

Diversity, Culture, Community Development and Recovery

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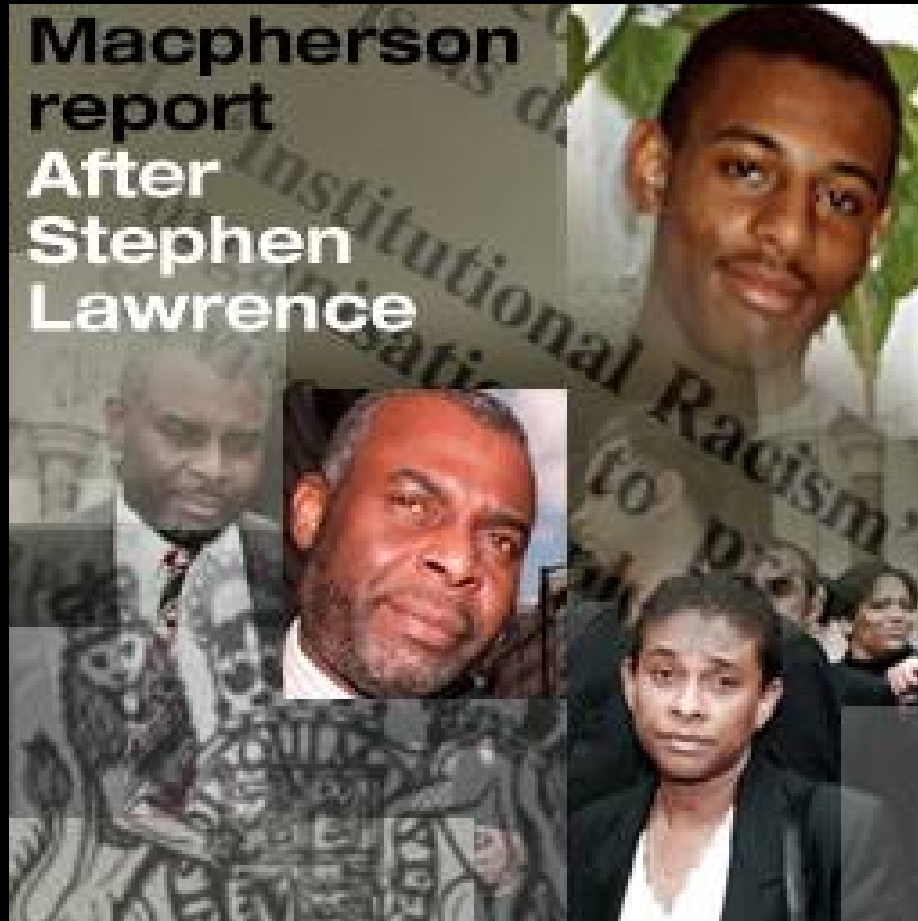
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Whitley R. Kirmayer LJ. Groleau D. (2006) Understanding immigrants' reluctance to use mental health services: a qualitative study from Montreal. *Canadian Journal of Psychiatry/Revue Canadienne de Psychiatrie*. 51(4):205-9

- A perceived overwillingness of doctors to rely on pharmaceutical medications as interventions.
- Participants perceived a dismissive attitude and lack of time from physicians in previous encounters that deterred their use of current health service.
- Many participants reported a belief in the curative power of nonmedical interventions, most notably God and to a lesser extent, traditional folk medicine.

**Macpherson
report
After
Stephen
Lawrence**



The situation in England: 1

- Young African-Caribbean men are:
 - Much more likely to be diagnosed ‘schizophrenia’
 - Much more likely to experience coercion
 - Much more likely to present via CJS
 - Much more likely to experience excessive medication and polypharmacy
 - Much less likely to be referred for ‘talking treatments’

The situation in England: 2

- People in BME communities:
 - Are less likely to keep initial appointments
 - Are less likely to stay in contact with services
 - Perceive mental health services as oppressive
 - Are afraid of mental health services
 - Are less likely to be referred for ‘talking’ therapies



Ethical responses?

- The need to reach out to and engage with communities
- The need for humility – science and technology do not have all the answers
- Respecting traditional interpretations of and support systems for those in distress
- The need to work alongside community groups and individuals

Box One: Key Characteristics of Community Development⁷

The characteristics of community development which make it a particularly useful tool for statutory health and social services have been identified as follows:

- Knowing about community strengths: mapping of needs and resources is an essential first step to working in partnership with local groups and organisations.
- Helping communities prepare for community care: informal teaching methods and dialogue with local people can reduce popular fears.
- Empowerment: peer groups, increased participation in decision making forums, facilitating community enterprise all enhance the scope for self-determination.
- Enhancing community support and networks: community development can facilitate positive networks and help tackle oppressive behaviour.
- Contracting: through capacity building on both sides, CD workers can increase opportunities for devolving services to small organisations.
- Training for statutory sector staff: this can promote understanding of local communities.

Sharing Voices Bradford: Local contexts

- Inner-city Bradford; 60% of community from BME communities; Largely South Asian
- 1999 – closure of TCPU
- 2000 – NHS reorganisation; Bradford City tPCT

PAR – SVB: Activities 2004-2005

1. Peer group activity (7 groups attended by 67 people)
2. Individual Support (36 individuals)
3. Partnerships and Networks
4. Service user participation – in own care plans, in local planning forums, with local Trust, in research
5. Sign-posting and information
6. Dialogue and debate

PAR – SVB: Activities 2004-2005

125 participants responded to the audit questionnaire, including volunteers, group members, supported individuals and others engaged in training/consultation.

60% (80) were female

50% (62) were young adults (age 25-34 years)

30% (37) were aged under 25 years (10% under 18 years)

60% came from three Pakistani communities (Mirpuri, Punjabi, Pataan); others included Bangladeshi, Indian (Sikh and Hindu), African, African-Caribbean, Black, (other), shared heritage and white Irish

42% (52) participants had used specialist mental health services

68% (84) had consulted their GP because of mental health problems

Box Three: Hamdard – 3 key findings for community groups

Hamdard is an Urdu word meaning ‘companion’ or ‘one who gives support’. The group promoted a holistic approach to mental health, taking into account its members’ experiences.

‘I felt weaker and weaker and lonelier than ever...There were times I felt so low and dirty I would harm myself or make myself ill, just so that I could go back to my family for a while and get away from my husband and in-laws’

Coming together as Muslim

women:

Most members valued the fact that they were all Muslim and shared an interest in their faith. During Ramadan the women decided to continue meeting to read the Qur'an to explore their Muslim identity together. But they also came from different Muslim communities, so they also discovered new perspectives on what it means to be a Muslim, and differences between Islam and regional culture. Women living in patriarchal traditions discovered female roles within other cultures that were acceptable within Islam. Their writing indicated that their Muslim faith was an important source of strength at time of difficulty:

'Other women [in the group] understand your feelings because they are going through the same thing.'

Hamdard group member

Finding strength to be active in society:

Through sharing experiences women gained the confidence to think more positively about their futures. After speaking initially of not wanting to go anywhere or do anything, they started to enjoy a more active social life, getting a job or starting college.

'Hamdard's made me speak up-it's built my confidence...now I'm thinking about the future...I'd like to get a job.'

Hamdard group member

Helping others is as important as receiving help:

All the women wanted more people to benefit from the support in the group. They had a strong ethos of mutual aid.

I would like to help them the way I've been helped out with Hamdard...I would like to see all the women out there who haven't got any confidence in themselves build themselves up by coming along.'

Hamdard group member

Conclusions

1. There was widespread support for the community development approach – as well as suspicion about it.
2. There was support for the way the project worked with individuals – and criticism of its ‘detached’ stance.
3. It was felt difficult to assess the impact of the project, and there is more it could do.
4. A conflict exists between independence from the mainstream and financial insecurity