WHO Early Adolescent Skills for Emotions (EASE):

A potentially scalable psychological intervention for young adolescents and their caregivers, living in communities affected by adversity

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On behalf of EASE Research Team(s):
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World Health Organization
Background

• **Adversity** (humanitarian, poverty, violence, post-conflict...)

• **Top ten burden of disease & injury, 10–24-year-olds:** depressive disorders, self-harm, anxiety disorders

• **Demand for younger adolescents (10-14yrs)**

Principles for potential scalability

• Transdiagnostic
• Brief
• Group delivery
• Feasible for non-specialist providers
• Adaptable to different contexts, adversity

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EASE intervention

Target
• 10-14 years old; & caregivers
• Internalising problems

Intervention
• Group
• 7 weekly sessions - young adolescents
• 3 x sessions - caregivers

Delivery
• 2 vs 1 provider
• Protection pathways
• Intervention manual, storybook, & associated materials
EASE young adolescent strategies

- Psychoeducation
- Stress Management
- Behavioral Activation
- Problem Solving
- Relapse prevention

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EASE caregiver strategies

- Psychoeducation
- Emotion identification and active listening
- Quality time
- Praise
- Alternatives to harsh punishment
- Self care
- Relapse prevention
## EASE testing sites

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country (design)</th>
<th>Jordan (RCT)</th>
<th>Lebanon (RCT)</th>
<th>Pakistan (cRCT)</th>
<th>Tanzania (feasibility cRCT)</th>
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<tr>
<td>Partners (funders)</td>
<td>UNSW, IFH (R2HC)</td>
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<td>HDRF, UoL (MRC, DfID, NIHR)</td>
<td>IRC, JHU (Oak Foundation)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Target</td>
<td>Syrian refugees</td>
<td>Syrian, Palestinian refugees, Lebanese nationals</td>
<td>Rural school attending children in Rawalpindi</td>
<td>Burundi refugees</td>
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<tr>
<td>Delivery</td>
<td>Community</td>
<td>Community</td>
<td>Schools</td>
<td>Camp</td>
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</table>
| Primary outcome | PSC | PSC | PSC | AYP A
Methodology

Phase 1
- **Adaptation** of intervention for local sociocultural context *(qualitative research)* and, sometimes, an uncontrolled pilot run

Phase 2
- **Small, feasibility randomized controlled trial (RCT)**
  - (a) feasibility, safety and delivery of intervention in a RCT
  - (b) feasibility of high quality evaluation (*n* = 40 – 120)

Phase 3
- **Process evaluation (qualitative research)** of administering and trailing the intervention to finalize intervention and prepare for Phase 4 (*n* = 25)

Phase 4
- Large, **definitive, state-of-art RCT** (*n* = 350-550)

Phase 5
- **Process evaluation (qualitative research)** of administering the intervention to prepare for scaling up (*n* = 25)

Tanzania: doi: 10.21203/rs.3.rs-295574/v1

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EASE Jordan

- EASE, (N= 185) , EUC (N= 286)
- **Adolescents:**
  - PSC-internalising scale
- **Caregivers:**
  - psychological distress
  - inconsistent disciplinary parenting
- **Mediation analysis:**
  - indirect path - receiving EASE and greater reductions in child internalising symptoms via reductions in caregivers’ inconsistent disciplinary behaviours
- **No other effects** on adolescent measures
The specific aims

1. To examine *relevant concepts*

2. To *adapt the English standard EASE* protocol for Burundian early adolescents in Tanzania

3. To understand the *cultural acceptability and feasibility* of the adapted EASE intervention with Burundian early adolescents in Tanzania

4. To develop and test the research protocol to *explore potential effectiveness* of the EASE intervention with Burundian early adolescents in Tanzania
• Adaptations based on the findings of this study are anticipated to enhance relevance and acceptability of the EASE intervention and its delivery for camp-residing Burundian refugees in Tanzania

Closing comments

• EASE:
  • promising for adolescents with internalising symptoms affected by adversity

Further consideration:
  • principles of implementation

Potential:
  • entry, delivery, integration in wider child/family sectors
  • stepped care / options of delivery (HAT, STARS)
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