

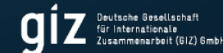
ECONOMIC INCLUSION

FOR THE POOREST – MOVING TO SCALE

GLOBAL LEARNING EVENT 2021



Session 2.2: Behavior and Mindset Changes



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The Impact of Cognitive Behavioural Therapy (CBT) on the Psychological & Economic Lives of the Poor in Ghana

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Angela Ofori-Atta,
University of Ghana

Nate Barker, *Yale University*

Elizabeth Bradley,
Vassar College

Gharad Bryan, *LSE*

Dean Karlan,
Northwestern University

Christopher Udry,
Northwestern University

The Link Between Poverty and Poor Mental Health

- **Living in poverty** is very stressful
- This can lead to **depression** and **lower cognitive bandwidth** for decision-making
- Can a **cognitive behavioral therapy** intervention improve mental health for ultra-poor individuals?
- Does improved mental health lead to **better economic outcomes**?

Study Context: Ghana



- **Regions:** Upper East, Northern, Bono East (formerly Brong Ahafo), Ashanti
- CBT intervention integrated into **graduation programme** run by Heifer International
- **7700 individuals** from 258 communities assigned to one of four study arms:
 - Pure control
 - CBT only
 - Graduation only
 - Graduation + CBT
- **Midline survey data** collected 3 months after CBT intervention

Image from <http://districts.ghana-net.com/index.html>. Accessed June 18, 2019.

The Cognitive Behavioral Therapy Intervention

- Intervention designed by **Dr Afori-Atta**
- **Four main modules:**
 - How to listen to thoughts, identify errors in thinking, challenge them, and replace harmful thoughts with more adaptive ones
 - Communication and conflict resolution skills
 - Healthy living (diet, exercise, stress reduction)
 - Goal setting, planning, celebration
- **Programme implementation**
 - Interactive group of 10 -12 participants, in separate male and female groups
 - 12 weekly meetings
 - Delivered by university graduates trained for two weeks and supported by IPA programme staff
 - Programme monitored by psychiatric nurses

Kessler Psychological Distress Scale

During the past 7 days, about how often did you feel nervous?	1 = None of the time 2 = A little of the time 3 = Some of the time 4 = Most of the time 5 = All of the time
During the past 7 days, about how often did you feel hopeless?	1 = None of the time 2 = A little of the time 3 = Some of the time 4 = Most of the time 5 = All of the time
During the past 7 days, about how often did you feel restless or fidgety?	1 = None of the time 2 = A little of the time 3 = Some of the time 4 = Most of the time 5 = All of the time
During the past 7 days, about how often did you feel that everything was an effort?	1 = None of the time 2 = A little of the time 3 = Some of the time 4 = Most of the time 5 = All of the time
During the past 7 days, about how often did you feel so sad that nothing could cheer you up?	1 = None of the time 2 = A little of the time 3 = Some of the time 4 = Most of the time 5 = All of the time
During the past 7 days, about how often did you feel worthless?	1 = None of the time 2 = A little of the time 3 = Some of the time 4 = Most of the time 5 = All of the time

Mental Health Issues are Very Common

- At baseline:
 - 55% of individuals report **any psychological distress**
 - 15% of those individuals **report severe psychological distress**
- But mental health can change rapidly
 - **Distress levels vary over time**, even without therapy, in response to trauma or changes in income
 - Of people with **no psychological distress** at baseline, 43% experience distress at midline
 - Of people with **moderate to severe mental distress** at baseline, 65% report no mental distress at midline

Does CBT Improve Mental & Physical Health?

- CBT recipients report **less psychological distress**
 - 13% less distress of any sort
 - 26% less moderate distress
 - 31% less severe distress
- Other measures of **soft skills** improve
 - Socioemotional skills ↑ by 0.28 standard deviations
 - Cognitive skills ↑ by 0.08 standard deviations
- **Physical health** improves
 - 26% fewer days with poor physical health

**all estimates statistically significant at $p = 0.01$*

Who Benefits from CBT and How?

- Who **benefits the most** from CBT?
 - CBT seems to help individuals regardless of whether they experienced psychological distress at baseline
 - Many people who aren't distressed at baseline may experience distress later – and CBT can prepare them with skills to help them cope
- Can CBT affect recipients' **economic outcomes**?
 - Endline survey data on economic outcomes is not yet available
 - At midline, recipients report **0.7 more days spent working each month** due to better mental & physical health
 - Improvements in **cognitive capacity & socioemotional skills** also correlated with better economic outcomes in other literature
 - So there's reason for optimism here, but we'll need to see endline data to be sure



Thank You!

angela.oforiatta@gmail.com

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www.peiglobal.org



peimt@worldbank.org



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*Thank
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