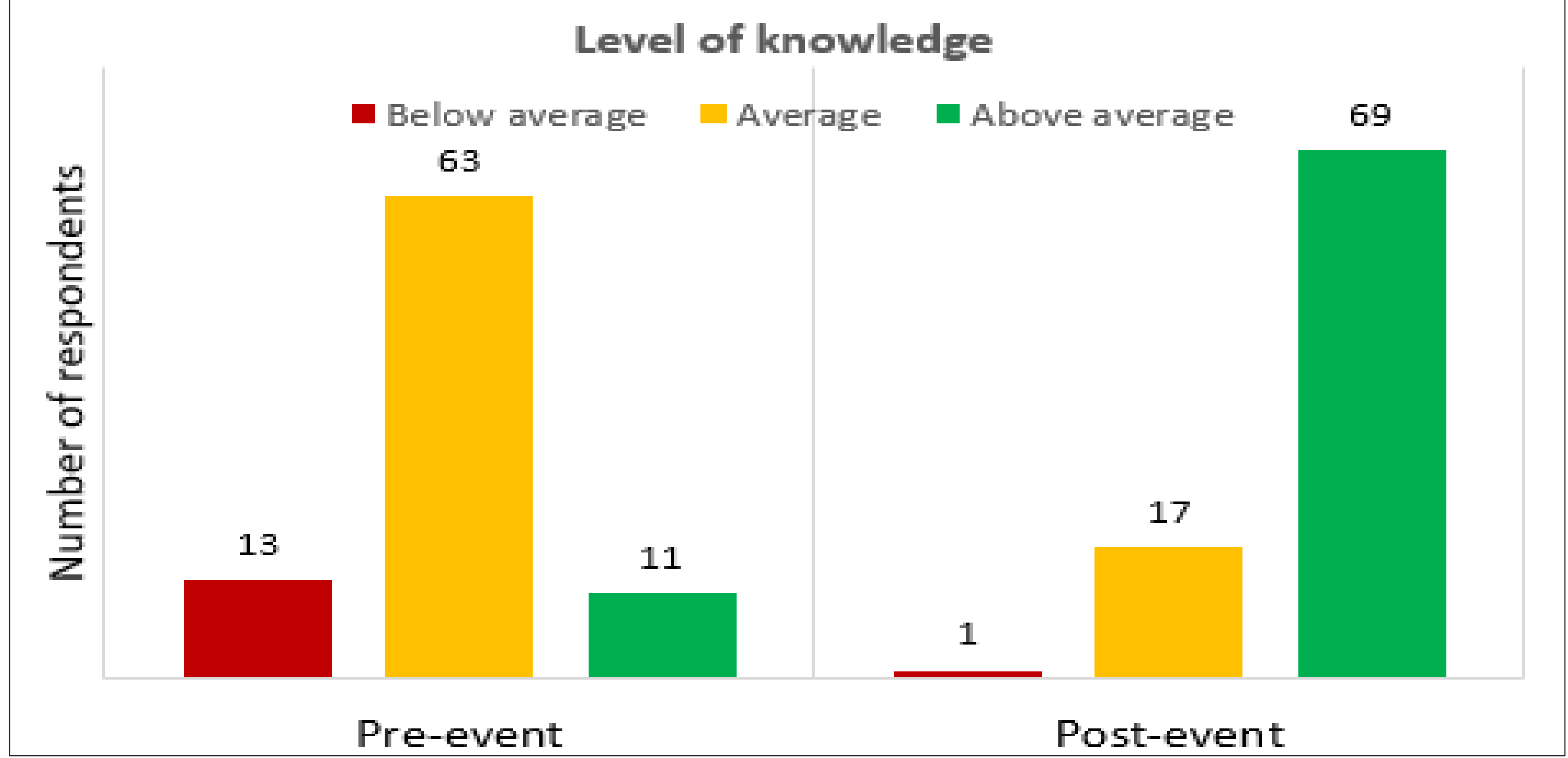
Evaluation

Measured perception of learners on value of the event through:

- Pre-presentation survey - Measured knowledge before the event, 118 respondents.
- Post-presentation survey - Measured knowledge after the event, 104 respondents.

Outcomes

Survey questions	% Pre	% Post
Can identify signs of SUD	80	92
Reporting supports patient and employee safety	85	92
Event helped me understand SUD is prevalent among nurses		100
Event helped me understand ATD programs support nurses with SUD		95
Information provided in this event is relevant to my practice		98
Following the event, do you expect to change your practice?		95



Clinical Relevance

- Research shows approximately 10% of nurses have SUD (Stewart, & Mueller, 2018).
- SUD amongst nurses is associated with drug diversion from hospitals.
- Lack of transparent conversations on SUD among nurses undervalues its effects, leaves it undetected, and underreported (Nyhus, 2021).
- Unfortunately, SUD has claimed lives of nurses.

Recommendations

- Add SUD education to continuing nursing education.
- Collaborate with state boards of nursing and ATD agencies to educate nurses on available SUD resources.
- Encourage nurses to engage in nurse-to-nurse peer support programs.

Acknowledgements

- Dr. Ellen Buckner, Samford University Faculty, Team leader.
- Dr. David Wyatt, AVP and CNO at UT Southwestern, Team member and mentor.
- Dr. Kristin K. Benton, Director of Nursing, TX BON.
- James "Dusty" Johnston, General Counsel, TX BON.
- Brittney Majefski, Program Director, TPAPN.
- Roland Rodriguez, Case Management Team Lead, TPAPN.