

Short &
long-term
evaluation
report:

Community of
Practice for
developing
more racially
responsive
services

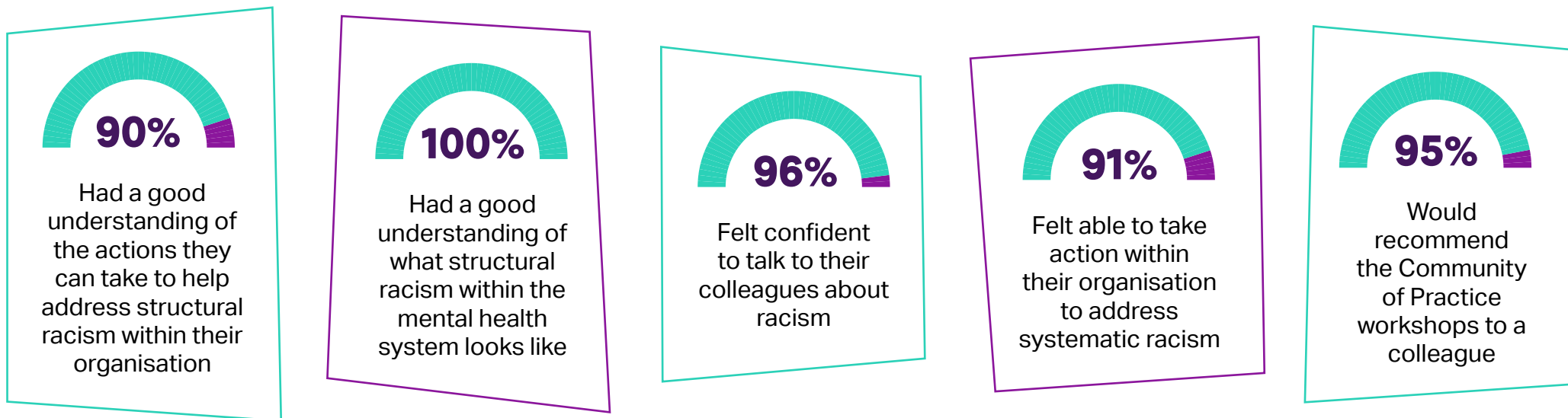
August 2022

 **YOUTH ACCESS**

Written by
Sarah Burrows

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

ACRONYM	DEFINITION
CAMHS	Children and Adolescent Mental Health Services
CoP	Community of Practice
BAME*	Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic
POC	People/Person of Colour
YIACS	Youth Information, Advice and Counselling Services

*We acknowledge that the term 'BAME' is perhaps not the most reflective or useful, and know that many people find it problematic. There isn't currently an agreed phrase across the sector to use when referring to people of colour, or those from minoritised groups. As such, within this report, we use the terms 'BAME' and 'minoritised groups' interchangeably.

1. Background & Overview

1.1 BACKGROUND

In 2021, as part of the Equal Access in Mind (EAIM) project, funded by the Department for Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS), a series of Community of Practice sessions were undertaken for members participating in the project. These members are part of the Youth Access network and are referred to as YIACS (Youth Information, Advice and Counselling Services). They are located within local communities across England and provide young people with an array of free, holistic and young-person centred support services.

After discussions with these members about progressing the activities within the EAIM project, it became clear that there was a need to further develop ways to improve access to, and experience of, service users from typically minoritised groups.

MEMBERS SAID



They lacked confidence in talking about these issues (race/racism), knowing the facts and how this might translate into positive action



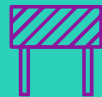
The issues (race/racism) seem so complex and overwhelming for many that it is likely to lead to inaction if support, guidance, and a framework aren't offered for how to move forward



They were keen to discuss and take action on issues

In addition to member feedback, Youth Access recognises that minority communities have particular mental health needs and meeting these is key to achieving the human right to mental health.

THIS MEANS



Understanding and addressing barriers across the system



Engaging with young people from different BAME communities to address specific needs



Representation of Black and minority groups in the therapeutic community, and placing greater value on their insight and expertise

As a result of member feedback, and what we know from working within the youth mental health space, Youth Access set about implementing the Community of Practice for developing more racially responsive services.

The aims of the CoP were to:

- 1. Establish a baseline of knowledge amongst participants**
- 2. Create an understanding of systemic, structural and institution racism/racist practices**
- 3. Explore the intersectional nature of racism, class, gender etc**
- 4. Provide a brave space for open, honest and uncomfortable discussions**
- 5. Encourage peer learning and to amplify lived experience expert voices**
- 6. Provide a framework for implementing organisational and practice changes**

Due to the success of the first CoP sessions, Youth Access applied to Awards for All for additional funding to support the delivery of a second cohort, which took place throughout February and March 2022.

Members signed up via an email sent out to the whole member network and spaces to join the course filled quickly. There is now a waiting list of those wanting to attend future sessions.

The purpose of the sessions, facilitated by Ezimma Chigbo, an anti-racism expert, are to educate members through the delivery of a series of engaging and thought-provoking sessions, and by giving them the tools and resources they need to embed more racially aware and responsive practices.

Ezimma worked with lived experience experts, both from within and outside of the Youth Access membership network, to co-design and co-deliver five sessions over the course of five weeks, each two hours long. The first round of sessions had 12 attendees and the second round had 17 attendees. It was a requirement that each participant attend all five sessions.

Participants received a comprehensive resource toolkit, which was developed by Youth Access, and included a combination of readings, videos, and podcasts to listen to. There was also compulsory reading given to participants between each session to enhance their learning and

allow for deeper conversations.

Attendees were asked to complete brief pre and post surveys to enable a 'before and after' picture to be developed to assess the impact of the sessions and the learning achieved. See 2. Short-term research findings (survey responses) on page 5.

Additionally, 6 semi-structured, follow-up interviews were conducted in June 2022. Half of these research participants were from cohort one and the other half were from cohort two. See 3. Long-term research findings (interviews) on page 7.

This report sets out the key findings from these surveys and the follow up interviews, and therefore provides an assessment of the impact attending the CoP sessions had on learners.

1.2 METHODOLOGY

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2. Short-term research findings (survey responses)

This section sets out the key findings from the surveys.

The survey questions and answers are outlined and explored below.

Participants answered a range of questions regarding improvements in confidence in discussing racism with colleagues, understanding structural racism and the actions that they could personally take to help address structural racism.

The findings and analysis indicate significant improvements across all measurements.

The analysis of the pre and post session surveys indicates an improvement in awareness and learning across all of the domains explored. Below are the key findings and changes participants demonstrated as a result of attending the CoP sessions.

DATA INFORMATION

This data is a combination from the two cohorts of participants that attended the CoP sessions. The complete data represented in this report is from n=22 pre-survey responses and n=25 post-survey responses. All the data has been converted to percentages to demonstrate change.

2 SHORT-TERM RESEARCH FINDINGS (SURVEY RESPONSES) CONTINUED

'I feel confident in talking with my colleagues about racism'
increased from 80% to 96%

"This training made me aware of some of the fears I have about this and will need to work on"

"I'm still worried about getting it wrong but I have to lean into that."

"I feel my colleagues would respond well, we have in fact had conversations about racism"

'I have a good understanding of what structural racism within the mental health system looks like and how it is experienced by young people of colour'
increased from 60% to 100%

'I have a good understanding of the actions I can take to help address structural racism within my organisation and the services it offers to young people'
Increased from 60% to 90%

I feel able to take action within my organisation to address systemic racism:
increased from 72% to 91%

"I feel able to take action within my own remit of work, but I am not as confident to address the issues in my organisation as a whole."

"I feel able to feed into further discussions as a result of my learning and feel that the other team members who attended with me are in a good position to work together."

"I know that I am supported by [xxx] within my team. I feel that there is a solid evidence base to support my actions and I don't feel alone!"

"I am already positioned to do this work, but these sessions have given me the confidence to be more confident in my position."

"I feel I can take action and that I will be heard, the struggle is being a part of a bigger organization who may not see it as a priority."

"The course has placed the responsibility upon me to continue educating myself on an ongoing basis and I believe this to be a continuing process which should also be fed into by BAME individuals and communities most affected by systemic racism."

"This training has developed me to think in a way where I feel I can take action"

95%
of the respondents indicated that they would recommend the CoP sessions to a colleague.

Attendees indicated that they found the input regarding lived experiences the most useful aspect of the sessions.

2.1 RECOMMENDING THE COP

When asked whether they would recommend the CoP to a colleague, **95%** of respondents indicated that they would recommend the sessions.

Descriptions used to represent the training were **'supportive'**, **'informative'**, **'safe environment'**, **'challenge'**, and **'useful'**.

Some illustrative quotes from both cohorts indicate what about the sessions people found useful:



"I haven't ever experienced a learning experience like this and the environment and facilitation was so supportive, I was able to really challenge myself and reflect on my practice."

"Was very insightful and I gained a lot of important and invaluable information I don't think I would have been able to get elsewhere."

"It was informative and felt like a safe environment to share."

"I would like all of my colleagues to do a similar training."

"It was really useful and a great space to think and reflect. Can empower people at different levels of the organisation."

2.2 WHAT PEOPLE VALUED ABOUT THE COURSE

Respondents were asked to indicate what they found most useful about the course. Respondents were given a number of options to select from and put in ranked order (from most useful to least useful). The results are set out at Table 1.

COHORT 1		COHORT 2	
ELEMENTS	RANKED ORDER	ELEMENTS	RANKED ORDER
Input and lived experiences from facilitator and guest speakers	1	Input and lived experiences from facilitator and guest speakers	1
Understanding how to be a more racially responsive practitioner	2	Understanding how to be a more racially responsive practitioner	2
Reading and resources	3	Networking with peers	3
Group discussion	4	Readings & resources	4
Networking with peers	5	Personal development	4
Personal development	6	Group Discussion	5
Being able to share my experiences with others	7	Being able to share my experiences with others	6

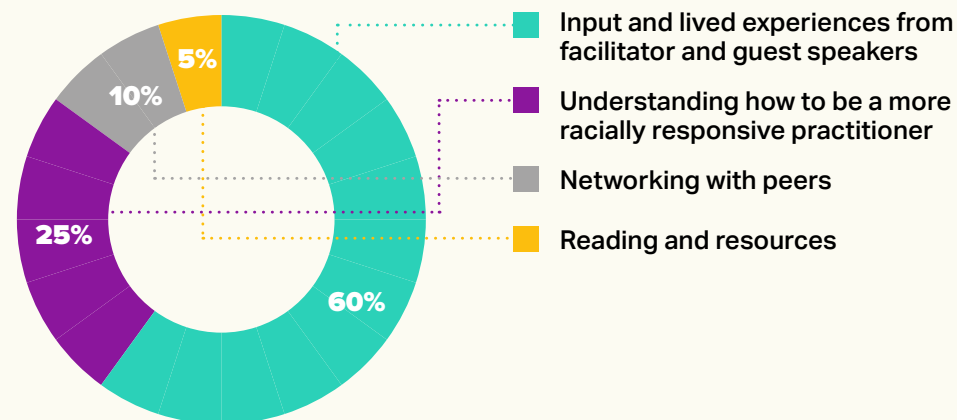
The element that was cited as the most useful was “Input and lived experiences from facilitator and guest speakers”, followed by “Understanding how to be a more racially responsive practitioner”. This was conclusive in both cohorts.

Both cohorts felt that “being able to share my experiences with others” was ranked lowest, however, in the second cohort the responses were more diverse and scores varied. For example, for 3 people, it was their first and second choice.

Figure 1 below shows the percentage of respondents rating each course element ranked first (n=25).

FIGURE 1

Elements of the CoP – ranked first



Base: All post data, n=25

3. Long-term research findings (interviews)

A thematic analysis was conducted to understand the long-term impact of the Community of Practice. Participants in this research attended both cohort 1, 14 months before the research, and cohort 2, which was three months before the research.

General comments included:

"I really valued the course, and it has added a further layer to my questioning of situations in work, in the news and in my personal life."

"Acknowledging my whiteness and white lens, hearing the impact of structural racism that is engrained in our systems and beliefs."

"I think that I am more confident to discuss issues of race within my work"



3.1 PARTICIPANTS PROFILES

The research participants represented frontline delivery staff who interface regularly with young people and have some organisational responsibilities. Some of the interviewees had changed their principal role since attending the CoP, taking on increased staff development responsibilities and moving away from frontline delivery. This has afforded them the potential to be change agents across their respective organisations.

Research participants represented both hyper ethnically diverse urban areas or, in contrast, ethnically white English rural areas.

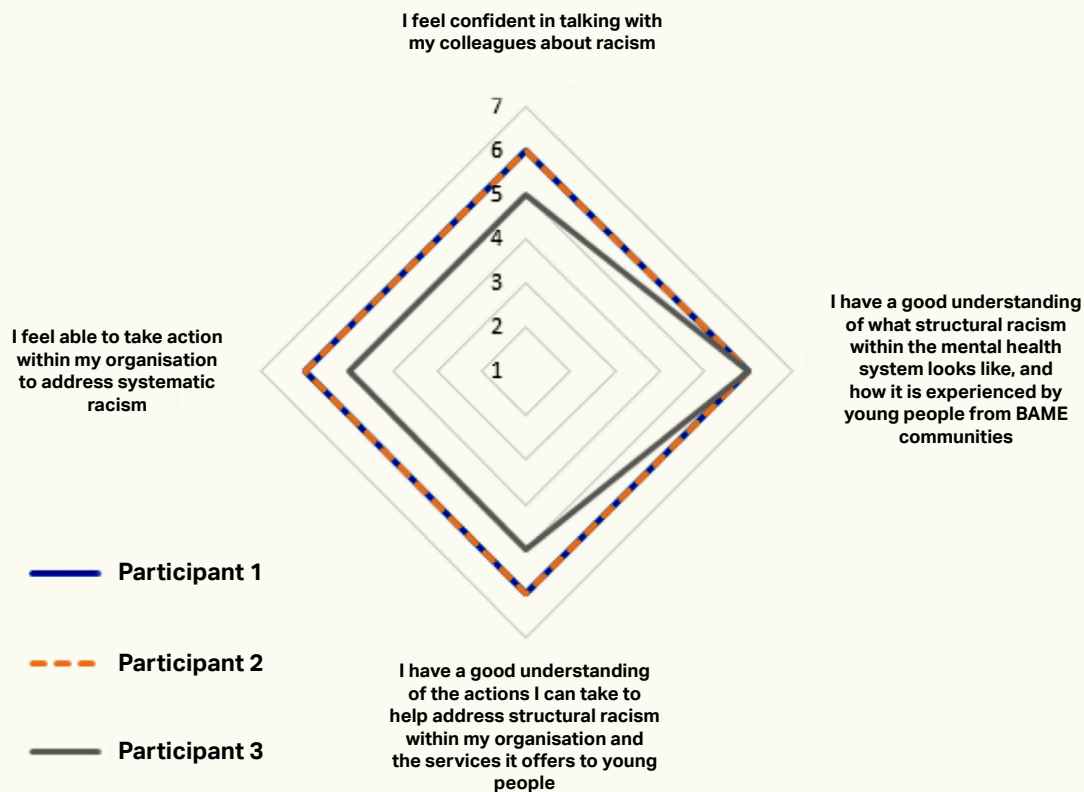
Many of the research participants self-defined as people of colour and had an underlying empathy with Black and ethnic minority service users. They brought with them an understanding of the impact and effects of racism and desired to upskill themselves with the tools and techniques on how to support the creation of a culturally responsive service. Namely through enlisting the help and support of white colleagues who may not perceive there to be a problem in the principal service delivery approach.

3.2 FINDINGS

Figure 2 shows how many respondents answered questions on their developmental needs, showing an increase in their levels of confidence and knowledge, and ability to transfer learning into practice for building a racially responsive service following exposure to the CoP.

FIGURE 2

Levels of agreement through four questionnaire assessments



AFTER THREE MONTHS

- ▽ Participants had shared learning and next steps with other colleagues who had attended the CoP
- ▽ Plans to consult organisational leaders to feedback ideas and shape organisational policy and strategy.
- ▽ Plans to develop targeted awareness-raising forums between young people from underrepresented ('BAME') communities and service delivery persons.
- ▷ Acknowledgment that the exposure to this structured dialogue on racism has created opportunities to use this model.

AFTER TWELVE MONTHS

- ▷ Learning has been shared amongst colleagues
- ▷ Alteration in some job roles since the CoP had led to participants being closer or further away from being able to lead change
- ▷ Recruitment practice has changed to reflect lived experience in conjunction with education.
- ▷ Limited memory of the CoP content, and limited or no knowledge transfer following the CoP attendance.

3.2 FINDINGS CONTINUED

Change has most noticeably occurred at a personal level, with attendees reporting the CoP strengthened their personal knowledge on the topics surrounding race. It further validated their beliefs and practice of creating a racially responsive service. However, limited service changes were reported as a direct result of the training and for some attendees, who were interviewed 18 months after they participated had limited memory of the content from the CoP sessions. *"I do not remember much from the training event itself."*

Overall, research participants provided some examples of where change has occurred within their practice/behaviour as a result of attending the CoP sessions. Undoubtedly at a personal level, attending the CoP has made a difference in how participants have gone on to think about their practice, used their lived experiences as a resource, and learnt new ways in which to work together with colleagues to help and support them to support young people they encounter who face race-based trauma. This has involved incremental steps to challenge other people, increased awareness, and encouraging a change in language.

Since attending the CoP, research participants reported that they have started to implement some direct actions in their service. For example, one participant had used their learning to influence a new approach which matches



young people and therapists based on culture, and not simply the topic of the therapy. Furthermore, this same service has applied their learning by testing new recruitment strategies. They have additionally shared their learning with

colleagues and arranged meetings to discuss the next steps.

Participants expressed the ownership and challenge of their 'white guilt'. This specifically applied to therapists and counsellors who are empathic and compassionate in their dealings with Black and ethnic minority young people, but they recognised they sometimes fail to act upon racial and ethnic inequalities that compound the difficulties being experienced by service users.

Many of the research participants cited the disruption in their natural workflow caused by Covid-19 (e.g., remote working and pausing of the principal delivery model) as the main reason why they have not yet been fully able to apply their new learning in their place of work.

3.2 FINDINGS CONTINUED

Three research participants commented:

"I found the training thought-provoking, informative, and the facilitator was amazing. It really helped us to better understand young people's lives. I also enjoyed the exercises we were asked to do".

"It has changed how I approach working with white colleagues. I am now far more patient and take on a different approach. The training shifted my approach to work. In work, there have been barriers to bringing up topics on inequalities. You would meet a silence. I believe this is because they feel powerless to do anything about it".

"Since completing the course I have booked a meeting with my line manager to share my thoughts. There is a need for different conversations at different levels of the organisations to take place on 'race'.

Research participants identified several areas in which they would like to see improvements in how the CoP is organised and delivered, including:

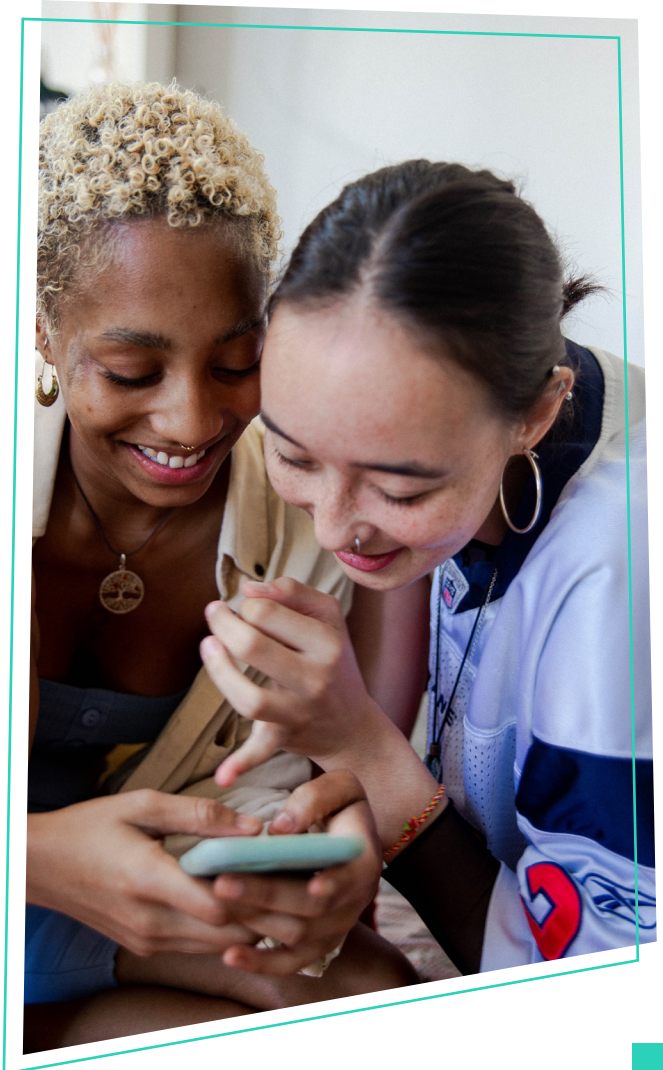
"In the future, more good practice examples that are accessible and inclusive are needed. Also, consider groupings of delegates that require introductory or advance learning on the topic matter."

"Improvements include more space for speakers to share their knowledge on service development. More time for Q&A and reflection, and to improve the structure to maximise the time together."

"To maintain momentum, I would like us to pull together every 12 months, as a network."

"Slightly more focussed thinking on how our organisations become more racially responsive. There was a lot of emphasis on understanding the landscape which of course was extremely useful. But maybe slightly more focus towards the end of how we can take our learning forward. There wasn't much time for sharing initial thoughts/plans amongst the participants."

Research participants also highlighted the lack of male attendees and felt that the conversation about 'race' would have been greatly improved with a more diverse set of opinions and perspectives.



4. Conclusions

It is evident that the Community of Practice for developing more racially responsive services had a positive impact on attendees and helped them to become more racially aware and responsive as a result. In the short-term, a positive change was registered in relation to each question with respondents consistently giving agreement ratings of over 90% after attending the sessions. The average increase in responses across all the questions was 26%.

The short-term survey results, therefore, indicate that the CoP sessions are an effective tool to support members to develop a racially responsive service. Not only did the learning stimulate thinking and discussion about different aspects of racism, but it also supported people to discuss good practices and share practicalities of how to become a racially responsive practitioner.

Research participants have all valued the experience and exposure to the CoP and noted the skills and knowledge they have gained from the facilitator and guest speakers. They highlighted the challenges

and awkwardness they experienced resulting from other attendees' spoken and unspoken words. However, they acknowledged that some level of un-comfortability is inherent to this type of training and is to be expected.

In the long-term research, all participants reported that they experienced an increase in confidence in talking with their colleagues about racism following exposure to the CoP. This demonstrates that up to 14 months after the research, people who attended the CoP maintained an increased amount of confidence in talking about racism.

Furthermore, research participants stressed the need for more organisational recognition of trauma experienced by young people, which could be considered a cause, effect, or catalyst of being a visible minority. The CoP had increased their learning about techniques and approaches to work with all types of young people.

The challenge in implementing organisation-wide change was put down

to a combination of time constraints, changes in roles and responsibilities, and finding the right opportunity to collaborate with colleagues to share what they have learnt on the CoP. For instance, many of the research participants who had planned to conduct knowledge transfer activities, haven't yet managed to run in-house training or structured discussions on their learning from CoP. This has left some research participants feeling frustrated but hopeful that CoP refresher sessions could be provided.

Participants overwhelmingly felt that attending the CoP has had a positive impact on their work, and they look ahead with confidence at what is possible in building racially responsive services.

To conclude, to support collective action in creating racially responsive services, the attendees found the CoP helpful, and its planning and delivery could be strengthened further by the adoption of the following recommendations.

5. Recommendations

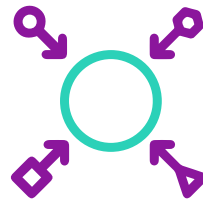
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POST-TRAINING SUPPORT

Post-training support: Provision of refresher training and/or alumni that will allow for ongoing conversations in the established trusted groups.

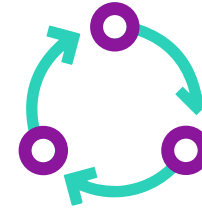
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MORE DIVERSE GROUP OF ATTENDEES

Encourage more diverse group of attendees to enrich dialogue: Targeted recruitment of male attendees to help balance out the perspectives of attendees. This would ensure that multiple perspectives are included in conversations on 'race' beyond the predominately female practitioner voice and experience.

3



EQUAL SHARING OF EXPERIENCES

The equal sharing of experiences by all attendees, and an emphasis on solution-focused dialogue to ensure meaningful practice-based actions can be taken away from the sessions.

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