# Early Adolescent Skills for Emotions (EASE)

#### **Purpose**

Equip individuals, including professional actors, volunteers or community members, with knowledge and skills to enhance problem management and coping skills amongst adolescents living under adverse conditions.

#### **Briefly about**

EASE is an evidence-based group psychological intervention to help <u>10–15-year-olds</u> affected by internalizing problems (e.g. stress and symptoms of anxiety, depression) in communities exposed to adversity.

Published by the WHO and UNICEF, EASE aims to support adolescents and their caregivers with skills to reduce distress.

The intervention consists of 7 group sessions for adolescents and 3 additional group sessions for their caregivers. It is based on aspects adapted from Cognitive Behavioural Therapy and has been designed to be suitable for delivery by trained and supervised non-specialist helpers.

#### **Target Groups**

#### **EASE Helper:**

The target group for the EASE training comprises: (a) mental health professionals who have not previously been trained in the strategies described in EASE; (b) people without professional training in mental health care (ranging from people with a degree in psychology, but without formal training and supervision in psychological interventions, to community workers and other non-specialist helpers); and (c) trainers and supervisors of helpers who will offer EASE.

#### **EASE** beneficiaries:

EASE is for adolescents aged approximately 10–15 years. who are affected by adversity. It has been designed to help adolescents cope with internalizing problems (such as feelings of intense sadness, anxiety or stress, etc.). It is for adolescents whose emotional distress could be at a level that is interfering with their functioning. EASE is also for the caregivers of these adolescents. In EASE, caregivers are given skills to support their child

#### **Outcomes**

The EASE adolescent sessions aim to improve an adolescent's capacity to better manage or cope with internalizing problems. Specifically, these sessions help adolescents to: Improve identifying their feelings. Improve stress management. Increase behavioural activation & problem-solving

#### **Monitoring and Evaluation**

The EASE manual provides a thorough guide on how to do the assessments, why doing assessments and when to do the assessments. Measuring EASE follows a pre and post assessment structure. Both caregivers and adolescents are being assessed individually.

The organization implementing EASE will need to select which measures to use for the assessments of adolescents and their caregivers. It may be necessary for organizations to

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translate, culturally adapt and validate any measures used, and for all measures, a locally validated cut-off score should be used. The assessment measures are ideally the same for the pre-intervention and postintervention assessments.

- Basic demographic information
- Internalizing problems eg. e Pediatric Symptom Checklists (PSC-17 or PSC-35) or WHO mhGAP assessment of emotional disorders tool
- Risk of self-harm and thoughts of suicide

#### **Key considerations**

Implementing EASE requires thoughtful adaptation to local contexts, especially in terms of language, cultural norms, and adolescent development.

EASE is a group-based intervention for young adolescents (10–14 years) delivered through seven weekly sessions and three caregiver sessions. The group setting is crucial for peer interaction and normalisation of emotional challenges.

Facilitators should have experience working with children or adolescents and be trained in child safeguarding and communication. Training and regular supervision are essential to ensure fidelity and emotional safety.

Caregiver involvement is a key component of EASE and supports the child's emotional regulation and well-being beyond the sessions.

Coordination with schools, community leaders, and child protection systems enhances feasibility, engagement, and sustainability.

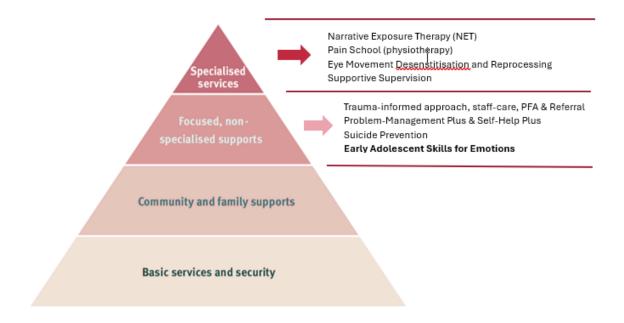
#### **Check questions**

In my organisation, we need an evidence-based, scalable intervention to support the
mental health of early adolescents.
We can recruit and train facilitators who are comfortable working with young
adolescents and are open to learning and applying EASE methods.
My organisation can ensure appropriate supervision, child protection measures, and
coordination with caregivers, schools, and relevant services.
Our team is willing and able to follow the EASE protocol, use the materials provided,
monitor participant progress, and participate in supportive supervision.

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### **Type of intervention**

EASE is a focused, non-specialised intervention



#### Implementation overview: Early Adolescent Skills for Emotions (EASE) Host 10-day in-person training workshop for Recruit 10 interested trainers amongst EASE Helpers (or 5-days Ensure that EASE Helpers experienced EASE Helpers and/or mental health Partner for experienced MH implement the intervention Develop full implementation professionals professionals) actions to identified beneficiaries. and scale-up plan, including Organise training logistics Ensure that trained Each intervention consists of set up monitoring and Host 5-day ToT training Helpers delivers EASE to 7 sessions for a group of xx From ToT cohort and/or MH professionals, evaluation system and tools 2 clients with detailed adolescents and 3 Identify and recruit 1020 identify 6 participants for supervisor training feedback additional group sessions for potential EASE Helpers for Host 2-day training in supportive supervision Host 2-3 days training their caregivers Establish sustainable supervision structure training Monitor treatment outcomes Organise training logistics for supervisors based on local health system Preparation (1-3 months) Training (2 months) Scale-up capacity (12-18 months) Adapt materials if Deliver 2-hour online Deliver supervision to EASE Deliver 5-day ToT training implemented for the first Helpers pre-training webinar Deliver 2-day supportive supervision training **DIGNITY** Support monitoring of time in context (optional) Support establishment of sustainable treatment outcomes and Identify NGO or institution Deliver 5-day insupervision structure actions documenting effects taking responsibility for person training implementation and workshop, incl. supportive supervision pre/post evaluation

Phase I: first cohort of 20 EASE Helpers trained => capacity to reach 300 adolecent beneficiaries per year

**Phase II:** ToT cohort trained and supervision structure established => capacity to reach 2400 beneficiaries per year