

Issues for BAME communities in accessing mental health services

- Groups fed back that the Deciding together consultation process was complicated, and it was hard to understand all the options suggested
- Those whose first language is not English found the NHS materials difficult to understand along with their interpreters

People need more information about:

- How to recognise the symptoms of mental health issues
- How and where to ask for help when someone needs it
- Better awareness within communities about mental health and encourage open discussion
- Preventative measures to stop people reaching crisis point

The community and voluntary sector:

- Provide an essential 'invisible network of support' to communities and those accessing health services
- Are more accessible for vulnerable communities than the NHS, and Community Mental Health staff should do outreach in community organisations

Health professionals need to:

- Provide appropriate support to ensure health services feel inclusive to BME service users accessing treatments
- Understand that for some members of some communities it is even more difficult to admit they are finding things difficult or feeling mentally unwell
- Ensure advice is given on support services available for those experiencing mental health issues, particularly parents with young children
- Provide service users with a clear treatment plan with review times
- Understand the impact of culture and gender in communities about domestic violence and the impact on women's health

Health services need to:

- Have welcoming environments, and be inclusive such as by providing appropriate food and prayer facilities
- Consider where services are based as people prefer to access treatment and support services near to where they know. Traveling further may prevent family and friends visiting them. Transport costs were a significant issue for some groups, and transport would need to be free for visits.
- Ensure appropriate interpreters are used to help service users understand what the next steps will be in their treatment
- Community health services would allow greater access for visits from family and friends. People would feel less isolated and more supported.
- Share information about patients in a better way, so people do not have to keep retelling their story