

Self-Help Plus (SH+)

Purpose

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

Briefly about

SH+ is an evidence-based intervention model from WHO. It entails 5-session stress management course for groups of up to 20 adults. Research in some contexts, has shown to reduce psychological distress and prevent the onset of mental disorders.

SH+ can be delivered by supervised, non-specialist facilitators who complete the short SH+ training course and use pre-recorded audio and an illustrated guide to teach stress management skills.

The format of SH+ makes it well-suited for use alongside other mental health interventions as a first step in a stepped care programme or as a community intervention delivered in a broader programme. Therefore, a referral network for more specialised support should be identified before implementation.

Target groups

SH+ beneficiaries

The SH+ intervention is suited for adults experiencing psychological distress. It is especially suited for people affected by adversity in places where it is difficult to provide or supervise more resource-intensive psychological interventions.

SH+ can benefit individuals with varying levels of education including illiterates. It is not suitable for individuals in an acute crisis and/or persons who are overwhelmed by their situation.

SH+ facilitators

The SH+ training educates a cohort of SH+ facilitators to deliver the intervention to beneficiaries.

SH+ facilitators are individuals with a genuine interest in helping others. They do not necessarily have a mental health background. They should speak the language, good interpersonal skills, have a flair for group facilitation, and ideally have the same cultural background to that of beneficiaries. It can include community workers or leaders. Ideally, SH+ facilitators have completed secondary level education.

Outcomes

SH+ facilitators will experience the following change:

- Professional development through expanded knowledge basic helping skills, and improved ability to provide psychological support in a group setting

- Personal growth through increased self-awareness, ability to manage their own stress and exercising empathy and understanding for people experiencing psychological distress

Beneficiaries receiving SH+ support will likely experience the following change:

- Improvements in mental health and wellbeing, including reduction in psychological distress.
- Increase in stress management and coping skills.

Monitoring and evaluation

To assess the effects of SH+, a measurement tool is used both before and after the intervention. SH+ does not provide a standardized monitoring tool within its manual, and tools can be adapted to the context. Effects can be measured on variables such as pain intensity, distress and emotion regulation difficulties.

Additionally, evaluating the acceptability of the intervention before scaling up the program can provide valuable insights for adaptation and improvement.

Key considerations

SH+ is implemented with the aid of audio recordings, which requires adequate technical equipment. If it has not been implemented in the context before, it needs adaptation to context and translation to local languages.

SH+ facilitators should speak the same language and ideally have a similar cultural background as participants. They should have adequate time available to prepare, rehearse in smaller groups after the SH+ training, practice and receive supportive supervision.

Implementing SH+ requires a sustainable supervision structure, which can ensure adequate mentoring and support to SH+ facilitators. Achieving scale through a Training of Trainers model requires anchoring with mental health professionals.

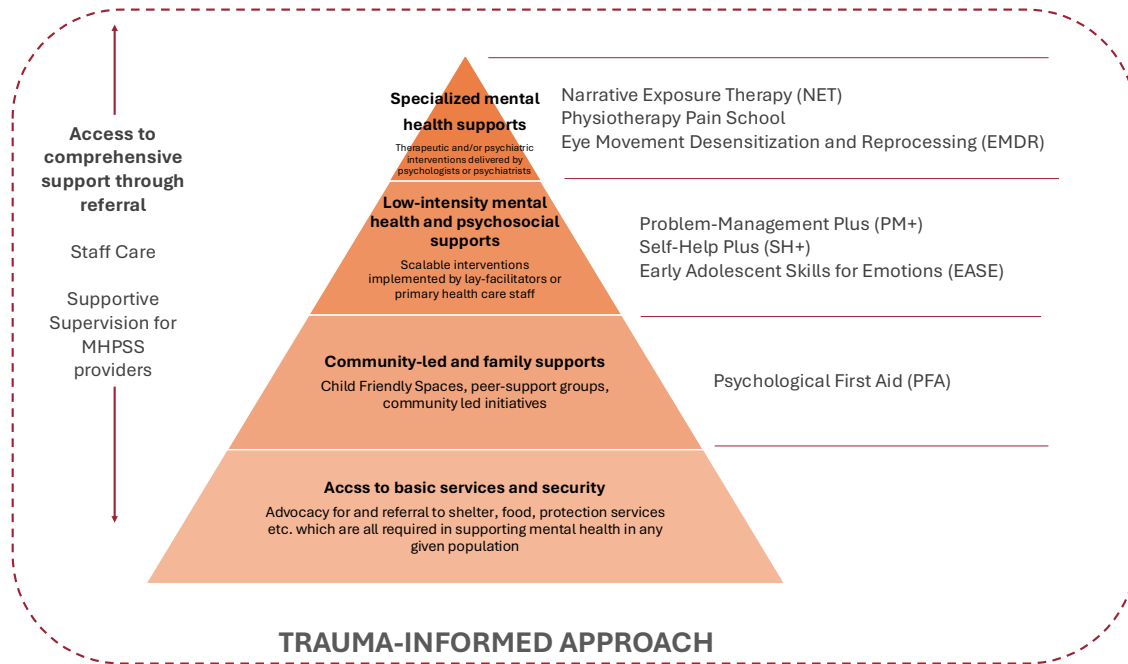
Therefore, it is highly recommended to include and engage mental health professionals from the outset, i.e. the first cohort of SH+ facilitators, to achieve a sustainable and scalable structure.

Check questions

- ☐ In my organisation, we need a structured and scalable approach to assist people in distress.
- ☐ Managers in my organisation are willing and able to allocate sufficient time and resources for staff to participate in SH+ training, allow staff to rehearse and implement the intervention.
- ☐ Staff in my organisation are willing and able to follow the SH+ guidelines, use the tools and collect pre- and post-data from beneficiaries.

Type of intervention

SH+ is a focused, non-specialised intervention



Implementation overview: SH+

