**Mental Health Workshop Notes**

One participant described himself as a black gay man under CTO, who has been brutalised and traumatised by the mental health system

It needs to be reported the mental health system is not working. It is an oppressive system.

Particularly difficult for black males currently. The UN guidelines don’t get down to ground level. You can quote the UN in a tribunal and say that coercion is against their belief system but in reality having your rights upheld is difficult because the law in the UK doesn’t support human rights.

People had had traumatic experiences with the police e.g. distress caused by handcuffing, having a knee on their neck in A&E, being dragged down a corridor. Police are the first call when someone is in distress but they do not have the training or empathy to respond.

People running what’s going on are not trained to the level of current thinking. Mental health law hasn’t changed since 1984 – this was before the internet, before certain developments in knowledge and understanding.

Spiritual beliefs have changed – our rights to believe what we want, and to religious freedom. But if you say you hear the voice of God or experience something unusual the first port of call Is to drug you. This approach is not trauma informed and doesn’t take a person’s life experience into account.

A participant had experienced coercion of medicine – this was traumatic

The government speak the rhetoric of the oppressor – there is no way to vet people (in government) and their views even though these conventions have been signed. If you said what our leaders say in any other workplace you’d get fired/subjected to disciplinary action.

Since Covid it has been made easier to section people.

Sectioning experience is traumatic – “I’m quite well spoken/eloquent but many people aren’t who are suffering at the hands of the Government and NHS.”

You can’t criticise NHS because it’s a national treasure. In terms of sickness/physical health it’s great but in terms of neurodiversity, spirituality, mental health they don’t have a clue. It’s overwhelming that people can see you suicidal, depressed off your medication and not do anything immediately.

It’s the meaning we make of our experience – they can say you’re going through psychosis without saying what psychosis is.

Participants were members of the Hearing Voices Network which has more advanced outlook than talking services in NHS and come from lived experience.

Also an ambassador for Hope Street which does things like social prescribing – things like chats, crafts, choir, and a support network

Also part of a Spiritual Crisis Circle.

All these things work better than the mental health system AND it is cheaper to socially prescribe than medicate.

We need to get away from western ideas of illness and of looking at things and look at more indigenous ways, simple ways.

We tell people they will be ill for the rest of their life – this is not helpful, assuming people can’t recover.

There should be choices of non-medical intervention.

The Government are ignoring other indicators like the rise in Islamphobic, and homophobic attacks – not seeing that these are signs that things need to change.

They also don’t care.

As we move on you realise the problem is society not the individual – mental health is a reaction to that and should be seen as a message to the whole and not about the individual.

**Questions**

1. Yes things have got worse

2.

3. New issues – easier to section people since covid, Government are ignoring other indicators like the rise in Islamphobic, and homophobic attacks – not seeing that these are signs that things need to change.

4. Top 3 issues

1. Human rights are being withheld – difficult to find a human rights lawyer, and find people who are outside the system to help you get them upheld.

2. Use of coercion

3. Traumatic practice