

# Feasibility and Relatability of Cultural Adaptation Amongst Conflict-Affected Populations

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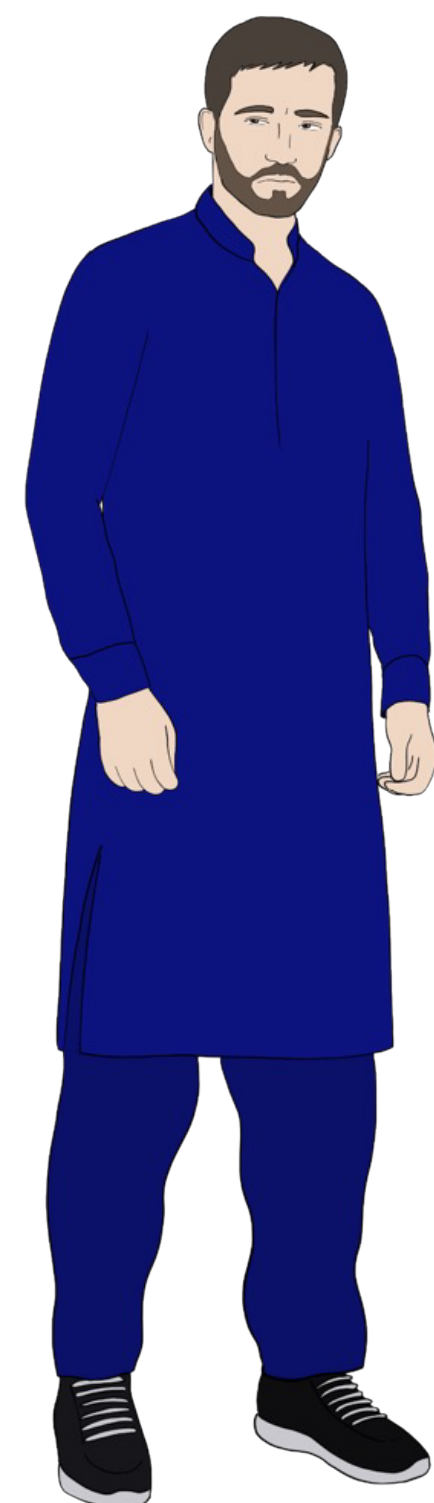
## Background

- Migrants in Switzerland are faced with disproportionate barriers to mental health services and access to effective interventions is limited.
- START NOW is an evidence-based, integrative skills training program, incorporating core features of resilience, such as effective emotion and stress regulation, self-efficacy and cognitive reappraisal.
- In culturally-adapted the program, eleven characters of male and female Persian / Afghan ethnicity, and fifteen storylines describing negative experiences commonly faced by migrants, were created.
- Content testing was conducted with the feasibility and reliability of characters and storylines scored on a Likert scale by participants.



## Aims & Objectives

- Identifying the six most relatable characters and ten most relatable storylines to feature in the program manual.
- Primary outcome to improve symptoms of depression and anxiety, and reduce levels of stress in the migrant population.
- Outcomes of the intervention should be maximised with high relatability.

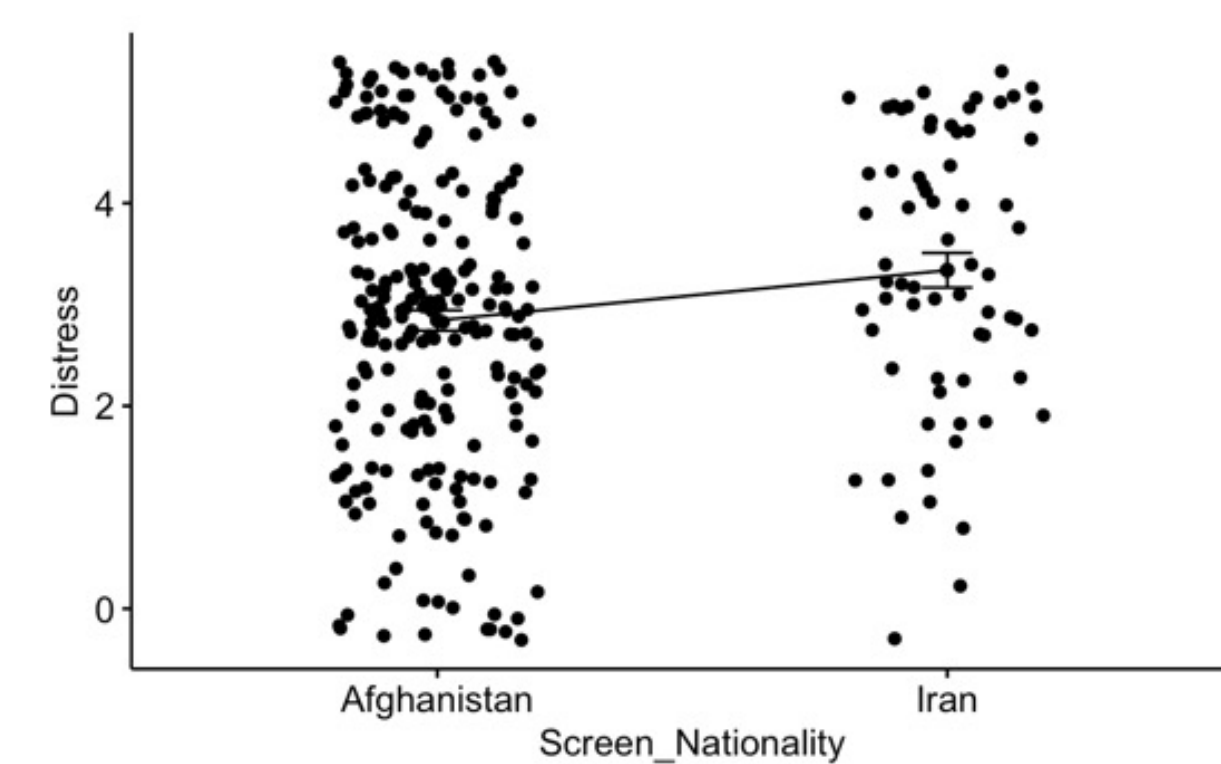


## Methods

- Scoring was collected through a Qualtrics survey, available in English or Farsi.
- Inclusion criteria of speaking and reading some Farsi, aged 14-40, Afghan or Iranian nationality, experiencing psychological distress but not suicidal ideation.
- Participants scored each character and storyline between 1 and 5 (0=not relatable at all, 5=very relatable).

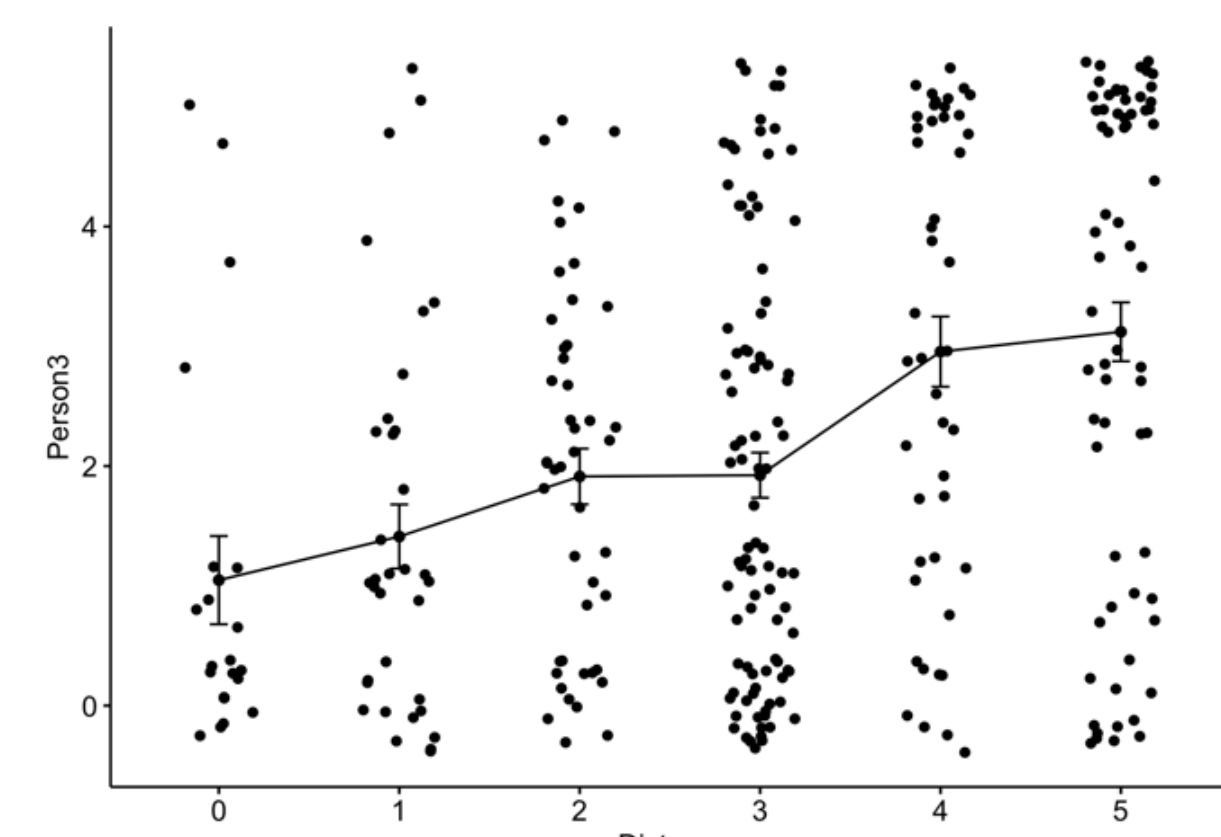
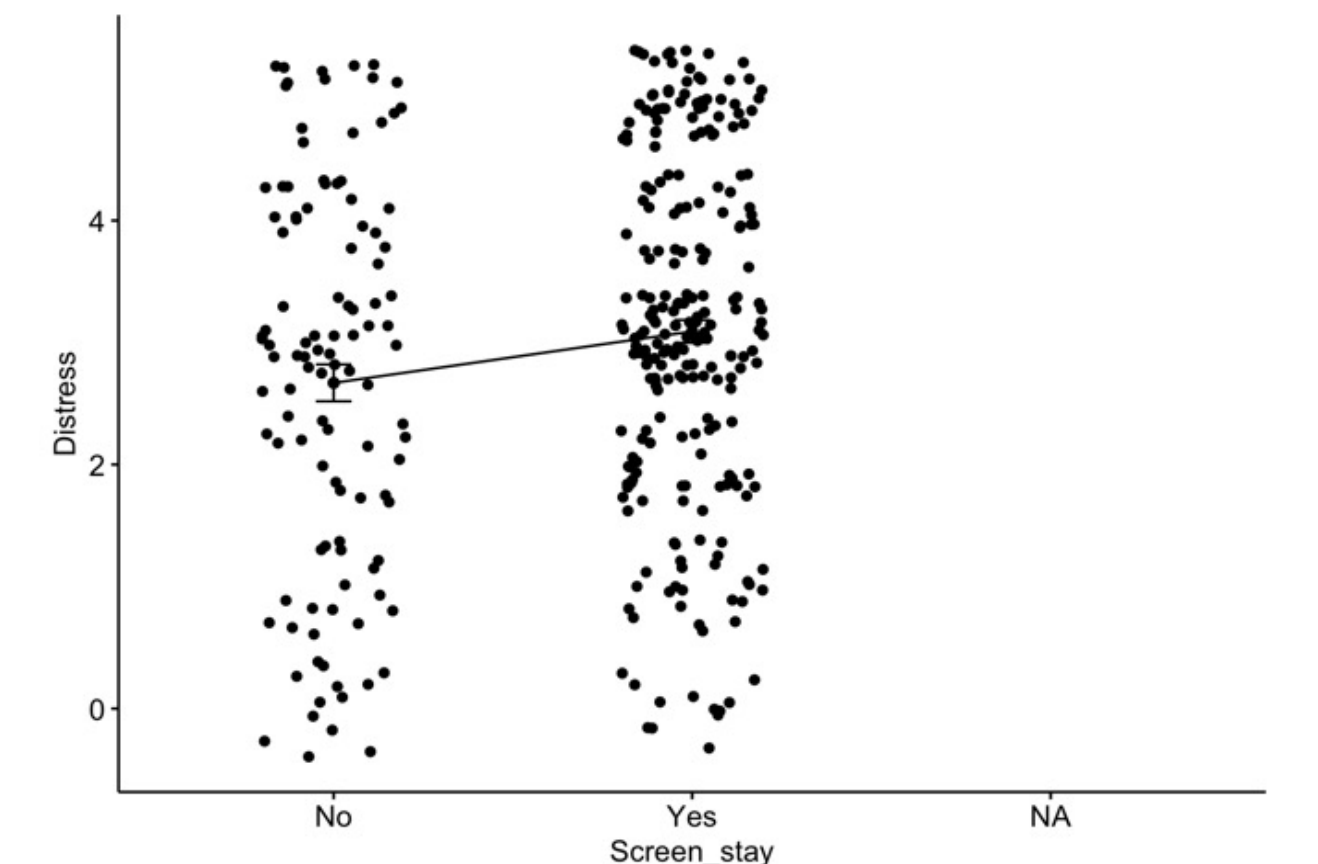
## Results

- A majority of respondents reported suffering from at least some level of psychological distress (range = 0 to 5; Mean=2.96; Median=3; SD=1.5)
- Distress was not correlated with age ( $\rho=-0.023$ ;  $p=0.691$ )



- There was no difference between genders ( $t(132.3)=0.798$ ;  $p=.426$ ), but between nationalities ( $t(117.6)=-2.493$ ;  $p=.014$ ), with Iranians experiencing higher levels of distress ( $M=3.34$ ,  $se=0.17$ ) compared with Afghans ( $M=2.84$ ;  $se=0.10$ ).

- There was no difference between gender regarding psychological distress, however there was a significant difference in level of distress for people who expressed wanting to stay in Switzerland and those who did not.



- Respondents who reported greater levels of distress also reported a higher value of relatability to the characters and storylines (.3 medium effect size). One such example is the response to character 3.

## Conclusions

- There is a clear correlation between reporting high levels of distress and higher relatability to characters.
- The level of psychological distress experienced by participants only correlated with nationality, indicating that gender and age has little to no effect.
- Further studies could discover any correlation between psychological distress and narrower characteristics.

## Implications

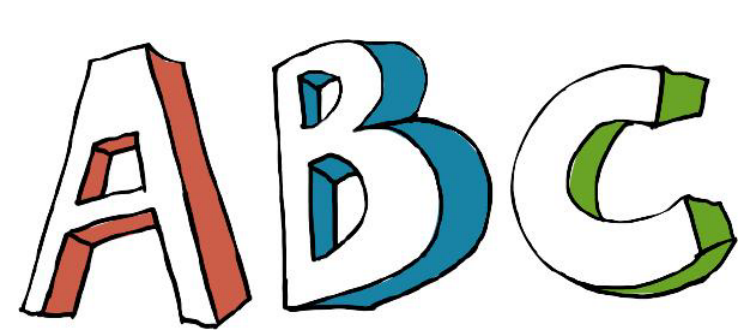
- Data collected through content testing will increase the relatability, and therefore effectiveness, of the intervention for target beneficiaries.
- This higher rate of relatability should contribute towards a greater reduction in symptoms of depression, anxiety and stress in participants.

## Session Structure

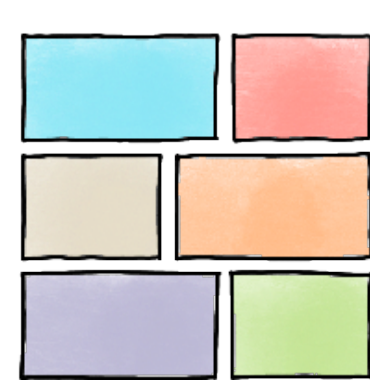
The skills training is delivered through clinical sessions, and will include:



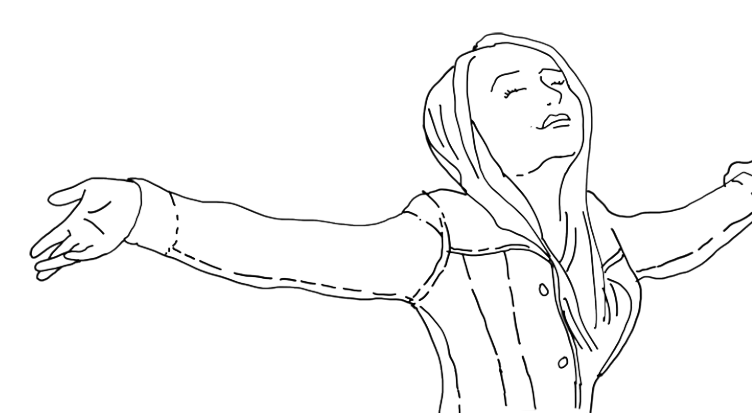
Mindfulness  
Exercises



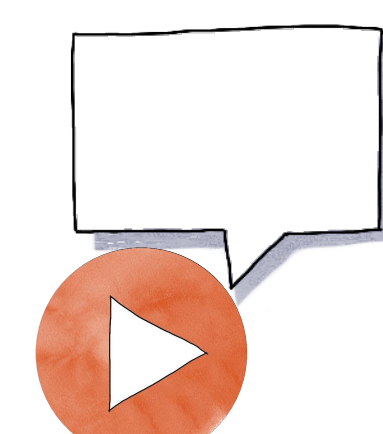
ABC of Emotions



Comic Strip



'Focus on You'



Film Clip  
& Discussion



Skills Training,  
Including Roleplay

## Projected Hypothesis

START NOW skills training with guided support by a clinical psychologist (skills training + guidance) is more efficient in decreasing symptoms of depression and anxiety, and in decreasing symptoms of stress, than no treatment, as assessed by the HSCL-25 score and by cortisol levels in hair sample.