



SUICIDE CAMPAIGN PROJECT

**CARIBBEAN & AFRICAN HEALTH NETWORK
(CAHN)**

APRIL 2022

Project Background & Rationale for Approach

Prior to June 2021 self-reported data was the mechanism used to indicate rates of suicide by ethnicity. This data (although variable over the decades) highlighted that young Black men and middle-aged Black woman were at the highest risk of suicide. We also know that from the data collected on maternal related mortality that maternal suicide remains the leading cause of direct pregnancy related death in first postnatal year. In the context of the Black community MBBRACE (2021) data evidences that Black women are four times more likely to die during the perinatal period. As the overall national reports did not provide an accurate picture about which ethnic groups was more likely to commit suicide the Office National Statistics (ONS) in England and Wales began collecting and reporting on ethnicity suicide data in 2021 alongside existing gender and age data. The newly published information highlights that suicide rates for men have risen for young Black Caribbean and African men including those from mixed racial backgrounds. Statistics on the inequalities on mental health already indicates the disproportionate mental health illness suffered within ethnic groups especially Black men. The evidence also points to how less likely Black people are to having their needs met by mainstream mental health services.

As an organisation we are committed to improving holistic health and well-being for the Caribbean & African community. Suicide happens in all communities; however, it is a taboo topic in the Black community and therefore people do not talk about it openly. During the pandemic, we lost several members of the black community because of suicide. These unfortunate events prompted us into taking proactive actions to raise awareness within our community in Greater Manchester and beyond with the support of professionals. Suicide prevention awareness, workshops and engagements are very impactful in getting our community to open up, understand more and addressing the myths about this sensitive subject.



Aims & Objectives

- Increase understanding and knowledge of practical suicide prevention techniques.
- Spotting the early signs and acting on it
- Enable people to confidently make appropriate and timely interventions if they think someone is feeling suicidal.
- Making suicide less of a taboo topic by addressing the cultural and religious sensitiveness associated to it
- Promote CAHN Helpline for signposting to support services

Project deliverables

In order to achieve our aims and objectives a number of interventions were developed to engage the Black Caribbean and African community.

We ran a series of suicide awareness workshops that occurred in person and on virtual platforms. For the two face to face workshops over 70 people attended and for the two workshops 76 people were on the virtual platform. We had an eclectic and rich mix of community & faith leaders, those working within mental health services, members of the public and those who have recovered from suicidal ideations and those who are victims of the loss of loved ones to suicide.

Workshop


Held @ St Thomas Centre, Ardwick Green, North Manchester, M12 6FZ

The Suicide Awareness Training was designed to allow participants to become more aware of suicide, enabling them to easily pick-up signs from someone having suicidal thoughts.



Evaluation: feedback from the workshops

Overall the feedback from the workshops were very positive and indicated that a lot of learning had taken place. Many of the participants wanted regular workshops to build assets of knowledge in the Black community and to be involved in other mental health training to support their learning on this programme.



“Overall training was insightful. It was a learning, unlearning, relearning session. I found the criteria very useful. Knowing more signs to look out for. Factors that increase the risk of suicide was great to learn. I loved the interaction during the sessions and the feedbacks from other participants. I am encouraged to look out for people with suicidal tendencies and offer support. Awareness is also very key and I am happy to be involved in this and seek other opportunities to get trained on other mental health topics”.

“The course has been extremely helpful to me. I recommend that it should be done on a regular basis for many people”

“Learning about the lack of representation of people from Black & Ethnic minority communities amongst these reported as affected by suicide is quite empowering. This challenges me to prioritise in speaking about suicide while becoming aware of I could support others who might experience thoughts of suicide”.

“Cultural appropriate service is necessary to support persons who experience suicide thoughts. This is a particularly good course which I recommend to professionals and non-professionals to build community resource”.

Promoting Support Services

Promotional materials were developed to utilise within community settings, and it was important that these were engaging and included representations in relation to gender, age and ethnicity to signal inclusion (see below).

Throughout the project our helpline remained available, and we were able to use this to receive calls and signpost to relevant agencies where required. We were also able to refer to our counselling service for culturally, racially and religiously tailored support and below are a selection of case studies and a number of clients that we supported through their suicidal challenges.



LET'S PREVENT SUICIDE TOGETHER

"THE LATEST UK SUICIDE FIGURES SHOW THAT ON AVERAGE JUST UNDER **6,000** PEOPLE TAKE THEIR OWN LIVES EVERY YEAR. THREE-QUARTERS OF THEM ARE **MEN.**"

(NHS (NATIONAL HEALTH SERVICE) 2018)

If you are feeling down and struggling to get help
Contact our CAHN helpline 07710 022382 or email help@cahn.org.uk

Image: A close-up portrait of a Black man with a somber expression.



TOGETHER WE CAN REDUCE SUICIDE!

DO YOU KNOW THE SIGNS OF SUICIDE AND HOW TO SUPPORT YOURSELF OR SOMEONE? IT'S IMPORTANT WE LOOK AFTER EACH OTHER AS SUICIDE OCCURS IN ALL COMMUNITIES!

If you are feeling down and struggling to get help
Contact our CAHN helpline 07710 022382 or email help@cahn.org.uk

Image: A young Black child looking down with a sad expression.



WE ARE HERE TO HELP

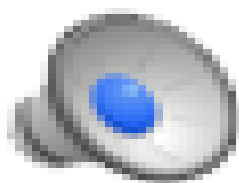
FEELING LOW? WE'LL LIFT YOU UP
FEELING LOST? WE'LL HELP GET YOU ON TRACK

**COMPETING WITH SUICIDE?
CAHN'S GOT YOUR BACK**

If you are feeling down and struggling to get help
Contact our CAHN helpline 07710 022382 or email help@cahn.org.uk

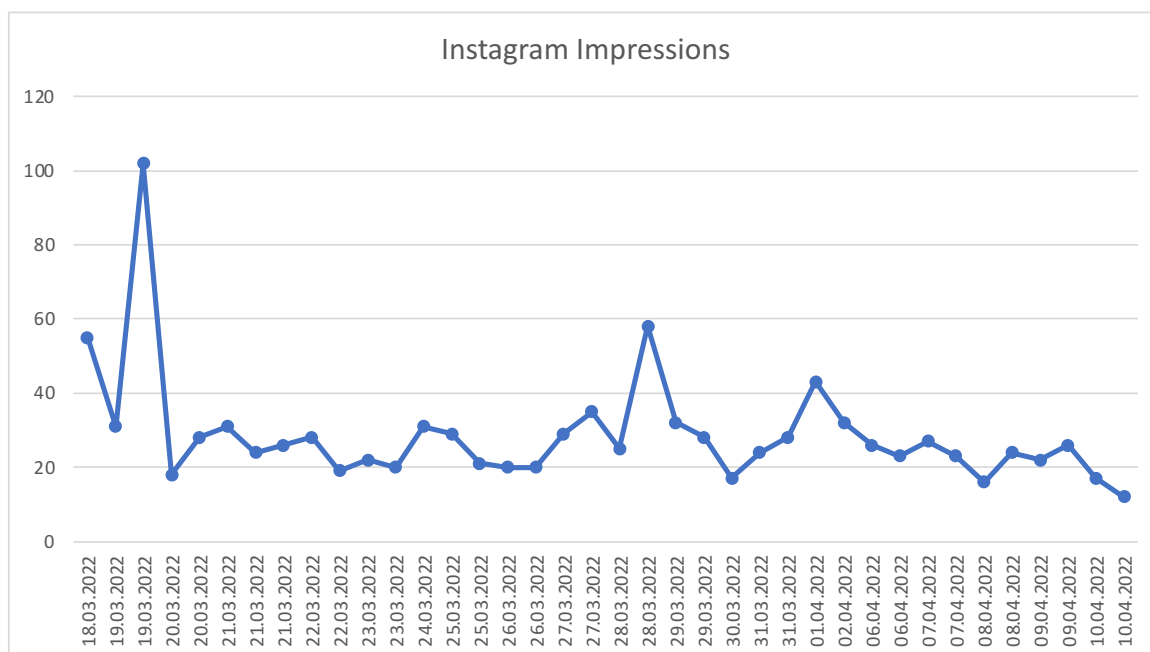
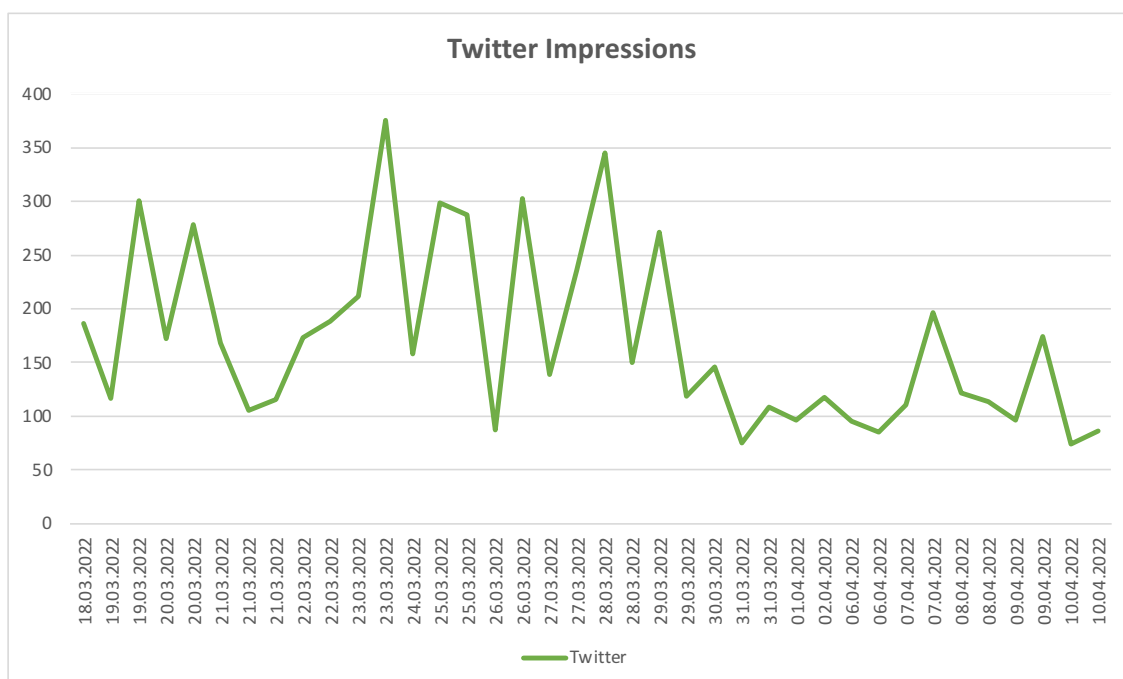
Image: A close-up portrait of a Black woman with a distressed expression.

In order to engage people across a number of mediums we developed radio jingles and aired these on local community radios where the listenership was predominantly Black Caribbean and African. We were also cognizant of those in Black communities that do not engage with local community radio and ensured those messages were aired using other social media platforms. Messages on these platforms raised suicide awareness and available support such as the one below.



Project Outputs/Actions & Data:

Developed several creatives and messages used in promotion of suicide awareness and prevention across the organisations social media platforms, please see below for the impressions.



Develop a young people's safe space for virtual and in person chats and support

On April 16th April CAHN held a young people's event on suicide and used the recent unfortunate incident of an African college student that committed suicide because of bullying. This event brought together over 35 young people on a Saturday afternoon with a counsellor to discuss mental health and suicide.

Several questions ensued from the conversations held that afternoon and feedback provided highlighted the need for more work to be done to protect our young people from mental health issues and suicide. Please see some quotes below.

"This event was really helpful because sometimes I feel really down about some of the experiences I have in school, it is not nice being picked on all of the time"

"It is really good to know that there is support from places like CAHN so there is somewhere to turn when life gets so difficult"

"I have found the last 2 years very hard, so much has happened and people around me have not been coping very well, this in turn has made me wonder what the future holds, we have lost so many people"

"One of my close friends committed suicide and there was no help for me or my other friends, I am so sad often when I think about it and I had my parents and others in church to help me but many of my friends do not have that and one of them has left school, I am worried about him"

"Life is scary, when I think about what my dad went through and the problems he has with his health it is a really worry, I am so glad there is help but many of us need more access to this for Black people"

"Regular talking sessions with leaders like yourselves will really help us"

What our young people said they want to happen to help their mental wellbeing



High School and College Engagement Session

Engaging young people to better understand and manage their mental well-being









JOIN US AND SHARE THE POSITIVE VIBES

- Emotional wellbeing
- Confidence building in a school environment
- Anti-bullying among peers

Saturday 16th April 2022 | 2pm-4:30pm

World Harvest Christian Centre, 21 Seymour Road, Manchester M11 4PG

Contact: communityengagement@cahn.org.uk

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Feedback from the young people's conversations

1. To make this a regular event.
2. To have one of session with parents where they can have opportunity for parents to see things from their own perspective.
3. To have an engagement session for parents that grew up in Africa so that they can understand what life as a young person living in the UK is.
4. They want to be involved more in decision-making process affecting their future.
5. They want parents to listen to them more.
6. They don't want parents to be comparing them with their childhood days in Africa.
7. They want parents to reduce the pressure they put on them especially regarding their academics.

The counselling service at CAHN received a number of referrals resulting from the suicide promotions. Please see some case studies below. We had a significant number of students that were referred to the service with suicidal ideation and this number increased through the pandemic.

Case Studies

Client A: Black African Male

Client is thirty-nine years of age who was married with three children. Due to challenges in his marriage he was thrown out of his matrimonial house by his wife. He had no family and nowhere to go, he didn't have a job or friends he could seek support from. He belonged to a church but was embarrassed to inform them of the challenges due to the stigma and shame. He had to sleep in his car and was in deep distress. He wife banned him from seeing his children.

Client: "What is the point of living"

Quote. "Getting the help, I needed saved me from doing what my mind was telling me to do."

Client B: Black Mixed-Race Caribbean male

The client came to counselling due to the bereavement of his wife. He was in significant distress and on one occasion consumed alcohol to excess which resulted in him passing out in a bathtub and drowning. He was discovered comatose by his children who alerted emergency services to revive him and save his life

"There is no reason to live, I have nothing all I want is my wife back and she is not coming back, I just want to die"

Common themes for referral to counselling service for suicidal ideation

- | | |
|---|---|
| o | Self-Harm |
| o | Bereavement |
| o | Parents divorce |
| o | Survivors guilt after traumatic event |
| o | Still born birth |
| o | Self-value, Self-esteem outward appearance of Being Black |
| o | Rejection from career progression |
| o | Substance abuse from childhood events |
| o | Low mood, abandonment |
| o | Grandfather committed suicide. |
| o | Inability to cope with mental health challenges of loved one from attempted suicide |
| o | Childhood issues Domestic violence |
| o | Lack of acceptance from In-laws |
| o | Perfectionism and inability to achieve in line with parental expectations |

Next steps

Several plans both short and long-term have been identified and plans are already in motion to get them executed.

1. We have a number of upcoming engagements and activities geared towards reaching out to the community.

Suicide Awareness Training Event

Facilitated by: Bishop Herbie McKenzie

Date: Friday 13th May 2022.

Venue: Denmark Road Sports Centre, Manchester, M15 6FG

2. Further engagement

Create safe spaces to have continued conversations over a period of 3 months. This will include a small group of 8-10 people to design a suicide prevention infographic that will guide young people to talk and signpost others for support.



The poster features the CAHN logo at the top, followed by the title 'Suicide Awareness Training for the Caribbean and African Community'. It lists the date as Friday 13th May 2022 and the time as 09:30hrs - 14.30hrs. The venue is Richmond House, 11 Richmond Grove, Longsight, Manchester M13 0LN. It describes the training as a workshop for Caribbean and African communities, where participants will receive a certificate and could progress to a 'Train the Trainer' course. The guest trainer is Bishop Herbert McKenzie, Senior Pastor of New Testament Church of God, Dudley. The course content includes: Introduction to suicide prevention, understanding why someone might have such thoughts, signs and symptoms to look out for, confident conversations, and helping someone get the help they need. A registration link is provided: <https://portal.cahn.org.uk/suicideawarenesstraining>. Contact information for Elizabeth, Events Officer, is also provided: elizabeth@cahn.org.uk or call 07312 082832. Social media handles for CAHN UK are listed at the bottom.

Conclusion & recommendations

The initiatives carried out during this project have highlighted the need for much more work to be done in the area of mental health and suicide. The Black community is at disproportionately high risk of suicide and some of the reasons for the increase has been due to the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic where Black people are more likely to die, have long covid and more likely to lose their jobs.

There is the ongoing challenge of racism and discrimination and the unequal levels of bullying, unfair, inequitable and unjust treatment in policing, education and the criminal justice system. In addition, Black people are less likely to be afforded the opportunities to gain promotion, excel in their careers and have the social networks to tap into to enable privileges. In health there is poorer access to services that Black people recognise as racially, religiously and culturally appropriate for them to use and benefit from. All of these factors have been highlighted during these sessions and put Black people at risk of mental health illness and suicidal ideation or suicide. The Black communities goal is to strive towards a time where high rates of mental ill health and suicide is a thing of the past.

Recommendations

- o More wraparound education, tools and resources to build assets within our community
- o Education delivered by Black people to sector providers such as education, employment, criminal justice etc. so that they can identify and respond to the challenges faced by Black people to reduce the prevalence of mental health illness
- o To work with the sector to strengthen existing mental health provision so that they are more responsive to the challenges faced by Black people

Appendix

- Conducted various suicide awareness training/workshops (both physical and online)

Face to face and virtual workshops

SUICIDE PREVENTION & THE CARIBBEAN & AFRICAN COMMUNITY

- Learn how you can help prevent suicide
- Hear about suicide bereavement support available
- Share ideas on how to make our community suicide safer
- Guest Speaker: Bishop Herbert Mackenzie

Tuesday 24th March 6 – 9pm
1st Floor, Richmond House, 11 Richmond Grove,
Ardwick, Manchester, M13 0LN

For further information, please email
events@cahn.org.uk or call Elizabeth on
07312 082832

SHINING A LIGHT ON SUICIDE

TOGETHER WE CAN HELP PREVENT SUICIDE

#shininglightonsuicide
shininglightonsuicide.org.uk

Online Workshops

Suicide First Aid

Spot the signs → Start the dialogue → Help save a life

Prevention is better than cure


- The sooner we can help someone get the help they need, the better
- Stigma is a really big issue and stops people asking for help
- Shame that we “can’t cope” or “are weak” is a blocker
- The attitude of those around us
- Feeling uncomfortable in our community
- Fear of being judged
- Being told to “man up”, “get a grip”, “it’ll be fine”
- WE NEED TO TALK ABOUT IT!

Health-Hour Engagement/Promotion

Through our weekly health-hour program we have constantly promoted the messages and even addressed several topics in relation to mental health whilst signposting and promoting the counselling services available.

The program averages about 200 subscribers weekly who are of Caribbean and African ethnicity.

In partnership with CAHN CROYDON BME FORUM Enfield Caribbean ASSOCIATION bhi




Health Hour


PROLONGED STRESS AND ITS LINK TO DEPRESSION

Saturday 2nd April 2022
11:00hrs - 12:15hrs


Speaker:
Dr Joseph Omofuma,
GP, Specialist interest Mental Health




- What is stress and how is it recognised
- Causes of emotional stress
- Forms of depression
- Prevention and management of stress and depression

Please email events@cahn.org.uk for the zoom details or join us on
 **Youtube** (Caribbean and African Health Network)
#CAHNHealthHour

07710 022382 www.cahn.org.uk

Health Hour is part of CATHIP which is funded by 

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Health Hour

Schizophrenic & Psychosis in Black & Mixed Heritage People

Saturday 9th April 2022 | 11:00hrs – 12:15hrs



Professor Dawn Edge
Professor of Mental Health & Inclusivity
in the Faculty of Biology,
Medicine and Health at
The University of Manchester.



Dr Shubulade Smith
Consultant Psychiatrist at the South London
and Maudsley NHS Foundation Trust
and Visiting Senior Lecturer at the Institute of Psychiatry,
Psychology and Neuroscience, Kings College London.

- Why are 9 times as many Caribbeans and Africans diagnosed with psychosis?
- Are causes genetic or social? What role does racism play?
- Diagnosis: What are the signs and forms of psychosis?
- Management: What should culturally appropriate care look & feel like?

Please email events@cahn.org.uk for the zoom details or join us on
 **Youtube** (Caribbean and African Health Network)
#CAHNHealthHour

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Health Hour is part of CATHIP which is funded by 

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11th November 2021, MBRRACE-UK Confidential Enquiry into Maternal Deaths in the UK and Ireland

CAHN would like to take this opportunity to say thank you for funding this project and to all those that participated.



For further information contact:
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