

CONVERSATION TO ACTION: CULTURALLY INFORMED PRACTICE

EVENT REPORT

An event hosted by Glasgow City HSCP exploring Black and Minority Ethnic Young People's Mental Health and Wellbeing in Glasgow City, North West.

APRIL
24
2024

VENUE

Maryhill Burgh Halls, 10-24 Gairbraid Avenue, Glasgow G20 8YE

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40 PARTICIPANTS

- 19 Third Sector
- 20 public sector
- 1 clinical

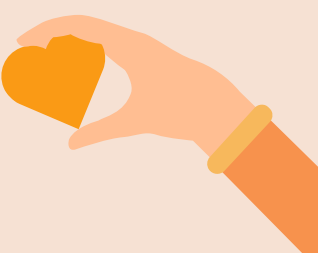


5 PANEL MEMBERS

- Nina Abeysuriya
- Jasmin Aden
- Agatha Kabera
- Dr Sadia Mohammed
- Ahlam Souidi

4 FACILITATORS

- Barbara Adzajlic
- Mary Kate Harte
- Mhairi Shepherd
- Stephanie Thomson



ABOUT THE EVENT

Glasgow City HSCP invited partners from across the North West locality to come together to build cultural awareness and anti-racist practice within mental health support for young people and their families. The Conversation to Action: Culturally Informed Practice event was designed to create opportunities for partners to share learning and good practice through discussion and networking.

The key aims of the event were to:

- Remove fear from asking cultural questions
- Hear about other's experiences
- Identify challenges or barriers to black and young people of colour accessing services
- Consider what organisations can do to address those barriers
- Share learning opportunities and resources that support culturally informed practice

The event was open to those working with children, young people and families, community-based providers of mental health and wellbeing support, and statutory mental health services. Jules Scheele Illustration captured the conversations throughout the event, you can view the illustration in [Appendix 1](#) and via the Jules Scheele website [here](#).

WELCOME AND INTRODUCTION

Mary Kate Harte, Health Improvement Senior, Glasgow City HSCP welcomed participants to the event, provided an outline of the day and established expectations. This highlighted the use of language throughout the day and the different terms that people may use to identify themselves and others, further information and explanations on terms were provided on the tables to support safe discussions around this ([Appendix 2](#)). Participants were reminded to respect others and their experiences and to maintain confidentiality throughout the day. Mental Health First Aiders were identified, and participants were encouraged to seek support if required.

As an initial activity, participants were individually asked what they would like to get out of the day. There were various responses, but the key themes across all were:

- Building Knowledge and understanding
- Improving practice
- Networking

Barbara Adzajlic, Health Improvement Lead for Children & Young People's Mental Health, Glasgow City HSCP, set the scene by delivering a presentation on 'Ethnic inequalities in Children & Young People's Mental Health in Glasgow'. Attendees were then asked to discuss what stood out or surprised them from the presentation with others at their tables. From the comments and discussions captured, the groups agreed that the presentation covered aspects of discrimination and issues of racism but did not cover all the issues that young people of colour experience in Glasgow, and how to best respond to this at a local level. One comment did point out the need to hear more positive accounts and stories of success. Key themes arising from group discussion post-presentation were:

- The importance of hearing the voices and experiences of young people
- Experiences of racism and discrimination within professional services
- Importance of considering the context of where racism and discrimination impacts on young people i.e. schools, home, community, workplaces, online etc.

PANEL DISCUSSION

During the event, facilitators hosted a panel discussion with five panel members, each with experience in tackling racism and discrimination and supporting young people's mental health. The questions were based upon the following themes, and we have summarised the key learning points below.

- **Language and preferred terms** - How young people identify themselves can change over time and is very individual. The ways in which people identify themselves are influenced by a range of factors such as experiences of discrimination, social media and family influences, all of which may evolve through a young person's development. Terms like BAME and BPOC are not terms that everyone is aware of or that young people identify with and we need to be mindful of how we use these terms and their appropriateness. Best practice is to ask young people how they identify themselves.



- **Asking about culture** - It is important to understand why you are asking the question and how it helps you to support the individual. Let people tell their story and acknowledge their experiences, however, it is not the individual's responsibility to educate the professional. We have a professional responsibility to be aware of the different cultures of the people and communities we support, and we must consider each individual's circumstances and their experiences. Discomfort is a barrier to people accessing services and as professionals, we must challenge that. To deliver change, we must ask difficult questions. We must also consider the cause of racial experiences and promote understanding and appropriate responses within our practice.
- **Equality, Diversity and Inclusion in the Workplace** - It is important to have diversity within teams and within team discussions and decisions. Employees remit within the team should be about what they are interested in and passionate about. It should be the whole team/ organisations responsibility to support equality, diversity and inclusion in the workplace and not the remit of Black or People of Colour within the team.
- **Prioritising a Whole Family Approach** - It is important to understand family history, circumstances and parents own health and experience of trauma when supporting children and young people's mental health. Factors such as intergenerational trauma, cultural differences and language can have a huge impact, as well as parents' understanding of mental health. Services must be mindful of cultural influences during assessments and when considering parenting styles. Family perception of, and trust in services should be considered. The intergenerational nature of racialised trauma needs to be recognised, acknowledged, advocated for and addressed, with a focus on reducing harm for the WHOLE family following experiences of racism and discrimination.
- **Advocating for Young People** - As professionals, we have a responsibility to build knowledge and understanding on how to best support all young people engaging with our services, we must take learning opportunities, attend events and training, learn from others and ask questions. It is important to advocate with young people and not always for them, giving young people opportunities for leadership, empowering and motivating young people. Empowering is a process, it is not something we give, it comes through learning, experiences and opportunity to contribute to change. We must engage with young people from different backgrounds and include them in the development of services and employ people with lived experience. We must call out racism and discrimination when we see it.

GROUP DISCUSSION

Following a networking lunch, Mhairi Shepherd, Health Improvement Senior, Glasgow City HSCP, thanked attendees for their participation and engagement in the event so far and outlined the agenda for the afternoon.

After panel discussion and opportunity for panel Q&A, attendees participated in further group discussion to explore what they felt the priorities were moving forward.

Key themes that emerged from this discussion were:

- A whole family approach
- Opportunities for training and further learning around this topic
- Improving communication
- Challenging racism, discrimination and stigma
- Supporting wider communication and cultural needs
- Person-centred care including young people and their families in the conversation
- Creating safe and diverse spaces – representation matters

Cultural Awareness and Anti-Racist
Practice: Further Learning and Resources
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CLOSE OF EVENT

Attendees were welcomed back from their group discussions by Stephanie Thomson, Health Improvement Senior, Glasgow City HSCP and Chair of the North West Youth Network. Stephanie promoted the opportunity for involvement in the Youth Network, which offers peer support, information sharing and partnership working to staff working with young people across the locality. Stephanie also shared that information, resources and further learning opportunities would be circulated to all attendees' post-event (Click [here](#) to view), so that they can continue to learn, develop and discuss the topics covered at the event.

To close the event, attendees were individually asked what they would leave behind after the event. Responses included:

- Fear
- Assumptions
- Labels

RECOMMENDATIONS

- Share learning from event with internal teams and partner organisations
- Consider terms and language that has been highlighted and how this may impact on future communication, strategy and policy
- Support partners to engage with young people
- Wider promotion and engagement across all sectors working with young people such as education, youth work and mental health services
- Support work with parents and carers to ensure that whole family wellbeing approaches and awareness raising of mental health supports and services includes families of different ethnic and cultural backgrounds







APPENDIX 2: DEFINITION OF TERMS

Race – As identified in the Equality Act 2010 race is a protected characteristic referring to a group of people defined by their colour, nationality (including citizenship), ethnic or national origins (Equality and Human Rights Commission, 2024). However 'race' is a social construct, and it has been found that genetic differences within ethnic groups are actually greater than the genetic differences between different ethnic groups. Therefore there is no biological basis for defining differences by race (Bhavnani, et al., 2005). Consequently, many organisations put the word 'race' in inverted commas to emphasise the fact that it is a social construct.

Racism – discrimination, prejudice or malicious acts towards individuals because of their skin colour, ethnicity, nationality, language, customs or practices and place of birth.

Systemic and structural racism are forms of racism that are embedded in and throughout systems, laws, written or unwritten policies, practices, and established beliefs and attitudes that produce, condone, and perpetuate widespread unfair treatment of people of colour. They reflect both ongoing and historical injustices. Although systemic racism and structural racism are often used interchangeably, they have somewhat different emphases. Institutional racism is sometimes used as a synonym for systemic or structural racism, as it captures the involvement of institutional systems and structures in race-based discrimination and oppression (Braveman et al, 2022).

Ethnic Minorities/Minority Ethnic refers to individuals and groups who are in the minority within a larger population based on certain characteristics and who are often subject to differential treatment. Used by UK Government to refer to all ethnic groups except the white British group. Ethnic minorities include white minorities, such as Gypsy, Roma and Irish Traveller groups.

BPOC/BIPOC is an abbreviation that stands for Black, Indigenous and People of Colour and is increasingly used when discussing race and ethnicity; however, as with BAME/BME/POC, it is important to note that not all individuals choose to identify with this term (University of York, 2024).

BAME is an abbreviation for Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic and is used to refer to groups of people from ethnic groups of non-white descent. However, use of the term often includes white ethnic minority groups such as Traveller, Roma and Gypsy communities. Although still widely used, in 2021, an independent report by the Commission on Race and Ethnic Disparities recommended not using BAME, to better focus on understanding disparities and outcomes for specific ethnic groups.

New Scots commonly used to refer to people who have moved to Scotland, including refugees and people seeking asylum. Scottish Government have published a 'New Scots Refugee Integration Strategy' to support all people who need protection to rebuild their lives in Scotland with the best support.

Marginalised groups/ Marginalisation describes both a process, and a condition, that prevents individuals or groups from full participation in social, economic and political life. As a condition, it can prevent individuals from actively participating (UK Aid Match, 2020).

White Privilege is described by Reni Eddo-Lodge "as a member of the dominant ethnic group, a white person in Western culture has inherited privilege simply because they are white. It suggested that a white person has greater access to available resources because they are white and that white 'ways of thinking' and living are seen as the norm, forming a standard against which all people of colour are compared. It is described as an 'absence of the consequences of racism, absence of structural discrimination, an absence of your race being viewed as a problem first and foremost.'" (Eddo-Logie, 2018)

Prejudice an unfair or unreasonable opinion or feeling, especially when formed without thought or knowledge, particularly a dislike of a particular group of people or things, or a preference for one group of people or things over another.

Direct Discrimination happens when someone treats you worse than another person in a similar situation because of your race.

Indirect Discrimination happens when an organisation has a particular policy or way of working that puts people of your racial group at a disadvantage.

Intersectionality was a term used by Kimberlé Crenshaw to reflect that no social identify category exists in isolation and that we are all within multiple categories such as gender, social class, sexuality, race and disability, which intersect forming different meanings and experiences (Crenshaw, 1989).

Equality is having equal opportunities and rights. It is being treated fairly. It also means being able and supported to reach your potential (Equality and Human Rights Commission, 2024).

Inequality is when people aren't given equal opportunities and rights and are treated unfairly and experience discrimination (Equality and Human Rights Commission, 2024).