

APRIL 2023

# MENTAL HEALTH, ABUSE & CULTURE IN THE BLACK COMMUNITY

Post Event Report



PRESENTED BY



# MENTAL HEALTH, ABUSE & CULTURE IN THE BLACK COMMUNITY

Adira brought together experts by experience, organisations, professionals and local community groups to have uncomfortable conversations and to raise awareness in the black community of the issues around mental health, culture and abuse. We also wanted to educate and inform people from outside the Black community regarding these issues.

"Mental health in the Black community is such a taboo subject, even in 2023. It is something that we still push under the carpet, we don't talk about, we say it is a 'White man's problem', it doesn't exist for us in the Black community...and yet we still we over-represent in every single psychiatric ward."

URSULA MYRIE, FOUNDER AND CEO OF ADIRA



The full conference was filmed by Kirklees Local Television.

Click to view

# MENTAL HEALTH, ABUSE & CULTURE IN THE BLACK COMMUNITY



**148**

attendees



**120**

views on YouTube

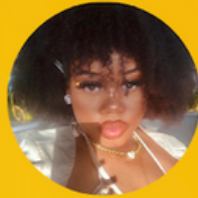


## SPEAKERS



**PROFESSOR DIVINE CHARURA**

Thriving and not just surviving! Love, diversity and mental health in Black communities!



**KEMI OSOBUKOLA (STUDENT)**

The stigma surrounding Black mental health



**ADELAIDE CHIBANDA (MENTAL HEALTH NURSE)**

'Mental Health Act  
The myths, the facts and US!'



**MICHAEL PENIEL (ENTREPRENEUR)**

'Child abuse in OUR community'



**NAOMI AZEEZ**

Black and LGBTQ  
-"Don't brush us under the rug"



**SALLY NYINZA (COMMUNITY LEADER)**

Mental health in the Kenyan Community



**DR PETER ISEBOR (CLINICAL PSYCHOLOGIST)**

"Behind closed doors: what is it like on a psychiatric ward?"



**ZARA MAKINTA ADEYEMI**

'Black Hair - Detangling the Narrative'

## WORKSHOPS

### WORKSHOP 1

Claire Powell (UCL)  
'Grill a Researcher'

### WORKSHOP 2

Kevin Scott  
The Black Family

### WORKSHOP 3

Sam Taylor  
Youth Justice

### WORKSHOP 4

Professor Divine Charura  
Thriving and not just surviving!  
Love, diversity and mental health in black communities!

### WORKSHOP 5

Peter Alleyne & Nisa Chisipochinyi  
Inside and out:  
Making a difference in the charity sector

### WORKSHOP 6

Zara Makinta Adeyemi  
'Black Hair - Detangling the Narrative'

### WORKSHOP 7

Adelaide Chibanda  
'Mental Health Act - The myths, the facts and US!'



# SPEAKER THEMES

## Theme 1: Self-worth and Loving Your Black Identity

"Racism is another pandemic and at the moment, the denial of racism is a cancer in our society and in our system because many people are impacted who are from diverse ethnic communities."

"A true paradigm shift is asking yourself different questions. Asking yourself about your identity, rephrasing the questions you have, reinterpreting the data that you have about yourself and the racial concepts."

### PROFESSOR DIVINE CHARURA:

"Thriving and not just surviving! Love, diversity and mental health in Black communities!"



For Professor Divine's full talk

### ZARA MAKINTA ADEYEMI:

"Black Hair- Detangling the Narrative"



For Zara's full talk

"We have been conditioned into thinking that for society to perceive us as professional or as 'proper' we need to have hair that appeases to the colonisation mindset. So we need to have euro-centric looking hair, we need to have straightened hair or we need to wear wigs so that we can look good to society."

"For once, I want to talk to the Black community about the Black community, about our own habits. For once, I don't want to focus on external racism or external oppression. I want to talk about what we do to ourselves in our communities and why."

# SPEAKER THEMES

## Theme 2: The Impact of Policy and Institutions on Race

"I came to Rethink as a result of an Oxytocin report that was published by Jacqui Dyer and her team. The Oxytocin report came post George Floyd when there was a big realisation globally that not enough is being done for the Black population."

"Part of my work has been about bringing together a group of people who identify as Black, as Asian, as Chinese etc. A lot of these people have personally been detained under the Mental Health Act. We have looked at what that piece of legislation looks like and what needs to change in order for it to be fitting for all demographics of people."

### Nisa Chisipochinyi

"Rethink Mental Illness: Our journey to becoming a truly anti-racist organisation"



For Nisa's full talk

### Claire Powell

"Health Research and the 'problem' with White research."



For Claire's full talk

"Problem number one is the ivory tower. We are all stuck in academia – it is mainly very elitist, very White, very middle class."

"We think we're the 'good guys'. So our research is tied up in who we are. If people criticise it we take it really personally...We think we are doing good and don't really want to think about being part of a system that can be really harmful for people taking part in research and also our colleagues as well."



# SPEAKER THEMES

## Theme 2: The Impact of Policy and Institutions on Mental Health in the Black Community

"One of the things that I remember that happened to me when I started nursing as a student in Manchester, I met an amazing 97 year old lady. She had been detained in the 1940's because she had a baby out of wedlock and that was her reason for treatment. We have come along way with the Meant Health Act. But we still have a long way to go."



**ADELAIDE CHIBANDA (MENTAL HEALTH NURSE)**  
'Mental Health Act  
The myths, the facts  
and US!'



For Adelaide's full talk

"These are the changes the we need to make, some 13 years later is when they expect to have implemented the changes. So what are we going to do.....It's a long time"



### Inspector Alec Gibbons

"Gun and Knife Crime: a Police Perspective"



"What is south Yorkshire doing to tackle knife crime? We are doing Stop & Search, I genuinely get how impacting it is on an individual to be searched, I hold my hands up sometimes we get it wrong and we need to change that."

"The average adult male has 8 to 10 pints of blood in his body, if an artery is severed they will bleed out potentially in 2 minutes, the average response time for ambulance service is around 11 minutes. Hence why guns and knives literally take lives."



For Alec's full talk



# SPEAKER THEMES

## Theme 2: The Impact of Policy and Institutions on Mental Health in the Black Community

"Wards are meant to be places of healing, where people who are unwell or are struggling are looked after, a place of safety, a place of treatment and kindness often become places that are further traumatising."

"When you go to a ward, you are back in a position of dependency on someone else, whether that be the assistants, the nurses, the doctors or whoever. But that whole relationship of dependency is something that is core to our existence."

**DR PETER ISEBOR (CLINICAL PSYCHOLOGIST) :**

"Behind closed doors: what is it like on a psychiatric ward?"



For Peter's full talk

**Mark Scott**

Youth Justice Services



"A clear anti-racist stance taken by leaders raises staff's confidence to advocate for Black and mixed-heritage boys in their work."

"We need to address gaps in specialist provision for Black and mixed heritage boys, either by delivering it in house or by commissioning it from local community organisations."



For Mark's full talk



# SPEAKER THEMES

## Theme 3: Barriers to Support

"I had so many symptoms of mental illness, but it was perceived as me being a 'bad child', which led to more punishment. My behaviour became even worse, it was a wicked cycle."

"I was raised in a very very strict Jesus loving family and even though I am insanely proud to be Nigerian, we can all admit our culture stigmatises mental health so much. You see, in Nigeria, if you are showing any odd behaviours or mental health symptoms, you're just a witch."

**KEMI OSOBUKOLA (STUDENT):**

"The stigma surrounding Black mental health"



For Kemi's full talk

**Dawn Monroe**

"The Black Community & Domestic Abuse: barriers to seeking help."



For Dawn's full talk

"If I were a stat! Then I would be 3% more likely to have experienced physical abuse and 4% more likely to have experienced sexual violence as a Black woman."

"If I were a stat! Then according to the national DA charity Refuge, as a Black women I would be 14% less likely to be referred by the Police to their support services than a white women."





# SPEAKER THEMES

## Theme 4: Diversity of Experiences within the Black Community

"When you come to the United Kingdom, where you have 67 million people and a mixture of cultures, as Kenyans we bring our own culture from back home. We also bring our stress. We have the problems with immigration, you have the isolation, loneliness, you don't know your surroundings...so mental health really affects you and you don't speak about it."



**SALLY NYINZA (COMMUNITY LEADER)**  
"Mental health in the Kenyan Community"



For Sally's full talk

**Wilster**  
"Black and Growing Up in Care"



For Wilster's full talk

"I never really got to know my Mum because my Dad wasn't really trying to be involved so she eventually came to my Grandma's house and dropped me there. So, I grew up with my Grandma...being in an African home, there is a lot of old school traditions. My Dad used to beat me and when I went to school they started noticing marks on my back so eventually I went into care."

"When I got to 15/16 I remember that Birthday I didn't even get one thing, not even anything. So I decided to move out of home as I didn't see the point of staying at home if I didn't feel like I was a part of something."



# SPEAKER THEMES

## Theme 4: Diversity of Experiences within the Black Community

"My mum, which is a sensitive topic for me, was a victim of child control and this seems to have been passed down from her mother. With the pain, the trauma, the experience she had, led her to raise us in the manner she only knew how to. We needed nurture, we needed love and we needed guidance, but it was just something that she couldn't give based on the state that she was in.

My dad, on the other hand, was present but he was also absent. So he would be in the house while emotionally unavailable.

### MICHAEL PENIEL (ENTREPRENEUR):

"Child abuse in OUR community"



For Michael's full talk

### NAOMI AZEEZ:

Black and LGBTQ-

"Don't brush us under the rug"



For Naomi's full talk

"The refusal to engage with the queer community is a dismissal that doesn't protect anybody, its a dismissive that robs you of an ability to actually know your children. It ruins the human ability to actually hear what your distressed colleagues, being attacked over their identity, are trying to tell you. All this does is deprive us of an ability to engage with one another in a meaningful way."

"We need to make space for existence...The more fractions of your life you have to manage, the messier your life becomes."



# SPEAKER THEMES

## Theme 4: Diversity of Experiences within the Black Community

“Mental health is something we don’t talk about in Nigeria, for example, it is not mental health, you just say that the person is ‘mad’. It creates a lot of stigma to the point where if you want to get married, the first thing your parents will want to know is ‘where is this person from?’, because we need to check if there is madness in their family.”

“In Nigeria, when you talk about mental health, you remember people who are on the streets, going naked, that was all we knew. So when I came to the UK, I think that was my first time hearing about ‘depression’, ‘mental health’. It was something that I never heard about in Nigeria even as a lawyer.”

**Ehinor Amedu**

"Mental health in the Nigerian Community"



For Ehinor's full talk



## Where to Find Help

Sheffield Flourish host a number of online tools and resources that provide information and help around mental health including depression, anxiety or suicidal thoughts.



Online searchable directory featuring over 300 services, activities and mental health support groups.



To visit:  
[sheffieldmentalhealth.co.uk](http://sheffieldmentalhealth.co.uk)



Local and national help, specific support around bereavement, learning and training resources for anyone having suicidal thoughts or worried about someone else.



To visit:  
[sheffieldsuicidesupport.co.uk/](http://sheffieldsuicidesupport.co.uk/)

# CONFERENCE FEEDBACK

"That's the best event I have EVER been to - and I have been to a lot. ♥ Congratulations!"



"Listening to an excellent talk by Dr Divine Chakura: 'Thriving & Not Just Surviving!', at @adiraorguk 'Mental Health, Abuse In The Black Community'. This was definitely worth working on a Saturday."



"Truly impactful, fantastic to see the amount of younger people taking an active part and whose lives you are touching."



"Many congratulations to you and the whole team on a really powerful, enriching and informative conference on Saturday!"

"Thanks so much to you and your amazing band of volunteers for the conference on Saturday. I learnt such a lot - lots of food for reflection - it was a really valuable event."

"It was so good to see so many black people supporting other black people. We need to get better at talking about mental health. Also, the stalls had amazing things to buy, well done to the black woman selling things they've created themselves.

I left the event feeling so proud of the things we are doing in Sheffield.

Well done to everyone who contributed to yesterday's conference "



"God continue to give you strength to empower those with less power. "



# OTHER CONFERENCE HIGHLIGHTS

## ADIRA Mentorship Scheme

'A:IMS' for a brighter future

ADIRA is launching a new mentorship scheme that aims to support Black people in Sheffield. We want your input to make sure that we are addressing the needs of young people, in a way that is relevant, engaging and beneficial. We don't want one size fits all!



Want to give back?

We are looking for people from all walks of life with a desire to be a positive influence in the Black community. You have a unique opportunity to get involved in a ground-breaking service as a mentor and/or support the development of the program. We aim to launch in the autumn.



At this stage, we would like your input on the following questions:

1. Would you like to be a mentor?
2. Would you like to support the development of the program?
3. Do you have ideas about where specific support may be needed within young Black communities?

Please scan the QR code to access our questionnaire and give your views on the mentorship scheme.



QUESTIONNAIRE: [HTTPS://FORMS.GLE/JCTXZYGTPZLL1NH8](https://forms.gle/JCTXZYGTPZLL1NH8)

WWW.ADIRA.ORG.UK

## Mentorship Scheme

The launch of the Adira Mentorship Scheme - supporting young Black people in Sheffield.



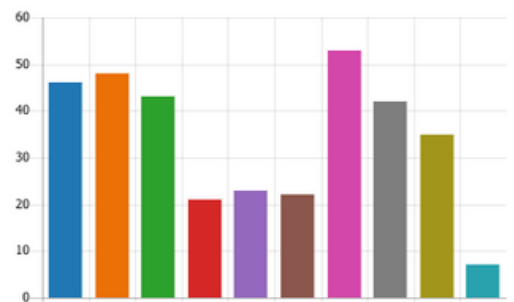
## Mental Health Survey

Survey to understand Black experiences with mental health services

138 people gave their insights!

2. What would stop you from accessing mental health support? Tick all that apply

- Not feeling represented by pr... 46
- Social stigma – not talked abo... 48
- Cultural barriers 43
- Language barriers 21
- Privacy concerns 23
- Prefer to self-care 22
- Racial bias in services 53
- Not knowing where to get help 42
- Not feeling listened to 35
- Other 7



# THANK YOU

We would like to thank the following organisations. Without their support, the conference would not have gone ahead.



SHEFFIELD  
FLOURISH



## Stall Holders

- Fruits of the Spirit
- Tyrah's Touch
- Kaleido Arts
- Sheffield Young Carers Partnership
- South Yorkshire Police Recruitment
- South Yorkshire Violence Reduction Unit
- YAYAH Products
- Sheffield Museum's
- Afeme Perfumes
- Fula Flavours
- Firecracker Art
- Damilola Jewellery
- Cavendish Cancer
- Sheffield Flourish

