

PEER RESEARCH SPOTLIGHT

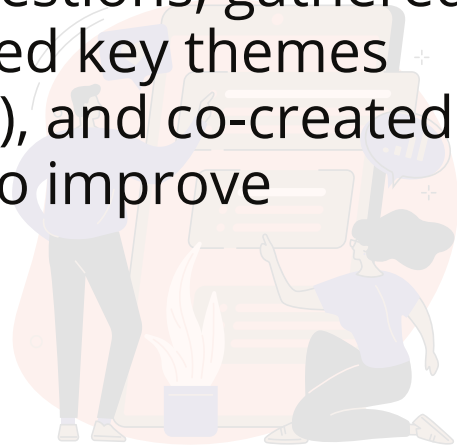


PROJECT SUMMARY

How do cultural perceptions and stigma affect Black African & Caribbean communities willingness to seek mental health support in Ealing?

This project explored how cultural perceptions and stigma affect Black people's willingness to seek mental health support in Ealing. Through surveys, one-to-one conversations, a focus group, a rapid review of reports and local service mapping, we worked with young people (16–25), parents/carers and youth workers.

Together, we co-designed questions, gathered anonymised insights, identified key themes (stigma, trust, access, culture), and co-created practical recommendations to improve support.



INSIGHTS

“ I'd rather talk to someone who understands my background before being referred to ”

“ When I saw a Black counsellor at the youth club, I finally felt comfortable opening up ”

“ Language and tone from services often feel clinical or judgmental; people want plain, respectful communication ”

**BY PEER RESEARCHER:
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PROJECT LEARNINGS

- 1 Stigma & Fear of Judgement**
Many participants described mental health as a taboo topic. Worries about being judged by family, peers, or the wider community meant people often delayed seeking support until they were in crisis, making early intervention much harder.
- 2 Trust matters more than awareness**
Awareness of services existed, but people were reluctant to use them without a trusted connection. Relationships with staff rooted in the community, who understood cultural context and showed genuine care, were the real gateway to support.
- 3 Practical access shapes follow-through**
Even when people were willing to seek help, barriers such as long waiting times, costs, and the lack of culturally safe or welcoming spaces determined whether they continued with services. Accessibility and environment were as important as availability.

