

Select your nation

United Kingdom

[Search](#)[Get help](#)[Donate](#)[Menu](#)[Home](#) / [Explore mental health](#) / [A-Z Topics](#)

Black, Asian and minority ethnic (BAME) communities

This content mentions discrimination or discriminatory violence (such as homophobia, racism, sexism and ableism), suicide or suicidal thoughts, self-harm, trauma, depression and anxiety. Please read with care. There are details of where to find help at the bottom of this page.

We recognise that not everyone likes the term BAME. It covers a wide range of people with diverse needs, and it can be problematic to put all those people into a single group. However, it can be useful to show that people who aren't White British can face specific issues and challenges because of their ethnicity. We use BAME here as a shorthand term but acknowledge people can find it unsatisfying or prefer to use a different term to describe themselves.

Contents

Are rates of mental ill-health different for people from a BAME background?

What can affect the mental health of people from BAME communities?

What barriers can BAME people face when getting support?

How can I find support that's right for me?

Are rates of mental ill-health different for people from a BAME background?

Rates of mental health problems can be higher for some BAME groups than for White people. For example:

Black men are more likely to have experienced a [psychotic disorder](#) in the last year than White men

Black people are four times more likely to be detained under the Mental Health Act than White people

older South Asian women are an at-risk group for suicide¹

refugees and asylum seekers are more likely to experience mental health problems than the general population, including higher rates of [depression](#), [anxiety](#) and [PTSD](#).²

Some groups have better mental health. For example:

[suicidal thoughts](#) and [self-harm](#) were less common in Asian people than in White people³

mental ill-health is lower among Chinese people than among White people⁴

With all these statistics, it's important to note that they might not reflect the true extent of mental health problems among BAME groups. This is because not much data is available and also because BAME people may be less likely to report mental health problems.

What can affect the mental health of people from BAME communities?

As well as the factors that can affect everyone's mental health, people from BAME communities may also contend with racism, inequality and mental health [stigma](#).

Racism and discrimination

Racism can range from micro-aggressions (subtle but offensive comments) to explicit hurtful words to verbal or physical aggression. Experiencing racism can be very stressful and negatively affect your overall health and mental health.

Exposure to racism may increase your likelihood of experiencing mental health problems such as [psychosis](#) and [depression](#).

If you've experienced racism, read our page on [stigma and discrimination](#). While the page is about mental health, the tips on making a complaint are relevant to all discrimination cases. There is also a list of organisations that can help and advise you.

Social and economic inequalities

People from BAME communities often face disadvantages in society which can increase the risk of developing mental health problems.

Mental health stigma

Different communities understand and talk about mental health in different ways.

In some communities, mental health problems are rarely recognised or spoken about. They may be seen as shameful or embarrassing. This can discourage people from talking about their mental health or seeing their GP for help.

What barriers can BAME people face when getting support?

People from BAME backgrounds have the same right as everyone else to access mental treatment and services. But research shows BAME people can face barriers to getting help, including:

Not recognising they have a mental illness because mental health was stigmatised or never talked about in their community.

Not knowing that help is available or where to go to get it.

Language barriers.

Turning to family or friends rather than professional support, especially for people who don't trust formal healthcare services.

Financial barriers, such as paying for private counselling.

Not feeling listened to or understood by healthcare professionals.

White professionals who do not understand their experiences of racism or discrimination.

How can I find support that's right for me?

As a BAME person, you have the right to mental health support just like everyone else. You may want support from and/or from people of your ethnic background. If so, try one of the organisations listed below.

General

Your [local Mind](#) may offer groups in your area for people from your community. You can also search [Hub of Hope](#) for local, peer and community support and services.

For specific groups of people

[The Black, African and Asian Therapy Network](#) has a directory of therapists of Black, African, Asian or Caribbean heritage

[Black Minds Matter](#) connects Black individuals and families to free mental health support provided by Black therapists

[Comhar](#) is a weekly group for Irish men living in Camden run by the Mental Health Foundation. Men can talk about their challenges and how they cope with them, as well as general topics such as music, sport and history. (Irish people living in the UK, while not included as a BAME group, have much higher hospital admission rates for mental health problems than other ethnic groups)

[Sharing Voices](#) works with various BAME groups in Bradford to offer emotional support, group sessions and befriending services

[Sikh Your Mind](#) offer culturally-sensitive and psychological support for Sikh and Punjabi communities.

[Taraki](#) works with Punjabi communities to create spaces where people can access mental health support and education. You can **[join their virtual forums](#)** for men, women and LGBTQIA+ people

References

[Black Asian and Minority Ethnic \(BAME\) mental health - rethink.org](#)

[A guide to race and ethnicity terminology and language - The Law Society](#)

[Ethnicity and the criminal justice system: What does recent data say on over-representation?](#)

[Perceived barriers to accessing mental health services among black and minority ethnic \(BME\) communities: a qualitative study in Southeast England - BMJ Open](#)

[Writing about ethnicity - GOV.UK](#)

[Unemployment - GOV.UK](#)

¹ WHO (2021), Mental Health and Forced Displacement. **www.who.int/news-room/fact-sheets/detail/mental-health-and-forced-displ...**

^{2,3,4} Rethink.org **<https://www.rethink.org/advice-and-information/living-with-mental-illness/information-on-wellbeing-physical-health-bame-lgbtplus-and-studying-and-mental-health/black-asian-and-minority-ethnic-mental-health/>**

If you are feeling like ending your life or feel unable to keep yourself safe, please call 999 or go to A&E and ask for the contact of the nearest crisis resolution team. These are teams of mental health care professionals who work with people in

severe distress. If you feel affected by the content you have read, please see our [get help](#) page for support.

*** Last updated: 9 November 2024**

Related content

Voices and visibility: the inclusion of refugees and asylum seekers in decision-making processes

Our Voices and Visibility for New Scots project was set up to help people from refugee backgrounds take part in their local communities and decision-making in Scotland.

Read

Covid Response Programme

The Covid Response Programme will deliver targeted support for those people who already experience inequality and have been far more adversely affected the COVID-19 pandemic - lone parents, refugees, people from Black and minority ethnic communities, and people living with long-term health conditions.

Read

[View all related content](#)

Quick links

[Get help](#)[Explore mental health](#)[A-Z topics](#)[Publications](#)[Contact us](#)

Nations

[United Kingdom](#)[England](#)[Scotland](#)[Wales](#)[Northern Ireland](#)

Social

[Twitter / X](#)[Facebook](#)[Instagram](#)[LinkedIn](#)[Pinterest](#)

Sign up for email updates

We'll send you updates and information about our work and how you can support us.

Sign up

Home of Mental Health Awareness Week

**MENTAL
HEALTH**

[Privacy](#) [Cookies](#) [Terms of use](#) Copyright © 2025 All Rights Reserved Registered Charity No. England and Wales 801130 Scotland SC 039714 / Company Registration No. 2350846 VAT Number GB524451857
Registered with Fundraising Regulator