



# CONTRIBUTION OF THE FREQUENCY OF COUNSELLING SESSIONS ON REDUCING RISKY BEHAVIOUR AMONG YOUTH ATTENDING YOUTH CENTERS IN IRINGA

*Alex Lwiza*

Department of Counselling Psychology, University of Iringa, Tanzania  
[alexlwiza@gmail.com](mailto:alexlwiza@gmail.com)

## ABSTRACT :

The purpose of this study was to examine the contribution of the frequency of counselling sessions on reducing risky behaviour among youth attending youth centers in Iringa Municipality, Tanzania. Specifically, the study assessed how the frequency of counselling sessions contributes to reducing risky behaviour among youth. A mixed-method approach was employed using a convergent parallel research design. Data were collected from 88 youth attending counselling programmes using structured questionnaires and six counsellors using semi-structured interviews. Quantitative data were analysed using SPSS Version 31, while qualitative data were analysed through thematic analysis. The findings revealed that the frequency of counselling sessions contributed to reducing risky behaviour among youth by improving decision-making, strengthening self-control and increasing awareness of the consequences of risky behaviours. Regular participation in counselling sessions also helped some youth to avoid risky sexual behaviours and manage situations that could lead to harmful behaviour. However, some youth continued to engage in substance use, violence and other risky behaviours despite attending counselling sessions, mainly due to peer influence, family difficulties and negative social environments. The study concludes that regular and frequent counselling sessions contribute to reducing risky behaviour among youth attending youth centers in Iringa Municipality. The study recommends that youth centers strengthen attendance monitoring systems, provide counselling sessions regularly and encourage consistent participation among youth. Counsellors should also follow up youth who continue to engage in risky behaviours despite participating in counselling sessions. Policy makers and youth-service providers should provide adequate support and resources to sustain regular counselling programmes in youth centers. Further studies should examine the long-term contribution of counselling-session frequency to reducing risky behaviour among youth in other settings.

**Keywords:** Counselling session frequency; risky behaviour; youth; youth centers; counselling participation; Iringa Municipality.

## 1. INTRODUCTION

### 1.1 Background of the Study

Counselling sessions provide psychosocial support that can help adolescents and young people understand personal difficulties, make safer decisions and reduce behaviours that may harm their health and wellbeing. The World Health Organization (WHO, 2020) recommends psychosocial interventions for adolescents to promote mental health and reduce risk behaviours. Regular contact with counselling services can provide repeated opportunities for young people to discuss problems, receive guidance and strengthen positive decision-making. Therefore, the frequency of counselling sessions is important because continued participation may provide greater opportunities for behavioural support and early identification of risky behaviour.

Risky behaviour among youth includes behaviours such as substance use, unsafe sexual practices, violence and other actions that may negatively affect health and social wellbeing. The WHO (2024) notes that adolescence and young adulthood are periods when behaviours are established that can have important effects on health and wellbeing later in life. In Africa, adolescents also face social and economic conditions that may increase their vulnerability to harmful behaviours, while access to psychosocial and mental health support remains limited in many settings. UNICEF and WHO have therefore emphasized the importance of strengthening mental health and psychosocial support services for children and adolescents in Africa.

In Tanzania, young people face different social and developmental risks, including violence, early marriage, sexually transmitted infections and HIV, while poverty and limited opportunities can increase vulnerability. UNICEF reports that Tanzania is a youthful country and that children and adolescents experience various social and economic challenges that affect their wellbeing. Existing adolescent programmes in Tanzania have used community-based support and trained mentors to help young people develop safer behaviours and respond to risks. However, the continued presence of risky behaviours indicates the need to examine whether regular participation in counselling sessions contributes to behavioural improvement. Therefore, assessing the contribution of counselling-session frequency among youth attending youth centers in Iringa Municipality is important for understanding whether more regular counselling participation is associated with reduced risky behaviour.

## 1.2 Statement of the Problem

Risky behaviour among youth remains a concern despite efforts to provide counselling and other forms of youth support. Behaviours such as substance use, unsafe sexual practices and violence can negatively affect the health, education and future wellbeing of young people. Regular counselling sessions may provide repeated opportunities for youth to receive guidance, reflect on their behaviour and develop safer ways of responding to risky situations. However, the contribution of the frequency of counselling sessions to reducing risky behaviour among youth is not clearly established.

Youth centres provide counselling services intended to support young people in dealing with personal and social problems. However, the continued occurrence of risky behaviours among some youth raises questions about whether the frequency of counselling sessions is sufficient to support positive behavioural change. Limited evidence on whether attending counselling sessions more frequently contributes to reducing risky behaviour creates a need to examine this relationship rather than considering counselling programmes generally.

In Iringa Municipality, youth centres provide counselling sessions to young people, including youth who may be exposed to substance use, unsafe sexual behaviour and other risky practices. Despite the availability of counselling services, risky behaviour continues to be reported among some youth. However, there is limited evidence on how the frequency of counselling sessions contributes to reducing risky behaviour among youth attending youth centres in the municipality. Therefore, this study was conducted to examine the contribution of the frequency of counselling sessions on reducing risky behaviour among youth attending youth centers in Iringa Municipality.

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## 2. LITERATURE REVIEW

### 2.1 Theoretical literature review

Social Learning Theory was developed by Bandura (1977) and explains that behaviour is learned through observation, imitation and interaction with others. Youth may learn risky or positive behaviours from peers, family members and other people around them. In this study, the theory helps explain how *frequent counselling sessions* provide repeated opportunities for youth to interact with counsellors, observe positive behaviours and receive reinforcement for responsible choices. Repeated counselling contact may therefore support youth in learning behaviours that help reduce risky practices. Social Learning Theory was adopted because it provides a basis for explaining how the *frequency of counselling sessions contributes to reducing risky behaviour among youth attending youth centers in Iringa Municipality*.

### 2.2 Empirical Literature Review

Evidence suggests that repeated counselling contact can support the reduction of risky behaviour among young people. Sorsdahl et al. (2024) evaluated Project ASPIRE in South Africa, where 117 adolescents were assigned to a four-session counselling intervention or comparison group and the study demonstrated the feasibility and acceptability of repeated counselling sessions for addressing risks related to depression and alcohol use. Chewen et al. (2023) in Kenya also found that counselling interventions, including individual, group and family counselling, significantly affected the management of adolescents' risky behaviour ( $F = 2.132$ ,  $p = .017$ ). In Tanzania, Kuringe et al. (2022) found that a structured combination HIV prevention intervention was relevant to reducing risky sexual behaviour among adolescent girls and young women, although the study did not specifically compare different frequencies of counselling sessions. These findings suggest that regular and repeated counselling contact may provide opportunities for youth to receive guidance, reflect on risky behaviours and strengthen safer behavioural choices, but there remains a need for more evidence specifically examining how the frequency of counselling sessions contributes to reducing risky behaviour among youth attending youth centers in Iringa Municipality.

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## 3. METHODOLOGY

### 3.1 Research Approach and Design

The study used a mixed-method approach. Quantitative and qualitative methods were used to collect information on the frequency of counselling sessions and reducing risky behaviour among youth. Quantitative data provided measurable information from youth attending youth centres, while qualitative data provided detailed information from counsellors involved in counselling sessions. The mixed-method approach helped provide a broader understanding of the relationship between the frequency of counselling sessions and risky behaviour among youth.

A convergent parallel research design was employed. Quantitative and qualitative data were collected at the same time and analysed separately before being compared and combined (Creswell & Creswell, 2021). The design helped the researcher compare responses from youth with information obtained from counsellors. This strengthened the understanding of how the frequency of counselling sessions contributed to reducing risky behaviour among youth.

### 3.2 Study Area

The study was conducted in Iringa Municipality, located in Iringa Region in the southern highlands of Tanzania. The Municipality was selected because it has youth centres that provide counselling services to young people. The study focused on Don Bosco Youth Centre and Iringa Development of Youth, Disabled and Children Care (IDYDC), where youth participate in counselling sessions. The availability of counselling services and youth participants made Iringa Municipality suitable for examining the contribution of the frequency of counselling sessions to reducing risky behaviour among youth.

### 3.3 Study Population and Sample

The study population consisted of 113 youth attending counselling programmes at Don Bosco Youth Centre and IDYDC. The population included male and female youth aged 15–35 years who participated in counselling sessions. The quantitative sample consisted of 88 youth, while six counsellors were included in the qualitative part of the study. The sample of 88 youth was determined using Slovin's formula, while the six counsellors were purposively selected because of their direct involvement in counselling services.

### 3.4 Sampling and Data Collection

Proportional sampling was used to select 88 youth from the two youth centres based on the number of youth attending each centre. A total of 47 youth were selected from Don Bosco Youth Centre and 41 from IDYDC. Purposive sampling was used to select six counsellors because they were directly involved in counselling activities and had relevant information for the study.

Structured questionnaires were used to collect quantitative data from the 88 youth. Semi-structured interviews were conducted with six counsellors to obtain detailed information about counselling-session frequency and observed changes in risky behaviour among youth. The use of questionnaires and interviews allowed the study to obtain both measurable responses and detailed views about the contribution of counselling-session frequency to reducing risky behaviour.

### 3.5 Data Analysis

Quantitative data were analysed using SPSS Version 31. Descriptive statistics, including frequencies and percentages, were used to summarise responses from the questionnaires. Qualitative information from the interviews was analysed using thematic analysis. The findings from the two methods were compared and combined to provide a clearer understanding of the contribution of the frequency of counselling sessions to reducing risky behaviour among youth.

## DATA PRESENTATIONS AND DISCUSSIONS

### 4.1 Contribution of the Frequency of Counselling Sessions

The first objective of this study was to determine the contribution of the frequency of counselling sessions on reducing risky behaviours among youth attending youth centers in Iringa Municipality. This section presents the findings that answer the research question: What is the contribution of the frequency of counselling sessions on reducing risky behaviours among youth attending youth centers in Iringa Municipality? Data were collected using structured questionnaires from youth attending counselling programs and semi-structured interviews from counsellors working in the selected youth centers. The findings are presented using both quantitative results and qualitative explanations to provide a clear understanding of how the frequency of counselling sessions contributes to reducing risky behaviours among youth.

**Table 4.1: Regular Counselling Sessions and Reduced Substance Use**

| Response     | Frequency | Percent (%)  |
|--------------|-----------|--------------|
| Yes          | 65        | 73.9         |
| No           | 23        | 26.1         |
| <b>Total</b> | <b>88</b> | <b>100.0</b> |

Source: Field Data (2026)

Results in Table 4.1 show that 65 out of 88 respondents, representing 73.9%, indicated that attending counselling sessions regularly contributed to reduced substance use among youth. In contrast, 23 respondents (26.1%) reported that regular counselling sessions had not contributed to reduced substance use. The findings indicate that the majority of youth associated regular counselling attendance with positive changes in substance use behaviours. The positive responses point to the role of counselling sessions in increasing awareness of the consequences of substance abuse and encouraging healthier choices. The negative responses indicate that some youth continue to engage in substance use despite attending counselling sessions. This suggests that challenges such as peer influence, family environments and personal habits continue to affect some youth.

The findings further show that regular counselling sessions contribute to reducing substance use by providing continuous guidance, follow-up and behavioural support. Youth who attend counselling sessions regularly receive repeated messages on the dangers of substance abuse and the importance of responsible decision-making. Such consistent exposure strengthens commitment to behaviours change and promotes healthier lifestyles. The majority of positive responses reflect the effectiveness of regular counselling in helping youth avoid harmful substances. However, the existence of negative responses indicates that some youth require additional support beyond counselling sessions. These findings demonstrate that regular counselling attendance is an important factor in reducing substance use among youth.

During interviews with counsellors, one respondent explained:

Most youth who attend counselling sessions regularly become more aware of the effects of substance use on their lives. Regular discussions help them understand the consequences of alcohol and drug abuse. Many begin to make positive choices after attending several sessions. Positive changes are often observed among those who participate consistently. Youth who miss sessions frequently tend to show slower behaviour change (Interview with C1, 01/04/2026, 10:15 AM).

Another counsellor stated:

Counselling sessions provide an opportunity for youth to discuss challenges related to substance use. Through regular attendance, many develop confidence to avoid negative influences from peers. Repeated guidance helps reinforce positive values and responsible behaviours. Several youth report improvements in their daily lives after participating in counselling. Consistent attendance remains important for achieving lasting change (Interview with C2, 02/04/2026, 2:30 PM).

A third counsellor noted:

Regular counselling allows close follow-up of youth experiencing substance use problems. Many youths gradually reduce substance use after receiving continuous support and encouragement. Counselling helps them identify triggers that contribute to harmful behaviours. Behavioural improvements become more visible as attendance increases. Limited participation often reduces the effectiveness of counselling interventions (Interview with C3, 03/04/2026, 9:20 AM).

These findings indicate that regular counselling sessions contribute to reducing substance use among youth attending youth centers in Iringa Municipality. The quantitative findings show that the majority of respondents experienced positive changes in their behaviours after attending counselling sessions regularly. The qualitative findings support this view by highlighting the importance of continuous guidance, awareness creation and follow-up in promoting behaviours change. Both sets of findings suggest that frequent participation in counselling programs helps youth avoid substance abuse and adopt healthier lifestyles. Nevertheless, some respondents reported limited benefits, indicating that counselling outcomes differ among individuals. The combined findings therefore emphasize the importance of regular counselling attendance in reducing substance use among youth.

**Table 4.2: Regular Counselling Sessions and Better Decision-Making**

| Response     | Frequency | Percent (%)  |
|--------------|-----------|--------------|
| Yes          | 49        | 55.7         |
| No           | 39        | 44.3         |
| <b>Total</b> | <b>88</b> | <b>100.0</b> |

**Source:** Field Data (2026).

Results in Table 4.2 show that 49 out of 88 respondents, representing 55.7%, reported that regular participation in counselling sessions contributed to better decision-making among youth. 39 respondents (44.3%) indicated that regular participation in counselling sessions had not contributed to better decision-making. The findings show that more than half of the respondents associated regular counselling attendance with improved decision-making. Those who responded positively pointed out that counselling sessions helped them evaluate consequences before making choices, set personal goals and avoid behaviours that could negatively affect their future. In contrast, respondents who gave negative responses indicated that some youth continue to make poor decisions despite attending counselling sessions. These responses point to the influence of peer pressure, family challenges and limited commitment to applying the guidance provided during counselling.

The findings suggest that regular counselling sessions contribute to better decision-making by providing youth with opportunities to reflect on their actions and consider alternative solutions to challenges they face. Counselling sessions expose youth to information and guidance that support responsible choices in education, relationships and daily life. The positive responses indicate that many youths use the knowledge gained from counselling when making important decisions. However, the relatively high proportion of negative responses shows that decision-making is also influenced by factors outside counselling programs. Some youth continue to experience difficulties in translating counselling knowledge into practice. The findings therefore indicate that regular counselling sessions contribute to better decision-making, although their effectiveness varies among individuals.

During interviews with counsellors, one respondent explained:

Regular counselling sessions help youth think carefully before making decisions. Many become more aware of the consequences of their actions after participating in several sessions. Youth learn to assess different options before choosing a course of action. Positive changes are often observed among those who attend consistently. Those who participate irregularly tend to show limited improvement in decision-making skills (Interview with C4, 04/04/2026, 11:00 AM).

Another counsellor stated:

Counselling provides a platform where youth discuss challenges and explore possible solutions. Through regular interaction, many develop confidence in making responsible decisions. Youth are encouraged to set goals and think about the long-term effects of their choices. This process helps them avoid decisions that expose them to risk. The greatest improvements are observed among youth who actively participate in the sessions (Interview with C5, 07/04/2026, 1:45 PM).

A third counsellor noted:

Decision-making improves when youth are given opportunities to reflect on their experiences. Counselling sessions encourage critical thinking and personal responsibility. Many participants become more careful when dealing with peer influence and social pressures. Behavioural improvements are visible among youth who apply the lessons learned during counselling. Some continue to struggle because of challenges within their social environments (Interview with C6, 08/04/2026, 3:15 PM).

These findings indicate that regular participation in counselling sessions contributes to better decision-making among youth attending youth centers in Iringa Municipality. The quantitative findings show that the majority of respondents reported improvements in decision-making after participating in counselling sessions. The qualitative findings support this result by demonstrating that counselling encourages self-reflection, goal setting and responsible choices. Both sets of findings suggest that regular counselling helps youth make informed decisions and avoid behaviours that place them at risk. However,

the existence of a substantial proportion of negative responses indicates that decision-making is influenced by additional social and environmental factors. Overall, the findings show that regular counselling sessions play an important role in improving decision-making among youth.

**Table 4.3: Regular Counselling Sessions and Reduced Risky Sexual behaviours**

| Response     | Frequency | Percent (%)  |
|--------------|-----------|--------------|
| Yes          | 83        | 94.3         |
| No           | 5         | 5.7          |
| <b>Total</b> | <b>88</b> | <b>100.0</b> |

**Source: Field Data (2026).**

Results in Table 4.3 show that 83 out of 88 respondents, representing 94.3%, reported that attending counselling sessions regularly contributed to reduced involvement in risky sexual behaviours among youth. In contrast, only 5 respondents (5.7%) indicated that regular counselling sessions had not contributed to reduced involvement in risky sexual behaviours. The findings show that an overwhelming majority of respondents associated regular counselling attendance with positive changes in sexual behaviours. Those who responded positively pointed out that counselling sessions increased awareness of the consequences of risky sexual practices, encouraged abstinence or responsible sexual decisions and strengthened self-control. Respondents who gave negative responses indicated that some youth continue to engage in risky sexual behaviours despite attending counselling sessions. These responses point to the influence of peer pressure, social environments and personal choices that continue to expose some youth to risky sexual practices.

The findings suggest that regular counselling sessions contribute to reducing risky sexual behaviours among youth. Through continuous guidance and education, youth gain knowledge about the consequences of unsafe sexual practices and the importance of making responsible decisions. Regular participation in counselling sessions also strengthens self-awareness and promotes behaviours that protect personal health and wellbeing. The high proportion of positive responses indicates that counselling programs are effective in influencing sexual behaviours among youth. However, the existence of a small proportion of negative responses shows that some youth remain vulnerable to external influences despite receiving counselling services. The findings therefore demonstrate that regular counselling sessions play an important role in reducing risky sexual behaviours among youth.

During interviews with counsellors, one respondent explained:

Regular counselling sessions help youth understand the risks associated with unsafe sexual practices. Many become more careful in their relationships after receiving guidance through counselling. Discussions on reproductive health and personal responsibility improve awareness among participants. Positive changes are commonly observed among youth who attend sessions consistently. Those who participate irregularly often show limited improvement in their behaviours (Interview with C1, 01/04/2026, 10:15 AM).

Another counsellor stated:

Youth are provided with accurate information about the consequences of risky sexual behaviours during counselling sessions. Regular attendance allows them to ask questions and receive guidance on challenges they face. Many participants become more confident in making responsible decisions regarding relationships. Counselling also helps them resist pressure from peers. Consistent participation strengthens these positive outcomes (Interview with C3, 03/04/2026, 9:20 AM).

A third counsellor noted:

Counselling programs encourage youth to think about the long-term consequences of their actions. Through regular interaction, they develop greater self-control and respect for personal values. Many participants report improved decision-making in matters related to relationships and sexuality. Behavioural changes become more noticeable as counselling continues over time. A small number of youths still struggle because of influences from their social environments (Interview with C5, 07/04/2026, 1:45 PM).

These findings indicate that regular counselling sessions contribute to reducing risky sexual behaviours among youth attending youth centers in Iringa Municipality. The quantitative findings show that the vast majority of respondents reported positive changes in their sexual behaviours after attending counselling sessions regularly. The qualitative findings support this result by showing that counselling increases awareness, strengthens self-control and promotes responsible decision-making. Both sets of findings suggest that regular counselling helps youth avoid behaviours that place them at risk of negative health and social outcomes. However, a small number of respondents reported limited benefits, indicating that some youth continue to be influenced by external social factors. Overall, the findings demonstrate that regular counselling sessions are an effective strategy for reducing risky sexual behaviours among youth.

**Table 4.4: Regular Counselling Sessions and Reduced Violent**

| Response     | Frequency | Percent (%)  |
|--------------|-----------|--------------|
| Yes          | 50        | 56.8         |
| No           | 38        | 43.2         |
| <b>Total</b> | <b>88</b> | <b>100.0</b> |

**Source: Field Data (2026)**

Results in Table 4.4 show that 50 out of 88 respondents, representing 56.8%, reported that attending counselling sessions regularly contributed to reduced involvement in violent or harmful behaviours. 38 respondents (43.2%) indicated that regular counselling sessions had not contributed to reduced involvement in violent or harmful behaviours. The findings show that more than half of the respondents associated regular counselling attendance with positive behavioural change. Those who responded positively pointed out that counselling sessions helped them control anger, manage conflicts peacefully and avoid behaviours that could harm themselves or others. In contrast, respondents who gave negative responses indicated that some youth

continue to engage in violent or harmful behaviours despite attending counselling sessions. These responses point to challenges such as peer influence, family conflicts and exposure to violent environments that continue to affect some youth.

The findings suggest that regular counselling sessions contribute to reducing violent and harmful behaviours by helping youth develop self-control and conflict-resolution skills. Through continuous guidance and support, youth learn appropriate ways of responding to disagreements and stressful situations. The positive responses indicate that counselling programs help many youths adopt non-violent behaviours and improve their relationships with others. However, the relatively high proportion of negative responses shows that violent and harmful behaviours remain a challenge for some youth. These findings indicate that while counselling contributes to behaviours change, additional interventions are needed to address factors that encourage violence among youth. The findings therefore demonstrate that regular counselling sessions play an important role in reducing violent and harmful behaviours.

During interviews with counsellors, one respondent explained:

Regular counselling sessions help youth understand the consequences of violent behaviours. Many participants learn how to manage anger and resolve disagreements without causing harm to others. Counselling also encourages respect, patience and self-control in daily interactions. Positive changes are commonly observed among youth who attend sessions consistently. Those who participate irregularly often continue to experience behavioural challenges (Interview with C2, 02/04/2026, 2:30 PM).

Another counsellor stated:

Many youths join counselling programs with difficulties in controlling emotions and responding to conflicts. Through regular counselling, they learn alternative ways of dealing with frustration and pressure. Participants are encouraged to communicate openly rather than react aggressively. As attendance continues, many become calmer and more responsible in their behaviours. However, some youth remain influenced by negative social environments (Interview with C4, 04/04/2026, 11:00 AM).

A third counsellor noted:

Counselling sessions provide opportunities for youth to discuss situations that trigger violent behaviours. They receive guidance on problem-solving and peaceful conflict management. Many participants show improvement in their interactions with peers and family members. Behavioural change becomes more visible when youth consistently attend counselling sessions. Limited participation often reduces the effectiveness of these efforts (Interview with C6, 08/04/2026, 3:15 PM).

These findings indicate that regular counselling sessions contribute to reducing violent and harmful behaviours among youth attending youth centers in Iringa Municipality. The quantitative findings show that the majority of respondents reported positive changes in their behaviours following regular participation in counselling sessions. The qualitative findings support this result by showing that counselling promotes anger management, self-control and peaceful conflict resolution. Both sets of findings suggest that regular counselling helps youth avoid behaviours that may cause harm to themselves and others. However, the substantial proportion of negative responses indicates that some youth continue to face challenges associated with their social and environmental conditions. Overall, the findings show that regular counselling sessions play an important role in reducing violent and harmful behaviours among youth.

## **4.2 Discussions of Findings**

The findings showed that regular counselling sessions contributed to reducing risky behaviour among youth attending youth centres in Iringa Municipality. This finding is consistent with WHO (2020), which reported that psychosocial interventions can support adolescents in reducing risky behaviours and promoting positive behavioural change and with Kuringe et al. (2022), who found that structured behavioural interventions can contribute to reducing risky sexual behaviours among young people in Tanzania. The findings suggest that frequent counselling provides repeated opportunities for youth to receive guidance, reflect on their actions and develop safer behavioural choices. However, continued risky behaviour among some youth indicates that peer influence, family conditions and the wider social environment may affect behavioural change. Therefore, regular counselling sessions are important in reducing risky behaviour, but continued follow-up is needed to support youth who experience persistent risky behaviours.

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## **5. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

### **5.1 Conclusion**

The study concludes that the frequency of counselling sessions contributes to reducing risky behaviour among youth attending youth centres in Iringa Municipality. Regular participation in counselling sessions provides repeated opportunities for youth to receive guidance, reflect on their behaviour and develop safer choices. The findings indicate that frequent counselling is particularly useful in reducing risky sexual behaviours, substance use, violent behaviours and improving decision-making. However, some youth continue to engage in risky behaviours because of peer influence, family conditions and negative social environments. Therefore, regular counselling sessions are important for supporting positive behavioural change among youth.

### **5.2 Recommendations**

Youth centres should strengthen attendance monitoring systems and ensure that counselling sessions are provided regularly to encourage consistent participation among youth. Counsellors should provide continued follow-up to youth who continue to engage in risky behaviours and encourage them to attend counselling sessions consistently. Youth centres should also strengthen cooperation with families, schools and community stakeholders to provide

additional support to youth exposed to negative peer and social influences. Policy makers and youth-service providers should allocate adequate resources to support regular counselling programmes in youth centres. Future studies should examine the long-term contribution of counselling-session frequency to reducing risky behaviour among youth in other settings.

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