

## TCIHC Urban Tales: Non-Clinical Staff Play Role in Making UPHCs Adolescent-Friendly

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*The following story is part of a series from The Challenge Initiative for Healthy Cities (TCIHC) called “**Urban Tales**,” occasional real-life stories of women and girls benefiting from TCIHC’s work supporting local governments to implement evidence-based family planning and adolescent and youth sexual and reproductive health (AYSRH) solutions.*



Pooja Kumari works as a janitor at the Aurangabad urban primary health center (UPHC) in Lucknow, Uttar Pradesh. Recently, she participated in a **whole-site orientation (WSO)**, a TCIHC proven approach that targets all staff working in a health facility to become advocates for family planning. All staff receive an “orientation” to gain a basic understanding of family planning and its benefits. At Pooja’s facility, the Medical Officer In-Charge conducted WSO for the entire staff on how to provide adolescent-friendly health services. Pooja was overjoyed to be sitting in the same hall as everyone else working for the facility.

With a sparkle in her eyes, she shared: “Since 2015, I am working in Aurangabad UPHC. As a janitor, my role is limited to facility housekeeping duties and responsibilities. When I was invited for WSO, I was somewhat astonished. I thought trainings are meant for medical staff only. At the same time, I was excited to have been counted for this training opportunity. It was a new experience for me. Whole-site orientation helped me to reflect on my adolescence, as back in those days there were hardly any services available for adolescents. In my teens, I could only approach my mother to discuss about menstruation and I don’t remember visiting any facility or hospital without any guardian.

*WSO changed my mindset. I liked the story of three teenagers titled “Kuchh to log kahenge” (People will say something) [shared during the WSO session]. This story describes how unmarried adolescents face socio-cultural prejudices and stigma when they visit a facility alone. Their fear of being judged inhibits them to seek sexual and reproductive health care information or services. Due to insufficient and inaccurate information, they are left with much curiosity and unresolved issues. The participatory discussion followed by the story helped me to realize the health needs of adolescents and also equipped me with a know-how of how a non-clinical staff [like myself] can also create a conducive environment for adolescents by being non-judgmental and unbiased, regardless of their age and marital status.”*

*I have learned so much from this orientation, both professionally and personally. Today, as a facility staff and as a mother I believe that the environment of a health facility and home should be adolescent-friendly so that they can fearlessly share their problems and get correct information related to sexual and reproductive health issues. In fact, after attending WSO, I have noticed a change in myself as immediately a few days later when some adolescents had visited the facility, I greeted them with a smile. I had never done this before. I am glad that I was considered as an important facility staff who can play a substantial role in creating enabling environment for adolescents.”*

To learn more about how to conduct WSO, read guidance and access tools for implementing it on **TCI University**. WSO is a critical component of **TCIHC’s priority strategies for improving contraceptive use among first-time parents**. Learn more about how TCIHC has helped UPHCs become adolescent-friendly in **Allahabad** and other cities in Uttar Pradesh.

For reading this story on TCI University please visit: <https://tciurbanhealth.org/tcihc-urban-voices-non-clinical-staff-play-role-in-making-uphcs-adolescent-friendly/> . You can read all previous stories also at <https://tciurbanhealth.org/topics/india-urban-voices/>.

PSI-TCIHC works with city governments to advance the cause of family planning. To know more about our work, visit <https://tciurbanhealth.org/india-toolkit/> and <https://tciurbanhealth.org/topics/india/>.