



## Race

### Equality in Mental Health



## South West

Here at the South West Regional Development Centre, we wanted to increase the involvement of Black, Minority and Ethnic (BME) service users who are in-patients within forensic services, so we worked in partnership with Avon and Wiltshire Mental Health Trust to achieve this.

Initially there were Black history presentations, poetry readings and film nights, but in 2008 it was decided to run theatre workshops that would enable service users to build their confidence and communication skills.

The workshops then became a writing group that wrote a play about the experiences of BME service users in forensic and other in-patient settings. The group created a female character using the 'Empty Chair' technique taken from Gestalt therapy that stimulates thoughts and highlights emotions and attitudes. The character was further developed with personal histories from in-patients and BME service users living in the community. As a result the play 'Unsent letters' was produced and performed in association with HEARTH productions.



**I like getting involved in the BME service user movement, like Black History Month where I did a presentation which touched a lot of people. I like expressing myself in many different ways. Like the presentation and my rap music.**



Avon and Wiltshire  
Mental Health Partnership NHS Trust

