

# 34<sup>th</sup> International Conference on Psychology, Psychotherapy and Mental Wellness

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Webinar

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## Using narrative exposure therapy (NET) for internally displaced ethiopian women: Addressing trauma in resource-limited settings

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The escalation of ethnic conflicts and the North Ethiopian War have resulted in a significant rise in internally displaced women and children in Ethiopia, reaching its peak in 2021. Displaced women and girls experience multiple layers of trauma throughout their displacement journey, creating a pressing need for effective and accessible mental health interventions. However, substantial gaps exist in the understanding of the accessibility and cultural relevance of such interventions in Ethiopia. While Narrative Exposure Therapy (NET), a structured six-session group-based intervention, has shown efficacy in various African contexts, its effectiveness remains untested for Ethiopian women suffering from PTSD due to displacement. This study employed a single-arm pre-post design, combined with a thematic qualitative approach, to assess the impact of NET on PTSD symptoms in nine internally displaced Ethiopian women. The participants engaged in six weekly two-hour group therapy sessions facilitated by three trained psychologists following the NET manual. The findings revealed a significant reduction in PTSD symptoms, with participants showing improvements in cognitive clarity, emotional regulation, physiological responses, behavioral adaptations, and social-relational dynamics. These results suggest that NET could be a valuable and culturally attuned intervention for trauma recovery among internally displaced women in Ethiopia. In this presentation, we will discuss the study's methodology, results, and implications for trauma care in resource-limited settings. We aim to provide mental health practitioners and policymakers with insights into how culturally responsive trauma interventions, like NET, can support healing and resilience in displaced populations.

**Table 1.** Wilcoxon Signed-Rank Test of Differences Between Pre- and Postintervention Scores

Outcomes	Pre- Intervention Md	Post- Intervention Md	W	p- value	Cohen's d
PTSD symptoms (HTQ)	3.09	2.12	-2.666	.008	0.62
Cognitive Difficulty	3.08	2.00	-2.375	.018	0.55
Emotional Challenges	3.30	2.33	-2.499	.012	0.56
Physiological and Behavioral Reactions	3.10	2.04	-2.527	.012	0.59
Social and Relational Difficulty	2.88	2.05	-2.461	.014	0.58

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## Biography

Waganesh Zeleke, an Associate Professor of Mental Health Counselling at Virginia Commonwealth University, is a Licensed Clinical Professional Counselor (LPC) and a National Certified Counsellor (NCC). She earned her doctorate during counselling at the University of Montana. Her research focuses on the intersection of culture, context, and mental health within the healthcare and educational systems. Dr. Zeleke has received numerous awards, including the US Fulbright Scholar and Cultural Diversity Research Award of the International Society for Autism Research. She has authored numerous articles and book chapters and has presented at various professional conferences on topics such as trauma, immigrant mental health, autism, and parenting. Dr. Zeleke has also led or contributed to various research grants in these areas. In her clinical work, she offers counselling, supervision, and consultation services, specializing in trauma-informed treatment, mindful practice, parenting, autism intervention, and culturally responsive mental health and wellness care.

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