



City Mental Health
Alliance UK



Mental Health And Race In The Workplace

A Toolkit to help businesses support
the positive mental health of their
people who are Black or from a
Minority Ethnic background

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Foreword



**Poppy Jaman, CEO,
City Mental Health Alliance**

At the City Mental Health Alliance (CMHA), we believe that workplaces, the cornerstone of any society, have a responsibility and an opportunity to protect, support and create positive mental health for all of their people. And, when it comes to people who are Black or from a Minority Ethnic background, we are calling on businesses to take informed and urgent action.

A growing body of research tells us that there is a higher incidence of mental health conditions and wellbeing challenges amongst people who are Black or from a Minority Ethnic background. Reasons include experiencing racism, health inequality, lack of appropriate support and, in some cultures, significant mental health stigma. 2020 has shone an even brighter light on the intersectionality between mental health and race, as people in these communities have faced challenges that have particularly impacted on their mental health. Black people have had to deal with triggering conversations around racism because of the death of George Floyd and the Black Lives Matter protests. Moreover, data shows that people from Black and Minority Ethnic backgrounds have been disproportionately impacted by COVID-19, through higher death rates, health anxiety and financial distress, further embedding existing inequalities.

To build a truly diverse, inclusive and mentally healthy workplace, businesses need to recognise systems that perpetuate discrimination, interrupt that system by calling it out and then ensure action to repair. They need to offer workplace mental health

and wellbeing support that is appropriate, effective and accessible to all employees. And businesses must ensure that workplaces create a culture of psychological safety, where all people feel a sense of belonging.

I want to thank all CMHA members, mental health and inclusion experts who have contributed their experience and knowledge to our Mental Health and Race in the Workplace Toolkit. In 2020, we have seen an incredible outpouring of support and commitment to action. Our hope is that this Toolkit will help businesses to build on this commitment, and better protect, support and create positive mental health of employees who are Black or from a Minority Ethnic background. Let's seize the opportunity for compassionate dialogue and create change for good.

“ ...businesses must ensure that workplaces create a culture of psychological safety, where all people feel a sense of belonging. ”



Patrick Watt
Commercial Director, Bupa Global and
Board Member of City Mental Health
Alliance

I have long believed that the wellbeing of employees is a business priority. And this priority has been thrown into very sharp focus in 2020. A global pandemic, alongside protests following the killing of George Floyd, has led to thousands of businesses reflecting on what more we need to do to support the positive mental health of our people. And this includes recognising that our colleagues who are Black or from a Minority Ethnic background face particular pressures that impact on their wellbeing, and that businesses need to act.

In this regard, Bupa, like so many others, is on a journey. Bupa is working to build a more diverse, inclusive and supportive workplace, and our Board is committed to a zero tolerance approach to racism. We are creating a supportive culture, where people feel a sense of belonging, regardless of their ethnicity. We have a responsibility to make this happen. There is also a business imperative. Bupa is a global organisation, with customers from every imaginable background and ethnicity. How better to understand them and their needs than through a diverse range of employees – whether that's in our clinics, care homes, hospitals, dentists, or insurance businesses. On a personal level, as a White man, I want and need to be an ally to those people around me who are Black or from a Minority Ethnic background. I am working to do this in my work with the CMHA and as a Senior Ally at Bupa.

There has never been a more important time for businesses, and business leaders, to do this work and I am proud that CMHA members have worked together to create this Toolkit. Whatever stage of the journey that your business is on, I hope that it helps to guide and inspire much needed action.



Beth Robotham
Executive Director, Goldman Sachs
and Deputy Chair of City Mental
Health Alliance

People might hesitate to explore race, ethnicity and mental health through fear of making a mistake or feeling intimidated by the scale of the work needed. Much like the journey we have been on together to talk more openly about our mental health experiences – commitment and bravery is needed again here to make progress through education, collaboration and action. The CMHA is an incredible community of leaders committed to taking necessary steps to support the mental health of people who are Black or from a Minority Ethnic background and this guide shares key insights and best practices.

“ The CMHA is an incredible community of leaders committed to taking necessary steps to support the mental health of people who are Black or from a Minority Ethnic background and this guide shares key insights and best practices ”

Beth Robotham

Introduction

Workplaces have an opportunity to better support the positive mental health and wellbeing of their people who are Black and from Minority Ethnic backgrounds. Conversely, workplaces can be a source of stress and, sadly, discriminatory experience, which can negatively impact on wellbeing.

Working in collaboration with CMHA members – including business leaders, wellbeing leads, mental health and inclusion experts and people with lived experience – we have identified four strategic actions for businesses to focus on. By taking these actions, businesses will be able to create a workplace culture that will protect, support and create positive mental health for colleagues who are Black and from a Minority Ethnic background. The workplace experience that people have – whether it is psychologically safe and if it creates a sense of belonging – will influence whether they thrive in that organisation and if, in turn, that organisation will thrive. So by taking these four actions, a business will build a more diverse, inclusive and high performing organisation.

Each strategic action is underpinned by practical guidance and examples of good practice from some of the largest and well-respected businesses from across the legal, professional services and financial sector. This Toolkit is designed for senior leadership, HR, wellbeing and D&I teams.

The CMHA recognises that many businesses are focused on mental health and race in the workplace, so there is a significant level of innovation. We commit to updating this guide regularly in line with new examples of good practice and initiatives. And if, as a reader of this guide, you have suggestions or comments, we welcome this. You can find contact details at the end of the document.

Four Strategic Actions

- 1 Allocate Board level responsibility
- 2 Challenge all forms of racism in the workplace
- 3 Build an inclusive and representative workplace health and wellbeing system
- 4 Measure progress and collect data



A note on language

When it comes to talking about race, language is important. It carries weight in terms of emotion, respect and personal identity. Therefore, it is understandable that some people may feel uncertain or confused about what language to use when talking about race. We must work to ensure that uncertainty over language does not become a barrier for having important conversations or taking necessary action. We are asking people who feel uncertain to inform themselves by reading educational resources (please see the reference section at the end of this guide for examples), and be willing to listen, learn, accept feedback and be brave.

After consulting with people who are Black and from a Minority Ethnic background, inclusion experts and our member businesses, the CMHA will use the language “People who are Black and from a Minority Ethnic background” to describe the people from different ethnicities, who are a minority in countries such as the UK. When we are talking about one particular ethnicity, we will use the appropriate language for that specific ethnicity.

We are conscious that recommended language will evolve. The CMHA will continue to listen, learn and update our use of language as appropriate.

A note on intersectionality and minority groups in the workplace

This Toolkit focuses on practices that relate to support for people who are Black or from a Minority Ethnic background. We recognise that effective diversity and wellbeing strategies take holistic approaches and account for the multiple aspects of peoples’ lives and identity that may impact their experiences. People who are from a similar ethnic background are unlikely to have the same experience because, for example, of being a different gender, from different socio-economic classes or living with a disability. Workplaces should also consider this intersectionality to ensure that the right support is provided.

We also recognise that there are other minority groups in the workplace – such as LGBT+, those living with a disability or neurodiversity – who are not Black or from a Minority Ethnic background who are also more likely to live with a higher incidence of poor mental health because of environmental reasons. The CMHA believes that workplaces have an opportunity to build mental health into all inclusion initiatives, and we are planning further work in this area.

“ We must ensure that uncertainty over language does not become a barrier for having important conversations or taking necessary action ”

Some context

What research and academic studies tell us about race and mental health

A growing body of research and studies are helping to shine a light on the relationship between race and mental health. It points to a higher incidence of poor mental health within, and less effective support for, Black or Minority Ethnic communities. It also suggests that the mental health of these communities in the UK have been impacted by racism.



People from Black, Asian and Ethnically Diverse communities are up to 5 times more likely to develop psychotic disorders than the White British population

(Kirkbride et al, 2017).



Suicide rates are higher among young men of Black African and Black Caribbean origin, and among middle-aged Black African, Black Caribbean and South Asian women than among their White British counterparts

(Mental Health Foundation).



People who are Black or from a Minority Ethnic background generally experience greater psychological distress and receive poorer quality care

(Alegria, Mulvaney-Day, Torres, Polo, & Cao, 2007; Gone & Trimble, 2012; Harris, Edlund, & Larson, 2005).



30% of people from Black and Minority Ethnic backgrounds said problems with housing made their mental health worse during the pandemic, compared to 23% of White people

(MIND 2020).



People who are Black or from a Minority Ethnic background emphasised stigma and a lack of knowledge around mental health as significantly apparent in their community

(Shefer, Rose, Nellums, Thornicroft & Henderson (2013)).



Synergi Collaborative Centre has found that the impact of interpersonal racism includes stress, hyper-awareness of difference, increased levels of psychosis and depression, decreased self-esteem, emotional distress, trauma and post-traumatic stress, substance misuse and fear of repeat discrimination.



The mental wellbeing of children and young people who are Black or from a Minority Ethnic background origin were disproportionately affected in the March – June lockdown, compared with their White counterparts

(Kooth, the NHS-funded online mental health support).



58% of Black and Minority Ethnic employees have experienced non-inclusive behaviours in the workplace over the last 3 years. Of those who had experienced this behaviour, 11% left their organisation

(BITC 2019).



61% of Black Caribbean, 63% of mixed-race and 65% of Black African people felt they were treated with less courtesy than others because of their ethnicity

(“Barriers To Belonging” report, British Red Cross)



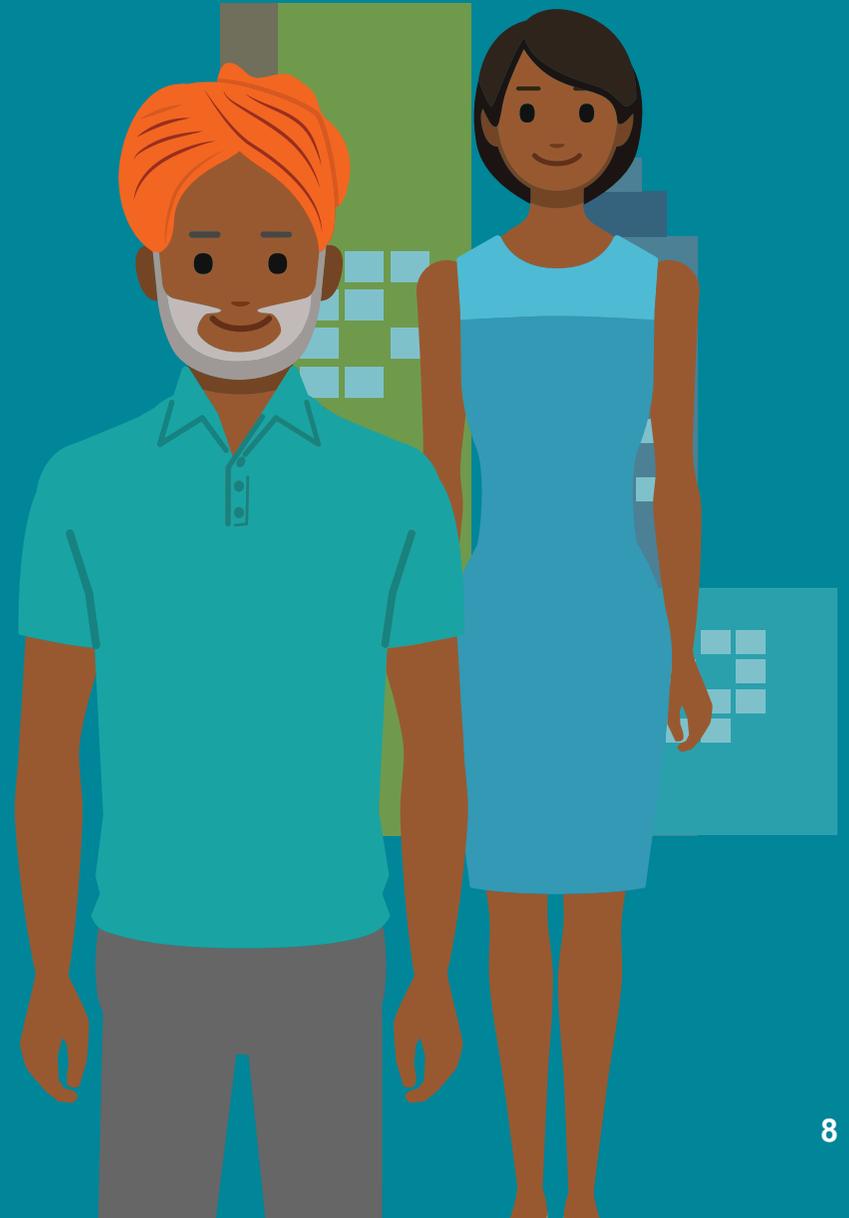
38% of Black and Minority Ethnic respondents said that they had experienced racism in the workplace

(YouGov 2020)



Allocate Board level responsibility

Significant and sustained change in workplace culture will require leaders to drive the change forward and be held accountable for progress. Board members and other senior business executives should work alongside D&I, HR and wellbeing leads, and should sponsor and visibly support any initiatives.



1 Allocate Board level responsibility

Recommended practices

- **Appoint a Board level sponsor:** The Board level sponsor will advocate for, and be responsible for, ensuring the positive wellbeing of people who are Black and from Minority Ethnic backgrounds. This sponsor should be accountable for delivering the strategic actions laid out in this guide.
- **Deliver training:** Hold workshops or training sessions for senior business leaders to help increase their understanding and confidence in talking about race and mental health.
- **Diversity based mentoring:** Create fresh perspectives and sharing of insights by establishing mentoring relationships between senior business leaders and employees from Black or Minority Ethnic backgrounds.
- **Support:** Ensure senior leaders who are Black or from Minority Ethnic backgrounds are not left with the responsibility to progress this agenda. If these senior leaders are leading work in this area, put in place the right wellbeing support.
- **Sponsor and launch initiatives:** Senior business leaders who are White should be visible and active in launching and promoting initiatives which support this agenda. They can do this by:
 - Sending key communications promoting race equality initiatives
 - Speaking about race equality at company wide meetings and events
 - Sharing honest, personal stories of their own personal education and journey in this area

Leadership perspective

“ At London Stock Exchange Group, we are committed to fostering an environment where our people can thrive and fulfil their potential. As the Executive Committee sponsor for Wellbeing I am working to ensure we continue to strive for positive mental health for all. As part of that ambition, we need to ensure we support the positive mental health of our colleagues who are Black or from a Minority Ethnic background. We recognise that these colleagues face particular pressures and stresses arising from race related issues that can impact on their mental health, both within and outside of the workplace. We need to identify and address those pressures where we can and ensure that we are offering our colleagues the specific support, tools and services to continue to support their mental health and wellbeing.”

David Shalders, Chief Operating Officer,
London Stock Exchange Group (LSEG)

Challenge all forms of racism in the workplace

Ensuring a workplace is free of racism and discrimination is crucial to the wellbeing of all employees. It is not possible to build a psychologically safe environment that supports the positive mental health of people who are Black people or from a Minority Ethnic background if they experience, witness or anticipate racism. Organisations must challenge explicit and structural racism. Racism and exclusion can take the form of offensive comments and bullying, as well as not having access to the same opportunities, development and support. Existing structures that act as barriers should be addressed.



2 Challenge all forms of racism in the workplace

Recommended practices

- **Embed zero tolerance racism policies:** Ensure policies are visible and make it clear that racism, in all its forms, is unacceptable. These policies should go beyond “racist bullying” and include “casual” forms of racism, including micro-aggression and disparagement.
- **Help your people to understand racism:** Any zero tolerance racism policies should be accompanied by education to increase understanding of racism and its impact. This includes understanding the prevalence of racism, the ways in which it can manifest itself and the lasting impact it can have on people who are Black and from a Minority Ethnic background. It includes recognising all behaviours that are explicitly racist, micro-aggressive, non-inclusive or inappropriate towards people who are Black or from a Minority Ethnic background in the workplace. Ways in which businesses do this include:
 - **Signposting:** Recommend and encourage engagement with resources and reading material to help educate all employees about racism (see the resources section at the end of this guide).
 - **Storytelling:** Provide a supportive and safe forum for colleagues or external speakers, who are Black or from a Minority Ethnic background to speak to the wider organisation about their experiences, including racism or cultural stigma. Stories could be shared via company blogs; internal newsletters; videos; and internal events. Be mindful that it can be exhausting or triggering to ask people to relive negative experiences and trauma, so ask people sparingly, be clear there is no obligation and give them an opportunity to say no. And, if they do, ensure support is available to them throughout.
- **Develop the skills of colleagues:** Support managers by offering training, guidance on language and increasing their confidence in talking about race and mental health as part of management training. Further, give White colleagues the tools to have conversation about race, and help them to understand how silent acceptance of racist behaviours, intended or otherwise, can cause employees who are Black or from Minority Ethnic backgrounds to lose confidence, or feel excluded and disengaged.
- **Provide confidence in language:** Help colleagues to overcome lack of confidence in language by providing a clear guide on what language should be used with regards to race and ethnicity.
- **Introduce allyship programmes:** Allyship is where people work to ensure that the voices of people who are Black or from a Minority background are heard. Allies use their own voice and platforms to elevate and support others.

2

Challenge all forms of racism in the workplace

Recommended practices

- **Improve representation within your workforce:** Where lack of representation or opportunity to progress exists, people will feel excluded. Assess, understand and take steps to address lack of representation and any barriers within your organisation.
- **Create clear pathways for people to raise concerns:** Reacting to complaints of discrimination and race inequality in a thoughtful, consistent and supportive way is key to maintaining a healthy work environment. Ways of doing this include:
 - Creating formal, safe pathways for employees, victims or observers to raise race related issues/concerns with the employer and in which they have confidence that it will be dealt with appropriately by an appropriate person / body.
 - Develop informal pathways, for example, through Employee Networks, to allow colleagues who are Black or from a Minority Ethnic background to discuss concerns/ issues with peers/colleagues in a safe environment. Employees within this employee network who offer this support should be “given time back” for doing this work, and it should not be treated as an extra-curricular activity. Support should also be offered as after care for those network members who have agreed to support others.

Personal Perspectives

“ I first experienced racism when I was just seven years old and that changed my perspective of how others may perceive me simply because of the colour of my skin, as well as my feeling of belonging. Every single racial event that a Black or Minority Ethnic individual experiences is a negative message. It is someone telling you that you are less worthy or that you don't belong. This can be painful and is never forgotten. From my perspective, it's no surprise that these experiences can impact on mental health and wellbeing.”

Leroy Knowles, Banking

- **Create race equality advisory groups:** Establish internal and external advisory groups of key stakeholders (including people who are Black or from a Minority Ethnic background), both within the business and externally who can consult with to provide insight, support and, when necessary, challenge existing structures or proposed actions and plans. This group can also include relevant employee networks and senior board sponsors.
- **Good practice in the ecosystem and supply chain:** Large businesses can help influence the race equality policies and actions of suppliers and businesses within their supply chain. For example, not providing contracts to companies which don't have equality policies in place.

2

Challenge all forms of racism in the workplace

Oliver Wyman focuses on allyship

Oliver Wyman has communicated to colleagues the need for a focus on allyship to support black colleagues. The firm encourages colleagues to:

- **Listen to your Black colleagues and friends** – when they share their experience and don't jump to try to share a similar experience – sometimes people need a "friendly ear"
- **Check in on your Black colleagues and friends** – take a proactive approach even though it may seem uncomfortable at first, it's about showing someone that you care about them and their wellbeing
- **Join events** that are hosted by Black colleagues and take the time to really learn
- **Signal allyship in meaningful, not performative ways**
– share articles with personal thoughts, volunteer your time, speak not silence

The Consultancy also launched the Inclusion & Diversity (I&D) Academy in 2020, which is open to all colleagues. The firm is currently rolling out modules such as Intro to Race, Ethnicity and Culture, Inclusive Leadership, Inclusive Communications, I&D Allyship and Advocacy and Difficult I&D Conversations.

Campaign

Committing to Change The Race Ratio



Change The Race Ratio is a campaign to improve diversity in UK Boardrooms. Led by founding partners, which include the CBI, CMHA, Deloitte, Linklaters and Microsoft UK, the campaign is calling on businesses to set targets for greater racial and ethnic diversity at the Board, ExCo and ExCo minus one. Setting targets should be accompanied by a commitment to publish those targets, a regular account of progress towards them, and the creation of a culture that enables diversity to thrive.

PwC runs facilitated wellbeing sessions for Black colleagues

After the Black Lives Matters protests started, PwC organised voluntary wellbeing sessions for Black employees in the UK. Attendees were invited to share, in a safe and confidential environment, any experiences they had of racism in the workplace. This included micro-aggressions, perceptions of structural racism or experiences of being "othered". Colleagues who were Black or from a Minority Ethnic background facilitated the sessions and, in recognition that these can be triggering conversations, a PwC Mental Health First Aider was present, and available afterwards. These sessions helped PwC to get a better understanding of the experience of their Black colleagues, which will inform future policies. Also, following the conversations in the sessions, attendees were supported to start an informal "talking network" of Black colleagues in the UK. This offers members of the informal network peer support as and when they need it.

2

Challenge all forms of racism in the workplace

Bank of America helps to address economic and social disparities in wider society

In June 2020, Bank of America made a \$1 billion, four-year commitment of additional support to help local communities address economic and racial inequality accelerated by a global pandemic. The programmes will be focused on assisting people and communities of colour that have experienced a greater impact from the health crisis. Areas of focus will be: health; jobs/training/reskilling/upskilling; support to small businesses; and housing.

Lloyds Banking Group introduced a Race Action Plan

Following in-depth listening sessions with colleagues, Lloyds took focused action in support of Black colleagues. It rolled out its Race Action Plan in July 2020, which focuses on its three key areas of **Culture, Recruitment and Progression** including:

1. Setting a new public goal, complementing our broader 2018 Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic target, to specifically increase Black representation in senior roles from 0.6% at senior grades to at least 3% by 2025 to align with the overall UK labour market
2. Setting up a new advisory board made up of Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic colleagues to influence and inform ongoing diversity strategy and ensure it is making the right progress
3. Working in partnership with external experts to develop a race education programme and removing issues of bias within the organisation
4. Undertaking regular listening sessions to gauge our colleague experiences and progress against its goal
5. Publication of Ethnicity Pay Gap report this year
6. All recruitment shortlists at executive leader grade to have a Black, Asian or Minority Ethnic candidate
7. Nurturing talented Black colleagues through specific development and sponsorship programmes for both middle management and senior grades so that Lloyds can help break the ceiling for senior role models including additional secondment opportunities

2

Challenge all forms of racism in the workplace

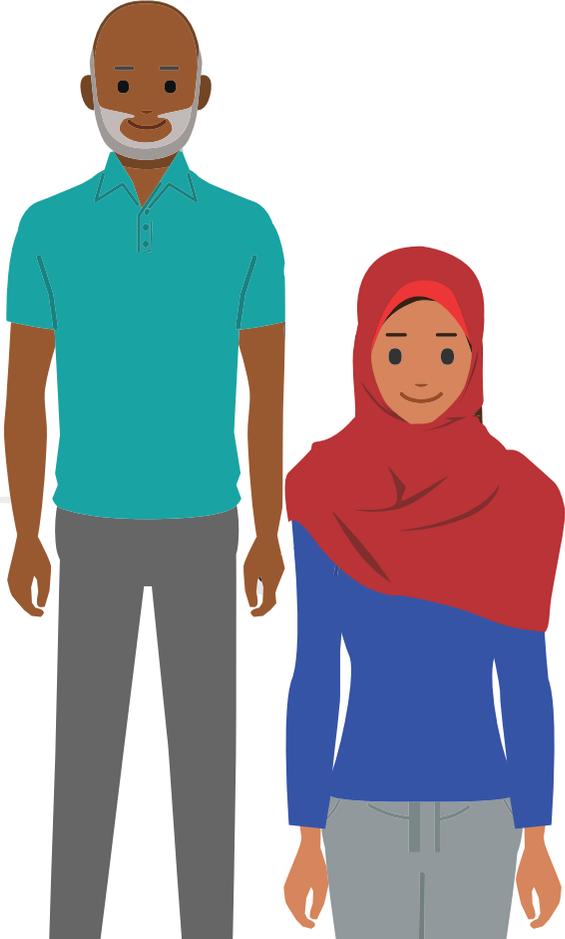
Goldman Sachs increases its people understanding about race

Goldman Sachs engaged a broad range of speakers to cover new topics with employees to help develop the many workplace conversations and leader-led dialogues, focused on responding to the global race events and Black Lives Matter movement. These included 'Understanding Racism and its Impact on Mental Health', 'Talking to Our Children About Race and Racism' and 'Acknowledging the Impact of Racism'. As the pandemic has

disproportionately impacted specific communities, the speakers focused attention on racial trauma, health inequalities and the importance of mental health during challenging times. Partnership across Diversity & Inclusion and Wellness teams, their Firmwide Black Employee Network and clinical specialists, ensured the events would be connected to overall strategy and culture at the firm. The sessions gave people additional language and education on racism and how to be more supportive, inclusive and thoughtful in their approach on having discussions on race – both at work and at home.

OSTC works to challenge systematic racial inequality in early careers

OSTC believes that long term investment is needed to really address the issues of systemic racial inequality within the business. It is currently designing a new arm of its business – a 'diversity accelerator programme' – designed to improve diversity and representation of their early careers intake. This is designed to directly support young people, helping move them from education, to the world of work and onto the trading floor. OSTC is creating a new role within the business to help head this initiative up, with the first intake of candidates planned in June 2021.



STRATEGIC
ACTION

3

Design inclusive workplace health and wellbeing systems

Businesses need to ensure their mental health and wellbeing initiatives and systems are inclusive, representative and effective in reaching and supporting colleagues who are Black or from a Minority Ethnic background. This will be key for effectively supporting positive mental health and ensuring that individuals feel included, understood and accepted. The very act of doing this signals to colleagues that your business is aware of the additional and specific burdens they may face, and you are ready to provide appropriate support. Conversely, if a workplace health and wellbeing system is not inclusive, it could cause distress and feelings of exclusion, rather than provide the support that is intended.



3

Design inclusive workplace health and wellbeing systems

Recommended practices

- **Involve colleagues in the design process:** Consult with colleagues who are Black or from a Minority Ethnic background in the design of wellbeing and mental health support. It may also be helpful to liaise with relevant employee networks.
- **Wellbeing and D&I teams should work together:** Mental health and wellbeing is inextricably linked with the D&I agenda because, firstly, it is an individual characteristic and, secondly, there is a strong intersectionality between living with poor mental health and different minority characteristics. Therefore, it is important that wellbeing and diversity/inclusion teams are aligned and consult with each other on their programmes.
- **Provide employees with training:** Upskill staff to build understanding of, and confidence in, talking about mental health and race. Give your people the opportunity to practise listening skills, give them the confidence to start a difficult conversation, and understand that they don't always have to have the answer.
- **Create inclusive mental health awareness campaigns:** Ensure the voices and experiences from people who are Black or from a Minority Ethnic background are represented in mental health awareness campaigns. Provide a supportive and safe forum for Black colleagues and those from Minority Ethnic backgrounds to speak to the wider organisation about their mental health experiences. Stories could be shared via company blogs; This is Me; and internal events.
- **Mental health and wellbeing support should be inclusive:** Workplace mental health support should be representative, accessible and relevant to people who are Black or from a Minority Ethnic background. This can be achieved by:
 - Mental Health First Aiders (or equivalent) should be recruited to have diverse representation and all should be informed on discrimination issues, such as how racism impacts on mental health
 - Confirm if the EAP service offers appropriate support for issues which may be particular to people who are Black or from a Minority Ethnic

3

Design inclusive workplace health and wellbeing systems

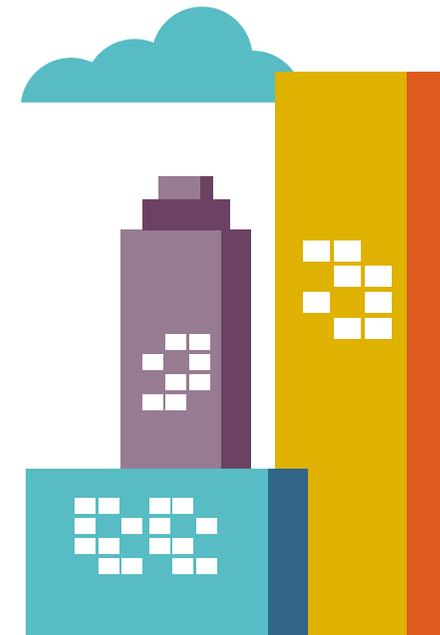
Recommended practices

background. Ensure the EAP services your people access have sufficient representation of professionals from Black and Minority Ethnic backgrounds. Provide access to counselling services and counsellors that are appropriate and representative for people who have experienced racism or discrimination

- Clearly signpost colleagues to external mental health resources which have been developed specifically for people from different Black and Minority Ethnic backgrounds (see the resources section at the end of this guide for examples).

- **Encourage peer support networks:** Encourage and facilitate the creation of inclusive networks to enable people who are Black or from a Minority Ethnic background to speak and build a community with other people who have similar lived experience in a safe space.

- **Recruit for, and support the development of, compassionate management skills:** The qualities of a compassionate manager – good communication and listening skills – should be included in job descriptions and in management training, and be a part of performance management criteria.



3

Design inclusive workplace health and wellbeing systems

PwC runs inclusive Mental Health Awareness campaigns

As part of PwC's ongoing effort to normalise conversations about mental health, it has used storytelling extensively. Having people across the organisation share their lived experiences of mental wellbeing challenges has proved to be an effective way of engaging staff in the conversation, helping to break the stigma often still associated with mental health. This has included [creating a film](#), with people from diverse backgrounds, exploring how the experience of mental ill-health plays out in different cultures and communities, where this can still be a taboo subject.

Hogan Lovells puts diversity at heart of its wellbeing offering

Hogan Lovells recognised the pandemic has had varying impacts on individuals and different groups, so the international law firm reviewed its wellbeing offering through various diversity lenses, including ethnicity. Its REAHL (Race and Ethnicity at Hogan Lovells) Network nominated one of their Steerco members to sit on the firm's working group that was set up to deal with working from home/return to the office during the Covid period, to bring any concerns specific to ethnic minorities collected by the wider network. Mental Health First Aiders include ethnically diverse representation and regular MHFA catch ups include sharing resources and discussions on race and wellbeing, the disproportionate impact of Covid on certain ethnic groups and how we can best support those coming from a diverse range of cultural backgrounds. The imminent appointment of a 'REAHL MHFA' will ensure the two groups are linked with each other.

Personal Perspectives

CMHA INSIDE STORIES

A recording of the CMHA's [Inside Stories event](#) includes personal and honest accounts of how race can impact on mental health and sense of belonging.

3

Design inclusive workplace health and wellbeing systems

Personal perspectives

Ashley Fontaine (22), Social Media Consultant

“You cannot underestimate the power of appropriate, tailored mental health support that truly understands and addresses individual mental health needs, especially when those needs intersect with identity characteristics such as race. Following the tragic passing of my dad and countless battles with trying to come to terms with it, I decided to see a counsellor. They were kind and welcoming, and it was nice to talk about the incident with someone who was far removed and impartial. However, I soon realised that they were too far removed: when it came to discussing issues about my mental health that related to my Blackness, they didn’t quite seem to understand and, thus, know how to respond or provide the right care. In the end, I didn’t completely get the help that I needed. I learnt some great anxiety management techniques, but ultimately there were many (race-related) issues concerning my mental health that were left unresolved.”

Supporting the unseen workforce

Businesses are increasingly recognising their responsibility to those key workers who work behind the scenes of their business, in service and manual roles - such as, security, cleaning, transport and hospitality. They may be contractors, rather than employees. This unseen workforce includes a significant proportion of people who are Black and from a Minority Ethnic background. They are more likely to have low pay, poor job security and live in multigeneration households, where social distancing from older relatives is impossible. The stresses on their physical and mental health in 2020 have been intense, whilst their access to mental health services has been reduced. They continue to be at higher risk

of contracting and dying from Covid-19. This unseen workforce often does not have access to EAP, financial wellbeing advice, Mental Health First Aiders and rarely has access to mental health education. A growing number of businesses recognise that their responsibility extends beyond their “frontline” to this “unseen workforce”. They can support their mental health by ensuring they have access to support, such as company events to promote mental health and wellbeing, Mental Health First Aiders, mental health training and financial wellbeing advice. In situations where a person in these roles may have experienced racism, consider providing them with support via your EAP for the duration of any investigation and for a limited time post conclusion.

Mental Health And Race Training

The CMHA has developed training for workplaces to recognise and understand the intersectionality of race, racism and mental health, and build race confidence to support compassionate mental health conversations. The training aims to improve participant awareness and understanding of identity, belonging and the barriers faced by Black and Minority Ethnic people in the workplace. It explores systematic advantage, how to be a race ally, the different ways of getting conversations started to promote proactive engagement, and how to move towards creating culture change and psychologically healthy workplaces. This course is available for booking from January 2021. Contact cmha@citymha.org.uk to find out more.

STRATEGIC
ACTION

4

Measure progress and collect data

Measurement will be key for tracking what does and doesn't drive progress on the mental health and race agenda, guiding future thinking, increasing accountability and sustaining change.



4

Measure progress and collect data

Recommended practices

- **Evaluate workplace mental health:** Commit to taking external workplace evaluations that assess an organisation's progress in supporting the mental health of the diverse range of people within your company, including those who are from Black and from Minority Ethnic backgrounds. The [CMHA's Thriving at Work Assessment](#) can help with this.
- **Collect data:** Collect data regularly, for example from surveys and EAP usage, to understand and inform how colleagues who are Black or from Minority Ethnic backgrounds perceive and interact with services. When possible, disaggregate data by ethnic group, to understand specific issues and requirements relevant to each group.
- **Be transparent on reporting:** Increase transparency and accountability through internal reporting (reporting to the Board) and external reporting (for example, the organisation's annual report) on the progress against targets.
- **Consult and listen:** Undergo regular employee consultations, surveys and focus groups; include diverse voices in decision making; get a clear and regular snapshots of what is happening within your organisation; and understand how new initiatives are being received.

Slaughter and May sign up to the Race Fairness Commitment

The law firm announced its commitment to a range of measures on race designed to improve the career prospects of Black, Asian and Ethnic Minority employees within the firm by signing the Race Fairness Commitment. Measures committed to include analysis of quantitative data and monitoring throughout the careers of employees who are Black or from a Minority Ethnic background, in order to identify and address the points at which there may be points of divergence in their career path compared to peers. Another measure includes ensuring that race and racism are talked about in every induction and exit interview.

Resources

Mental health and wellbeing resources for people who are Black or from a Minority Ethnic Background

- [The Black, African and Asian Therapy Network](#)
- [Rethink Factsheet](#)
- [Chinese Mental Health Association](#)
- [Sharing Voices](#)
- [Mind's Peer Support Directory](#)
- [Black Thrive](#)

Research and further reading/listening

- [CMHA event](#)
- How racism makes us sick : [In his TED Talk](#), Professor David R. Williams looks at how racism makes us sick
- [Video: A demonstration of privilege / class / social demonstration](#)
- Mental Health Foundation analysis: [The Mental Health of Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic Communities](#)
- [The Impact of Racism on Mental Health Briefing Paper](#) from Synergi Collaborative Centre
- ["Racism and Inappropriate Behaviour: Five Actions For Allies"](#) from BITC
- [Race At Work: Black Voices Report](#) from BITC
- A guide to [Supporting The Mental Health of People of Colour and Black People](#) from Mental Health First Aid England:
- A manager guide to [Supporting the wellbeing of People of Colour and Black colleagues](#) from Mental Health First Aid England
- The ACAS podcast: [Race equality – getting uncomfortable and sustaining change](#)
- Books recommended by CMHA Members: 'White Fragility' by Robin DiAngelo and 'Why I am no longer talking to White People about Race' by Reni Eddo-Lodge.

Training

To find out about CMHA mental health training, please visit our [website](#)

If want to know more about mental health and race training, please contact cmha@cityhmha.org.uk

If you have any comments or thoughts about this guide, or innovations, that you would like to share with the CMHA, please do get in touch on cmha@cityhmha.org.uk



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