

Aminah's story



I initially applied to the post of Assistant in Community Psychology because being a minority myself, I had an interest in delivering provision relevant to the community we serve. The Transformation Programme meant that we had the chance to make some structural and systemic change, which is a rare opportunity to come by! It was through this role that I later applied to train as a CAP.

The work that we do helps the community through no longer making diversity an afterthought but instead incorporating community identity into all the work that we do. We look to increase workforce knowledge and representation beyond a tokenistic level and to work closely with the community.

A recent example of a project we worked on involved delivering some online webinars on managing low mood and eating disorders, designed specifically for the Bangladeshi community. [\[Watch here\]](#)

This was in collaboration with the charity Bangladeshi Mental Health Forum (BMHF) based in Tower Hamlets, who we connected with through Angela Byrne (ELFT BME Access Lead, Tower Hamlets). BMHF has been working hard to serve the community for many years and we were lucky enough to learn more about the community from Shamsur Choudhury (BMHF Operations Manager) and tap into the large pool of people BMHF has engaged over the years. A key aspect of our work is to tailor psychological education, tools and principles and make them relevant to the local community. We all make a great team and have built a strong, mutualistic relationship with the common aim to give the community what it needs.

We have to overcome the fact that many psychological tools and measures (even some of the most common ones we use daily) were designed for and researched on individuals from a very small range of communities. Cultural competency is to recognise this and ask questions beyond structured measures; to identify taboos, and form a therapeutic alliance safe enough to encourage openness.

Another key challenge is that, through research, we have found that clinicians can feel apprehensive in asking such questions especially if they are from a different cultural background themselves to the individuals for whom they are caring. Though this is understandable, by asking culturally sensitive questions and learning more about the communities we do not belong to we can actively demonstrate that all

aspects of identity are important in psychological work. The community has been fantastic and incredibly thankful! They are so keen to engage and use the platform for discussion. They have shared experiences, been validating of one another and bought some incredible insight. We firmly believe that this is due to the hard work organisations like BMHF put in to build trust and rapport. Several people attended the seminars and many more viewed them online, showing just how much the community values our efforts.