

# Black Lives Matter

We at Mind in Kingston have been following, with a sense of deep sadness and outrage, the recent tragedies which have highlighted, once again, the deeply entrenched problem of racism within our societies. We fully support the Black Lives Matter movement.

No matter the purpose of our work or charitable endeavours, the first and foremost guiding principle of our organisation must be equality. To achieve true equality, it is not enough to think we are not racist. It is not good enough not to have difficult conversations around race for fear of getting it wrong. We must be anti-racist through open dialogue and active allyship, including vigorous challenge of conscious and unconscious biases.

We acknowledge the privilege inherent in our organisation and we are committed to understanding and challenging this. We echo Mind's statement that we recognise, as an organisation, we are part of the problem and that we have issues we need to fix. We need to become uncomfortable with the status-quo so that we can really address the mental health needs of Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic groups and consider how we can increase Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic representation across our organisation, at all levels. This is a commitment we make both to our service users and to the public.

We acknowledge the time it has taken for us to put out this statement. As individuals, our staff team and trustees have been listening, learning, protesting, donating and reflecting during this period. As employers, we are working hard to support the mental health needs of our employees, recognising where extra support is necessary. This is as true and important now as ever before and we encourage other employers to do the same. As an organisation, we will be taking the time to consider in great detail what direct, practical changes we can make as an organisation to support the Black, as well as other communities of colour and diversity, better. We will also be focusing on education, both at a Board and employee level to educate ourselves on the systemic racism and marginalisation faced these communities.

Whilst we consider what medium and long term changes need to be made to our organisation, we recognise there is also an immediate need for action. To begin with, we are appointing one of our Trustees, Bijal Dattani-Parekh, as an Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Lead. If you have any questions, issues, concerns or feedback relating to a diversity issue, you can email Bijal directly at [bijal@mindinkingston.org.uk](mailto:bijal@mindinkingston.org.uk). Every single query will be considered and responded to personally.

Secondly, we are creating Diversity & Inclusion Working Group, which will report directly to the Board, and put forth the changes we will be making at Mind in Kingston to combat racism. Thirdly, we will continue to use our social media channels to amplify voices with direct experience and providing access to resources.

As an organisation, we do not believe in tokenism nor lip service. The changes listed above are just the beginning and we are committed to creating real, meaningful and long-lasting change to combat racism. We know there is much to learn and we are committed to the journey of learning and unlearning.

We would also like to take this opportunity to draw your attention to the impact of racism on mental health, which is staggering. Being subjected to racial discrimination is a key factor in the development of a number of mental health issues, including depression and anxiety as well as feelings of humiliation, shame and exclusion. This is compounded by the fact that Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic communities face greater barriers when seeking the help that they deserve. In mental health - as in other areas of life - there is a huge disparity in how Black people are listened to and supported at every level. People from BAME<sup>1</sup> groups living in the UK are more likely to:

- Be diagnosed with mental health issues;
- Be diagnosed and admitted to hospital;
- Experience a poor outcome from treatment; and
- Disengage from mainstream mental health services, which can lead to further deterioration in their mental health.

Under the outdated Mental Health Act, people from the Black community are more likely to be compulsorily admitted for treatment, more likely to be on a medium or high secured ward and more likely to be subject to seclusion or restraint. We recently marked 18 months since the Mental Health Act review - we echo Mind's sentiment on this - we are still waiting for the UK Government to make vital changes and we call on UK Government to act on this.

If your mental health has been impacted, please do not hesitate to reach out to us. We are here to support you. We can promise you that, should you choose to use our services, you will be treated with equality, respect and dignity, no matter your race, ethnicity, religion, gender identification or sexual orientation.

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<sup>1</sup> We acknowledge the issues and over-simplicity of the term 'BAME' but have used it here to reflect the wording of the research.

We note that the attention given by the media to the Black Lives Matter movement is slowly diminishing. We urge you not to become complacent in your fight for equality both for the Black community and other communities of colour. This race crisis has not been resolved and, even if we do not see it in mainstream media as much, it is an ever-present crisis which we must solve. Together.

We look forward to updating you on our progress over the coming months.

**Black Lives Matter.**

**Black mental health matters.**

Mind in Kingston  
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