

## **ABSTRACT**

There is a paucity of evidence regarding interventions that can improve the mental health of adversity-affected young adolescents living in low-resource settings. We evaluated the feasibility, acceptability, relevance, and safety of the World Health Organization's Early Adolescent Skills for Emotions (EASE) intervention among Burundian refugee adolescents and their caregivers in Tanzania. This study consisted of a feasibility cluster randomized controlled trial (cRCT) and a process evaluation. The feasibility cRCT included 82 young adolescents and their 64 caregivers, with two clusters randomized to EASE and two to an enhanced control condition. EASE was delivered by adult refugees without prior training in mental health. The process evaluation consisted of 36 semi-structured qualitative interviews with key stakeholders, including adolescents, caregivers, and facilitators. EASE participants and facilitators gave positive feedback about its format, accessibility, and content. Trained non-specialist refugee facilitators were able to deliver EASE with high fidelity. The research protocol functioned well in terms of balanced randomization, limited loss to follow-up, and psychometrically promising measures, but discordance was observed between the short screener and psychological distress symptom checklist. This formative study suggests the potential of EASE in targeting psychological distress among displaced young adolescents and lays the groundwork for a future definitive trial.

**Keywords:** Psychological intervention Feasibility cluster randomized controlled trial Low-resource settings Humanitarian emergencies Refugees Adolescents