

Making a Difference Hall of Fame

Mental Health First Aid

Training community organisations to spot early signs of mental health needs



The Challenge

The National Service Framework for Mental Health requires we pay particular attention to 'services for ethnic minorities, abolish inequalities in care and earn the confidence of people from minority communities'. One way of achieving this is by giving community leaders the appropriate skills to identify people with mental health problems wherever they present themselves.

Faiza Khaliq, Community Development Worker (CDW), works strenuously to meet the following goals identified by Black and Minority Ethnic (BME) communities:

- Raise awareness of mental health issues and services available in BME communities
- Challenge and reduce stigma around mental health
- Training and enhancing the cultural capability of mental health staff.
- Build the capacity of BME community organisations to

support mental health and wellbeing.

Faiza identified Mental Health First Aid (MHFA) training as a tool to support these goals.

What we did

MHFA training can be undertaken by anyone. The training teaches people to:

- Spot the early signs of a mental health problem
- Feel confident helping someone experiencing a problem
- Provide help on a first aid basis
- Help prevent someone from hurting themselves or others
- Help stop a mental illness from getting worse
- Help someone recover faster
- Guide someone towards the right support
- Reduce the stigma of mental health problems

MHFA training is an international qualification and is accredited by the Royal Society for Public

Key learning

- Training provided to voluntary/charitable services is appreciated and builds partnerships
- MHFA training is a good tool and helps to reduce stigma of mental ill health
- Training should be offered to carers, faith and spiritual leaders in order to recognise early symptoms and support recovery mechanisms
- Further training about mental health services, care pathways, jargon and roles is needed
- MHFA supports preventative approaches to mental illness, enables earlier access to services and builds complementary working relationships with other organisations

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Avon and Wiltshire 
Mental Health Partnership NHS Trust



Who was involved

Faiza Khaliq	AWP
Farooq Ismail	2Gether Trust
Idris Mohammed	NHS Bristol
Narinder Chana	Rethink

Community Organisations taking up training

Second Step, Refugee Action, Off the Record, Nilaari, Dekh Bhaal, Bristol NHS Health Trainers, Refugee Women of Bristol, The Two Way Street, Support Against Racist Incidents, Somali Mental Health Drugs Project, Bristol and Avon Chinese Women's Group Red Cross, Novas Scarman Trust, Polish Psychologist Group, Asian Health and Social Care Association, Barton Hill Settlement, Bristol Pakistani Women's Welfare Organization, Somali Resource Centre, Anglo-Iranian Society

Health; supported by the National Mental Health Development Unit and endorsed by the Department of Health. <http://www.mhfaengland.org/>

Community Development Workers are accredited MHFA trainers and have delivered 6 programmes to voluntary and charitable organisations working with BME communities in Bristol. Over 80 people completed the 2 day training courses.

What difference did it make

As a result of this training, participants reported they now know what first steps to take when they meet someone who may have mental ill health. They are more able to recognise signs and symptoms and know where they can go for professional help. They also said they can better understand individual coping and recovery mechanisms. It is hoped that this encourages early access to mental health services and enables greater support within community organisations.

The following comments illustrate how trainees felt after training:

"I will find it easier to spot certain disorders when talking with clients and how to deal with them initially"

"This course was an excellent refresher for me. And I particularly found the first aid recommendations extremely useful and will apply them to my everyday practice"

"At work I know how to handle things better"

"It will help me to support my clients when they start showing signs of mental health problems and be able to refer them to professional help earlier".

The training highlighted a further need for community organisations to have workshops around care pathways, mental health jargon and the range of services and treatment options available.

More training is scheduled to be delivered soon.

Contact

For more information please contact

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enable and empower people to reach their potential and live fulfilling lives