

Mental Health Conference

Culture and Mental Health: The place of identity and religion

27th
November

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Ethnic Health Initiative

bms-mentalhealth.org.uk

Monday 27th November 2006

The Resource Centre
356 Holloway Road
London
N7 6PA

Organised by Ethnic Health Initiative

Mental Health Conference

Culture and Mental Health: The place of identity and religion

About the conference

Mental health care in the UK is embedded in Western science and medicine, which has historically been characterized by social exclusion and inequality. Mental health and illness are socially and culturally constructed. How appropriate is it to transfer western psychiatric diagnosis and treatment models onto an increasingly diverse UK population? How can we develop mental health services within both the voluntary and statutory sector that respect different cultural understandings? How can we foster closer working relationships between both sectors?

Cultural misunderstandings between patient, family members and clinicians, professional biases, and the fragmentation of mental health services still deter many minority communities from accessing appropriate care. Culture influences help seeking behaviors, coping mechanisms, social support systems and the extent to which stigma is associated with mental health problems. How can we as mental health professionals and service users and carers meaningfully challenge the traditional psychological and psychiatric approaches that seek to locate problems within the individual? How can we encourage mental health services to recognise the impact of spirituality and socio-political forces on health? How do we challenge the 'one size fits all' approach which is dominant in the majority of mental health services? How do we develop mental health services that respect different cultural understandings? How can we encourage innovative practice?

The government and the Department of Health are committed over the next four years via the "Delivering Race Equality" initiative, to improving the experiences and outcomes for users, relatives and carers from Black and minority ethnic communities. This conference aims to support this work. This conference will attempt to explore the diverse effects of culture and society on mental health, mental illness, and mental health services. It will also encourage the exchange of different perspectives, ideas and practical suggestions to make our services more culturally competent.

Aims of the day:

- *To critically explore the relationship between culture and mental health within the BME communities (in the UK)
- *To consider racism, discrimination and prejudice and their effects on mental health
- *To consider alternatives to the medical model of care
- *To discuss how imams/healers may support statutory and voluntary sector mental health services in facilitating access, assessment, care planning, treatment and follow up of people suffering from mental distress
- *To generate practical solutions for participants to act upon, in relation to how mental health services in the UK could be more sensitive to the cultural, religious, social and economic needs of the Black and minority ethnic communities in the UK

Who should attend?

- Service Users/Survivors
- Carers
- BME health agencies and those representing service users
- NHS and independent mental health professionals
- Community health service providers including GPs and psychiatric nurses
- Strategic health bodies including the Department of Health
- NIMHE/Care Services Improvement Partnerships
- Health promotion specialists
- Professional organisations such as the Royal College of Psychiatrists, Royal College of Nursing, Royal College of General Practitioners
- Educational psychologists and behavioural experts
- Social services and social housing providers
- Substance misuse agencies
- Policy makers, academics and other specialists in BME mental health
- Organisations from the criminal justice system

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9.30 Registration and coffee

10.30 **Chair's welcome and introduction**
Chair: TBC

10.40 **Cultural Diversity: its meaning for mental health**

Dr. Suman Fernando, Visiting Professor at London Metropolitan University and Hon. Senior Lecturer in Mental Health at the European Centre for the Study of Migration & Social Care

11.10 **Muslim Experiences with Mental Health: psycho-social stressors, barriers and services**

Dr. Mona Amer, Postdoctoral Fellow, Program for Recovery and Community Health Department of Psychiatry, Yale School of Medicine, America

11.50 **Sensitising Mental Health Professionals to Islam**

Sue Salas, Management Consultant with Mental Health Strategies and NHS Trusts throughout England

12.30 **Good Practice When Working with Interpreters**

Hitesh Raval, Clinical psychologist and Systemic family therapist and Programme Director for the Essex-Tavistock Professional Doctorate in Clinical Psychology at the University of Essex

13.10 Questions

13.30 Lunch (halal food available)

14.30 **A Service User Perspective: experience of accessing and utilising health care**

Amal Abeedi

Concurrent Workshops

14.50 Session 1

1 **The Media, Minorities and Mental Health**

Dr. Mona Amer

2 **Working with Language Interpreters in Mental Health Contexts**

Hitesh Raval

3 **Mind the Gap**

Dr. Rufus May, Clinical psychologist, Bradford Mental Health services and one of the organisers of Evolving Minds.

Odi Oquosa, A community artist and shaman based in Brighton

15:35 Refreshment break

15:40 Session 2, swap for workshops

16.30 Close of day



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