Promoting resilience among children growing up in conflict

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Outline of presentation

• What have we learned about how to treat distress and promote resilience?
• Intro to War Child Holland’s care system approach for children affected by conflict
• Overview of current research underway
• Outline of planned evaluation of Early Adolescent Skills for Emotions
What have we learned about how to treat distress and promote resilience?
What have we learned?

- It’s more than mental health- don’t just consider diagnoses

- Drop out from school
- Sleep problems
- Concentration problems
- Anger, aggression, acting out
- Isolation
- Grief, sadness, emotional problems
- Moral problems: disobedience, early sexual behaviors, gang-like behaviors
- Substance use
What have we learned?

- It’s more than mental health—don’t just consider diagnoses
- Think across the entire spectrum—resilience to disorder
What have we learned?

• It’s more than mental health- don’t just consider diagnoses
• Think across the entire spectrum- resilience to disorder
• A stepped care approach
What have we learned?

- It’s more than mental health - don’t just consider diagnoses
- Think across the entire spectrum - resilience to disorder
- A stepped care approach
- An ecological approach
What have we learned?

• It’s more than mental health- don’t just consider diagnoses
• Think across the entire spectrum- resilience to disorder
• A stepped care approach
• An ecological approach
• A holistic and integrated approach
What have we learned?

- It’s more than mental health- don’t just consider diagnoses
- Think across the entire spectrum- resilience to disorder
- A stepped care approach
- An ecological approach
- A holistic and integrated approach
- Move towards scalable, non-specialist models
What have we learned?

• It’s more than mental health—don’t just consider diagnoses
• Think across the entire spectrum—resilience to disorder
• A stepped care approach
• An ecological approach
• A holistic and integrated approach
• Move towards scalable, non-specialist models
• Consider active components of interventions
Intro to War Child Holland’s care system approach
Nine Core Interventions

**FAMILY NETWORK INTERVENTION:**
focuses on supporting families with multiple problems

**FOCUSED PSYCHOLOGICAL SUPPORT INTERVENTION:**
for more severely affected children

**CASE MANAGEMENT:**
process of helping individual children and families

**PARENT SUPPORT INTERVENTION:**
psychosocial support to parents through a group intervention

**I-DEAL:**
psychosocial support to children and young people through a group intervention

**COMMUNITY BASED CHILD PROTECTION:**
working in communities on violence, abuse, neglect and exploitation of children

**TEACHER PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT:**
capacity building of teachers

**SAFE SCHOOLS:**
spaces for learning and healing where children can reach their full potential while exercising their rights

**CAN'T WAIT TO LEARN:**
innovation approach to provide quality education for children affected by conflict
War Child Care System

• Integrated care

• Multi-layered approach

• Ecological

• Context sensitive
Current MHPSS research underway

- Caregiver Support Intervention
  - oPt & Lebanon
- iDEAL
  - Lebanon & Jordan
- EASE
  - Lebanon
iDEAL RCT: Lebanon

Children aged 11-15
Akkar governorate

I-DEAL: psychosocial support to children and young people through a group intervention

Baseline
- iDEAL
  16 sessions, 90 min
  Themes

- Structured recreational activities
  16 sessions, 30 min

Post Tx
Post Tx
3mo FU
3mo FU

Wellbeing
Psych Sx
Early Adolescent Skills for Emotions

FOCUSED
PSYCHOLOGICAL
Support Intervention:
for more severely affected
children

World Health Organization
UNSW
Sydney
EU
Strenghts

This project has received funding from the European Union’s Horizon 2020 Research and Innovation programme Societal Challenges under Grant Agreement No 733337.
Early Adolescent Skills for Emotions (EASE)

• Group psychological help for young adolescents impaired by distress in communities exposed to adversity

• For whom?
  - 10-14 year olds, transdiagnostic (stress, depression, anxiety)

• What?
  - Problem-solving, identifying feelings, stress management, behavioural activation, strengthening social supports

• Format
  - 7 sessions group format plus brief intervention for parents
EASE in Lebanon

• Syrian, Lebanese, Palestinian children
• Conducted through Back 2 the Future- EU Madad funded education programme
• Locations-
  • most vulnerable regions in Tripoli and Akkar
• Facilitators-
  • Experienced, non-specialist PSS facilitators from existing WCH programmes
WHO’s five phase model for new intervention testing

- **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)* to explore (a) feasibility, safety and delivery of intervention in a RCT and (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)*
Adaptation process

1a. Desk Review

1b. Rapid Qualitative Assessment

1c. Cognitive interviewing

1d. Psychologist read through

1e. Mock sessions EASE

OUTPUTS
1. Bernal framework completed
2. Revision EASE materials

ADAPTATION WORKSHOP
21-22 Sept Beirut
Example adaptations

• Addressing aggression and bullying throughout

• Reducing resources needed—such as costumes, coloured pencils

• Prioritising problems during problem solving

• Quality time needs to consider large families, limited space, and limited time
Take home messages

• Promoting resilience and reducing distress among children affected by armed conflict requires a comprehensive approach

• Actual impact can only be made if we can provide feasible and quality support at scale

• Rigorous research is essential to support this
Thank you!

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