

## **Prevention of Depression in Adolescence: the use of Skill Facilitation Approaches**

Leunita Makutsa, Patrick Wanjala & Rispa Wepukhulu

### **Abstract**

Depression during childhood and the tremendous increase in depressive symptoms during early and mid-adolescence is a more public concern, not only in Europe and the U.S but also in other parts of the world. In Germany, for instance, 5.2% of 7 to 13 year olds and 5.6% of 14- to 17-year old adolescents show clinically relevant symptoms of depression (conservative estimate based on representative data; Ravens-Sieberer, Willie, Bettge, & Erhart, 2007). Risk factors for depression in adolescence are rooted in children's biological and personality characteristics interacting with adverse environmental factors which may lead to cognitive biases (e.g., Lewis, Jones, & Goodyer, 2016). Additional negative life events and various bio psychosocial processes during puberty, such as hormonal, brain-related, and cognitive changes, increased self-awareness or peer-related risks like teasing (Nolen-Hoeksema & Hilt, 2009; Weichold & Silbereisen, 2008) seem to be responsible for the increase in mild to severe forms of depression from childhood to adolescence. Especially girls with an early timing of pubertal maturation are at risk for developing depression with an early onset and chronic progression (Weichold, Silbereisen, & Schmitt-Rodermund, 2003). Because sub threshold depression and clinically relevant forms create significant individual and social costs (e.g., Bertha & Balazas, 2013), effective prevention strategies are urgently needed.

**Keywords:** Depression, adolescence, prevention, skill facilitation, risk factors