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Project Title:

Cultural Adaptation and Effectiveness of YMHFA for Arab, Middle Eastern, and North African (AMENA) Adults

Summary:

Research has shown that Arab, Middle Eastern, and North African (AMENA) youth often experience unique challenges, including acculturative stress, Islamophobia, and other forms of ethnic/racial discrimination. AMENA individuals also report particularly high rates of mental health challenges, considerable stigma surrounding mental illness, and low rates of mental health service usage, perhaps due to lack of culturally responsive resources. There is little known about the effects of YMHFA among AMENA communities, but scholars of AMENA mental health have suggested that culturally tailored outreach and education programs aimed at improving mental health literacy and knowledge of mental health resources may be helpful for AMENA populations.

Culturally adapting YMHFA for AMENA communities may be an effective way of reducing stigma and improving knowledge of mental health and mental health resources among AMENA groups in a more culturally responsive way. This study will use a longitudinal, mixed-methods, and randomized controlled trial (RCT) design to collaborate with AMENA communities, learn about their experiences and needs surrounding mental health, and culturally adapt the YMHFA program accordingly. We will first hold focus groups with AMENA individuals to seek feedback about their experiences. After identifying emerging themes from these interviews and using them to guide our cultural adaptation of the YMHFA training, we will then recruit AMENA parents to participate in the culturally adapted YMHFA training and will conduct an RCT to determine the effectiveness of the training. This study will fill a gap in the literature by increasing understanding culture-specific mental health needs of AMENA communities and examining the effectiveness of a culturally adapted version of YMHFA for this drastically understudied population.