

SUPPORTING BAME COMMUNITIES FACING MULTIPLE DISADVANTAGE

By Sohan Sahota

BAC-IN hosted Project Ahryzen - **Supporting BAME communities facing multiple disadvantage** learning event in Nottingham in December 2018. The event activities consisted of recovery rap, drama, spoken word, cultural dance and inspirational testimonies highlighting issues affecting BAME communities and success of BAC-IN recovery model. BAC-IN, a Nottingham based, peer-led drug & alcohol support service provides culturally responsive recovery solutions for Black, Asian & Minority Ethnic communities. BAC-IN was created in 2003, in response to mainstream services not adequately meeting the needs of BAME service users.

Supporting multiple disadvantage

The organisation helps individuals who experience substance misuse and related multiple disadvantage including mental health, homelessness, offending, discrimination and unemployment. A range of activities are on offer, including counselling, mentoring, recovery coaching & training to enable individuals to achieve a lasting recovery, families to become strengthened and communities to be more empowered.



Partnership collaboration

In 2017 BAC-IN was awarded a two year grant by Lankelly Chase to deliver ground-breaking Project Ahryzen in partnership with Sheffield Hallam University. Project Ahryzen action research explored through the authentic voice of lived experience the lives of BAC-IN peers, hidden experiences of disadvantage and the development of a successful model for supporting BAME communities facing multiple disadvantage. BAC-IN peers were trained to conduct repeat in-depth interviews with service users/peers every six weeks to track their personal journeys over a 6 month period using principles of co-production.

Shame, Stigma & lack of trust

The aim was to test how well BAC-IN's peer led recovery model works in meeting service user needs and to amplify the voices of BAME people with addiction.

Key learning highlighted cultural explanations for addiction, such as shame; stigma, racism and lack of trust and a lack of diversity and cultural knowledge in mainstream services.



Amplifying voices of BAME people

Service user experiences of accessing support with BAC-IN and mainstream services: Coming to BAC-IN has helped my family understand what addiction is... 'Opened their eyes a lot more to what I'm going through'. 'I know that the best help you can get is from another addict, someone who's been there ...' 'The people who I was speaking to through the NHS, they're just people who have studied it, they haven't really gone through it, and I think that slight disconnect between the two has made this place [BAC-IN] more appealing... 'BAC-IN offers more... it's done in a sincere way'



Social & system change

The findings of Project Ahryzen will be used to improve and influence social and system change for BAME communities. Nationwide stakeholders attended, including Commissioners, Managers, Service users and Service providers. Julian Corner, CEO of Lankelly Chase, spoke about why and how systems need to change, said, 'We cannot afford the failure of the current system. So we are looking elsewhere for clues. And this is why Lankelly chase has supported BAC-IN not because of meeting the unmet needs; it is because BAC-IN holds vital insights into what a transformed system might look like for everybody.'

Security, governance & commissioning

Kate Davies OBE, NHS Director of Health & Justice, guest speaker, stated, 'look how far you have come, 16 years of maintaining and sustaining, heartfelt support for men, women and families, consistently. Organisations like BAC-IN don't stay here because of love, energy and passion, or events like this. They also need funding, security and need to be a part of a bigger governance structure and part of different clinical commissioning groups and what this means for Nottingham...for all areas of the country. So look at how the research you've done, the evidence base, you build on the governance and assurance for black and minority ethnic communities but also for addiction and recovery.'

Recovery science/cultural issues

Professor David Best, Sheffield Hallam University, gave a presentation on Recovery for communities and life in recovery, which highlighted that, Peer models are successful because they provide the personal direction, encouragement and role modelling necessary to initiate engagement and then to support ongoing participation. On the theme of recovery, he said, 'The science is growing for recovery, we know very little about cultural issues around recovery. The process of developing innovative recovery projects is local. Recovery is a positive sum game and benefits the individuals, family and community. It's culturally embedded, community sensitive and community engaged. in order for that happen Projects like this (BAC-IN) must be allowed to flourish, to identify ways that are culturally sensitive and so local needs are addressed.'

Next steps

The evidence & findings of Project Ahryzen will be used;

- To impact policy
- To influence decision-making in governance and commissioning structures to drive social and system change for BAME communities
- To develop a successful Peer led model for supporting BAME communities facing multiple disadvantage
- To work in consultation with National Institute for Health and Care Excellence

Culturally adaptive solutions

Project Ahryzen forms a new beginning & an opportunity for BAC-IN & BAME communities to develop culturally responsive recovery pathways and culturally adaptive services appropriate for BAME communities in Nottingham & beyond. Sohan Sahota, BAC-IN co-founder, said, 'BAC-IN, an empowered 'grass roots' community organisation with lived experience and lived knowledge of recovery has successfully been delivering innovative living solutions and possess the authentic capacity to reach those in need of the most help in particular those termed as 'hard to reach'.

Feedback from conference delegates

- 'Passionate, powerful and eye opening'
- 'I'm taking away the faith that individuals have in this service and the need to transfer this across all services'
- 'Connecting those who see the need for change with the people preventing it, people with power, from outside & inside the system'

Full Project Ahryzen publication will be available at: www.bac-in.co.uk

