

Creative Spaces: Leeds - Post-Event Briefing Document

I am reassured and re-energised compared to feeling worn down and alone.

[I feel] intrigued, hopeful, inspired.

Fabulous to be in a room of inspirational people.

Busy day – need more different views in the room

Thank you for attending *The Creative Spaces: Leeds* event held on the 23rd October 2019, in collaboration with the Synergi Collaborative Centre, Forum Central, Leeds City Council and Leeds and York Partnership Foundation Trust.

The event brought together a cross section of people from Leeds, keen to transform the disproportionate experience that people from Black, Asian and other minority ethnic communities with lived experience of severe mental illness have when accessing mental health services. (See attached programme)

The Creative Spaces approach was designed to develop inclusive and co-produced approaches to addressing mental health inequalities experienced by people from BAME communities, enabling us to respond to longstanding concerns and issues in new ways, placing lived experience narratives at the heart of our discussions, policies and strategies.

Throughout the day there were invigorating presentations, followed by energised, focused and open discussions - and a desire from participants to develop workable actions across the whole system, recognising that change can only happen in collaboration. You can see photographs [here](#). A film from the day will be circulated shortly.

The feedback provided from participants during the *Creative Responses* section of the programme, included:

- Work better with communities and young people

- Form better connections with those who are doing the work but who aren't seen as the 'experts' which means valuing and trusting the role and expertise of communities
- Decipher the procedures which work against BAME people; break down the reluctance to talk about race: Why don't white people see it? Clearer leadership in this area is required
- Challenge the assumptions of well-meaning people in power; be committed to developing trust across the system by deepening relationships and creating safety
- Develop better services - with more continuity, more flexible pathways with more preventative measures in place. Challenge the view that there shouldn't be 'BAME-specific services'
- Post-event, develop structures to improve connections with the NHS, third sector, communities and at the grassroots; develop a network; create space for third sector, NHS and council staff to share best practice
- Highlight the real issues through the arts and digital platforms; finding ways that are visual that are not about words; creative engagement with service users and those with lived experience at the next event
- Work with people as intersectional human beings, especially engaging with LGBTQ experiences.

What Next?

We propose three work areas to focus on during 2020 (see below). We would like to encourage you to get in touch with us to identify your areas of interest and how you would like to contribute to take this agenda forward. Please contact Sarah Erskine: sarah.erskine@leeds.gov.uk or Sharon Prince: sharon.prince@nhs.net

Leeds Clinical Commissioning Group have also agreed to resource development of this work locally. This will ensure a sustained focus on addressing mental health inequalities experienced by Black, Asian and other minority ethnic communities in Leeds.

- **Service Users and Carer's Event (March 2020)**

This event will build on the engagement already started with BAME service users and carers. It will be an intimate, in-depth event that will connect service users in a way that allows them to speak their truth and share their journey via creative methods

- **Let's talk about race and mental health (May 2020)**

What more do we need to do in Leeds to understand how race and racism affects mental health and wellbeing? What are we scared of? What impact does the absence of discussion have on pathways, outcomes and the ability to change? What are the barriers to greater understanding – professionally and within systems? And how can we develop an inclusive, accessible language within a non-blame, shame or fear-based culture?

- **Developing a Leeds Network (September 2020)**

We are keen to support the development of a local network to allow us to continue to meet and support each other in this work and vision. We want it to be a space to share good practice, support each other and build connections and collaborations within and beyond Leeds. This network will be connected to the wider Creative Spaces ecosystem in Birmingham, Manchester and London.

To that end, we would encourage you to sign up to the Synergi Collaborative Centre's mailing list to receive its quarterly eNewsletter, be kept informed of useful research, relevant projects and activities and, more importantly, be part of Synergi's plan to set up an ePlatform for lived experience narratives to be profiled, followed by a national network eHub in the late spring 2020.

You can sign up to Synergi's mailing list [here](#).

We look forward to hearing from, and collaborating with you on this necessary and vital work.



PROJECT PARTNERS

