

“NHS England is aware that transgender people have, in the past, often received inequitable access to other health services.”

Black, Asian, and minority ethnic (BAME) trans people, including non-binary people¹, have additional difficulties in accessing healthcare aside from those experienced by white trans populations.

This Factsheet suggests the key tasks that healthcare providers and service-users, especially BAME trans people themselves, can take, to make healthcare services more accessible.

The Starting Point

As a BAME trans person you may experience discrimination on the basis of your race as well as your trans status, so you may be nervous about seeking help and perhaps reluctant to do so. Although healthcare providers *should* be aware of the possibility of double discrimination, they may not be. Of course, BAME people are not a homogenous group: BAME cultures, languages, faiths and family situations vary a lot, and some BAME people may have been born and raised outside the UK. These factors intersect with your gender identity and may make it hard for you to express your gender openly.

You have the right to appropriate health care which recognises your specific needs, and enables you to access timely support and provision, in line with non-BAME trans people.

The Issues

The Race Equality Foundation’s focus group reported that when interacting with service providers, especially Gender Identity Services, they experienced a consistent pattern of racist attitudes and concepts of masculinity and femininity that tended to reflect the sense of what it means to be a man or a woman in white communities. They, therefore, failed to recognise the impact of BAME cultures on these concepts. For instance, a young BAME trans man was discharged from a Gender Identity Clinic because he chose to delay treatment until he had won the acceptance and support of his family. In another case, access to treatment was disallowed because the person said, *“I cannot disclose my trans status to my family (as a condition of receiving treatment) because they would disown me or worse!”*

What Can Be Done?

- We recommend you read “Inclusivity – supporting BAME trans people” <http://goo.gl/fR82l8>
- Encouraging more BAME gender practitioners, clinicians, professionals, and counsellors to work in this field, will give BAME trans people more confidence that their cultural, religious and racial needs would be understood.
- Specialist interpreters and translation services should be readily available, where needed.



¹ ‘Trans’ is used in this factsheet to embrace all trans, trans*, non-binary, and non-gender people who seek healthcare.

Trans Health Factsheet on BAME people

- Existing LGB&T support and advocacy groups should make BAME trans people welcome by ensuring that their literature and premises feature images of BAME people. LGB&T groups should aim to develop working relationships with BAME LGB&T people and their allies in order to collaborate with them. These collaborations may be used to press for proper recognition and support for BAME people's individual needs. Where fear of rejection by their families and communities occurs, LGB&T groups can provide a safe space for them within their own organisations.
- Healthcare providers should be assisted to educate their staff regarding the specific issues for BAME trans people. Reception staff, as well as clinical staff, should have training to ensure that the service is BAME trans friendly, and also ready to educate others service users about trans people. Premises and literature should feature images of BAME people.
- Staff training should include great sensitivity in relation to disclosure because this can put a BAME trans person at physical risk, in addition to the possible rejection by their families and communities. Specific assurances regarding confidentiality would help to give confidence to BAME individuals to engage with Gender Identity Services.
- Where families are willing to support the BAME trans person, support for significant others, family, friends, and allies (SOFFAs), should be inclusive of BAME people.

UK BAME Trans and Non-Binary Support Groups and Services:

cliniQ <http://cliniq.org.uk/>

desiQ – London & South East www.facebook.com/groups/desiQLondonSE

Finding a Voice – South Asian LGBT Group, Birmingham

www.facebook.com/findingavoic

Friends - social/support groups in Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland for South Asian people identifying as lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender.

<http://leicesterlgbtcentre.org/groups/>

Gendered Intelligence – BME trans youth group, London

www.genderedintelligence.co.uk/trans-youth/BAME

Imaan – LGBTQI support group, London/Manchester/Birmingham www.imaan.org.uk

Intersections - a group run by and for Trans* & Queer Muslims in Central London

hello.intersections@gmail.com

QTIPOC Brighton – Queer, trans and intersex people of colour network, Brighton

www.facebook.com/groups/QTIPOCSBrighton

QTIPOC London – Queer, trans and intersex people of colour network, London

www.facebook.com/groups/232663200178649

Race Equality Foundation www.raceequalityfoundation.org.uk

Rainbow Noir – Queer people of colour group, Manchester

www.facebook.com/rainbownoirmcr

S.P.I.C.E – Sisters Promoting Identity, Culture and Empowerment for LBT women of colour, Bradford www.facebook.com/spiceBradford1

The Bayard Project – Leeds www.facebook.com/groups/ethniclgbtyorkshire

The Safra Project – Muslim LBT women www.safraproject.org

TranzWiki lists all national and local groups, indicating those who are BAME friendly

www.tranzwiki.net

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