

REPORT

Centre for
Mental Health



How are we doing?

A coproduced approach to tracking young Black men's experiences of community wellbeing and mental health programmes

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Executive summary

Centre for Mental Health was funded by Mind to design a new culturally appropriate measure or approach to tracking outcomes for young Black men aged 17-30 who attend community wellbeing and mental health programmes. This was important as few measures exist which are tailored to this group's experiences. In fact, only one measure identified in our literature review was recommended to track Black men's experiences of a programme they attended.

We carried out a literature review, interviewed experts in the field of young Black men's mental health and held digital focus groups with young Black men. Qualitative analysis revealed the outcomes young Black men most wanted from community wellbeing programmes. We also identified the features of an effective supportive environment at a wellbeing programme, which allow young men to feel comfortable and thrive. These themes were similar across younger and older age groups. An initial evaluation approach was designed based on what was learnt from the early workshops. This was then refined and improved through further workshops with young Black men and practitioners.

The final evaluation approach has two parts:

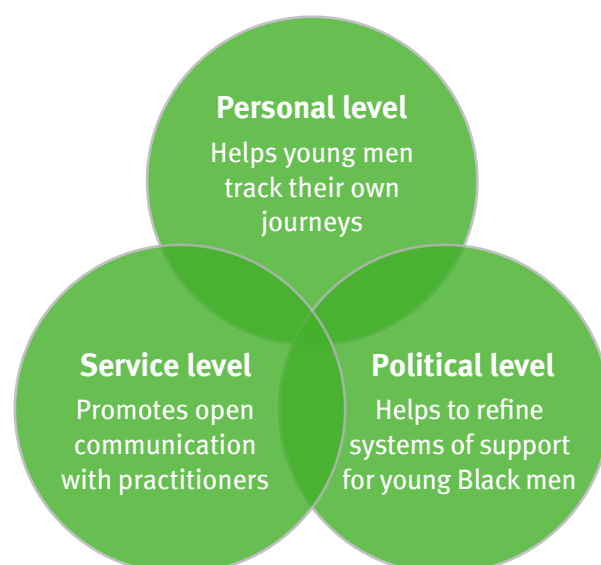
1. *My Journey*, to track young men's outcomes from the start to the end of a community wellbeing and mental health programme
2. *How Are We Doing?/How Did We Do?* measuring young men's experience of the programme at the middle and end of a community wellbeing programme.

Both parts of the approach include statements which young men rate using a Likert scale (offering a range of options to choose from, from one extreme attitude to another, with a neutral option in between).

Outcome tracking should not interfere with the therapeutic vibe of the support, and the programme should include space for conversational discussion about young men's outcomes and experiences. The outcome tracking approach should be guided by a representative of the project with whom

young men have a trusting relationship. This person needs to understand and buy into the importance of outcome tracking, so that they can successfully communicate the rationale for collecting feedback from those attending. Specifically, they ought to communicate the importance of outcome tracking on the personal, service and political levels:

- ▶ **Personal level:** Outcome tracking helps young men track their own journeys, and how effectively support is delivered for them. Studies show that including outcome tracking in the delivery of support can improve the overall outcomes of those engaging with support
- ▶ **Service level:** Outcome tracking can lead to improvements in participants' outcomes and experience of the project, and promotes open communication and dialogue with practitioners
- ▶ **Political level:** Outcome tracking has a potential role in transforming and refining systems of support for young Black men. Data contributes to an improved evidence base for culturally responsive support which is an overlooked area of knowledge and practice (Dera, 2021). This improves knowledge about what works and could be used to strengthen applications for funding for more culturally appropriate support in future.



Recommendations

- 1. The new approach should be piloted with young Black men** to test its relevance and appropriateness across the age group, in different geographical areas and different types of community wellbeing services. This would enable it to be tested for validity and reliability so that it can be refined further. Further insight should be gathered on how practitioners find implementing the approach, any challenges, and whether the guidance can be improved. And young men facing more intersectional challenges such as poverty, criminal involvement or being out of education should be consulted to determine whether the statements remain relevant or need refinement for specific groups.
- 2. Further work is needed to develop a design for *My Journey and How Are We Doing?/How Did We Do?* that is appealing to young Black men.** This might take as inspiration the My Mind Star (Burns, MacKeith & Greaves, 2019). The layout should be co-developed with young men by a culturally competent designer to create an engaging presentation of the surveys. This should help young men to quickly make sense of their answers in relation to their lives. The guidance for practitioners on how to use the measure should also be made more colourful and visually appealing so the information is easier to digest.
- 3. Further work should be undertaken to translate the survey into a secure digital format** which can be easily used by practitioners.
- 4. Additional time and resources are needed to facilitate reflection and discussion in community wellbeing programmes,** to ensure effective outcome tracking for young Black men.
- 5. Similar work should be done to develop evaluation approaches for young people from other racialised groups** for whom there are not culturally appropriate wellbeing measures.

The evaluation approach is on page 24-28, or can be downloaded separately [here](#).

Introduction

Centre for Mental Health was funded by Mind to work with young Black men to coproduce an improved approach to measuring outcomes and satisfaction with Mind's Young Black Men's Programme and its community wellbeing and mental health programmes more broadly. The approach should be suitable for use by young Black men aged 17-30.

What is a community wellbeing and mental health programme?

By community wellbeing and mental health programmes, we mean those that are delivered in non-statutory settings by communities or local groups and organisations, and which aim to improve individuals' wellbeing and mental health through a range of interventions. Examples include support groups, groups for creative expression such as drama groups, and programmes of regular workshops or discussions on topics relating to wellbeing and mental health. The link to wellbeing and mental health may be implicit or explicitly set out in the programme's name and description.

Why measure experiences and outcomes?

Tracking people's experiences and outcomes when they are offered support is important because it can be used to:

- ▶ **Improve the effectiveness and suitability of support offered:** It helps a service gauge how effectively it meets the needs of those engaging with it. It can help a service adapt its activity if these aims are not being met. In addition, those engaging with support do better when services track outcomes to proactively refine the support they offer (Lambert *et al.*, 2001; Delgado *et al.*, 2018)

- ▶ **Monitor individuals' progress:** Reflecting on an individual's outcomes to see whether they are progressing in the way they hoped for can be therapeutic, and open up conversations about any adaptations that should be made to the support
- ▶ **Build the evidence for culturally relevant support:** Tracking outcomes and experiences helps develop the evidence base for culturally relevant support bespoke to young Black men.

What is the rationale for a new measure or approach specific to young Black men?

Traditional outcome tracking approaches tend to involve tick-box and scaled answers which are scientifically tested for validity and reliability. Once validated, they can be used to build the evidence base for interventions. Our literature review identified a lack of culturally relevant tools which focus on mental health and wellbeing outcomes for young Black men. This means there is less understanding of what might work best to support their mental health and wellbeing, and puts young Black men at risk of receiving therapeutic support that is mainly shaped around the needs of white people. Using approaches that lack cultural sensitivity can also lead to mistrust and disengagement with services.

This report is the result of a project to coproduce a new approach which is meaningful and relevant to young Black men's needs and experiences, and provides a better experience of the outcome tracking process. It is hoped this will lead to a greater amount of higher quality data being collected, which could help build the evidence base for what effective culturally appropriate support looks and feels like.

Throughout this project we aimed to problem solve the following challenges:

1. Based on our early discussions with young Black men and experts in the field, young men prefer giving feedback as part of a flexible conversation with someone they trust. Yet most outcome measuring approaches involve form-filling and scaled responses. While the language of a measure can be made more culturally relevant to young Black men, the overall approach may be constrained by the pressure to meet the demands of traditional commissioning processes, which tend to reflect white values and thinking. There is a tension inherent in this work: that to gain credibility, funding or exposure, there is a pressure to conform to the default standard of white society.
2. Ideally, Mind wanted the developed approach to be able to track outcomes for young men making one-off contact with a programme, as well as those who attend regularly. This presented a challenge in that very few outcome tracking tools can effectively track change over very short timescales. It was not possible within the scope of the project to develop both, and so it was agreed the approach would be aimed at young men making regular contact with a community wellbeing programme.

Methodology

A literature review and expert interviews were completed, and more detail on these is presented in the sections below. Following this, 35 young Black men aged 17 to mid-30s were consulted in nine digital workshops, with each individual attending one workshop.

The workshops gathered young men's thoughts on what they wanted from support provided by a community wellbeing programme and what they valued most about it. Young men also advised us on how to make outcome tracking effective and culturally appropriate. Centre for Mental Health's Peer Researcher was key to our 'arm in arm' approach with young Black men in this project.

Young men were recruited from Mind's young Black men's programme and from other community wellbeing programmes which Centre for Mental Health has existing relationships with. Three members of Mind's young Black men's steering group were also consulted. Young men were mainly based in London, Birmingham and Coventry. The number of participants at each workshop ranged between two and nine. We spoke to young men representing the full age range for the measure, as shown in the table below.

First round of workshops

Table 1: Ages of participants in workshops

Age	Participants	Percentage of total participants
17-21	10	29%
22-26	12	34%
27-31	6	17%
32-36	6	17%
37 plus	1	3%
Total	35	

Refinement stage of the measure

During the refinement stage, we spoke a second time to ten young men who had self-selected to participate in a second digital workshop. Their ages ranged from 18-26 across three digital workshops and included one member of Mind's young Black men's steering group. In the workshops, we presented the measure we had developed based on the first round of workshops and expert interviews. We asked young men for any improvements, changes or deletions they would like to see and why. Close attention was paid to understandings and preferences for the words used in the statements. In addition, two practitioners were interviewed for their thoughts on the practitioners' guidance.

Feedback on the workshops

Short optional surveys were collected to record participants' feedback on the workshops with Centre for Mental Health. 28 participants (80% of all participants) responded to the survey.

- ▶ Half of respondents were Black British (African), nearly 40% were Black British (Caribbean), around 8% were mixed race and 4% were Black British (African and Caribbean)
- ▶ Nearly two thirds (64%) of respondents had personal experience of mental health problems
- ▶ Over one third (35%) of respondents had a friend or family member with personal experience of mental health problems
- ▶ Respondents were evenly spread across the age range of 17 to early 30s.

Most feedback on the workshops was very positive, and most reported there was nothing they did not like about the workshops with Centre for Mental Health. Participants valued the 'comfortable' and 'relaxed' atmosphere

created which enabled people to have an ‘open forum and space to talk freely’. Participants also felt comfortable to share their personal experiences due to the safe space created:

“I liked how everyone was open to listen and receive each other’s testimonials in such a respectful way.”

“I liked that the ideas I had were genuinely listened to.”

Speaking about topics like mental health and racism was seen as part of the appeal of the workshops:

“It was nice and refreshing to talk to new faces about a topic that is important to me: mental health. Everyone was open to hearing what everyone had to say.”

“I enjoyed the topics that are not really talked about but avoided – they were brought to light [in the workshop].”

Some participants reported that taking part in the workshop inspired them and left them feeling positive afterwards:

“I feel the workshop was inspirational and informative, I loved that we all stuck in.”

“It was very eye-opening and I felt good after the workshop.”

Success factors for digital workshops

- ▶ When using digital workshops, it is helpful to keep people who already know each other together, in this case young men who already attend the same programme. Familiarity can help young men to feel comfortable opening up in the workshop, including on sensitive issues like mental health and experiences of racism
- ▶ It is very important that participants’ time and lived experience is respected through providing suitable incentives for sharing their experiences, expertise and time
- ▶ Having an ice breaker at the beginning of the workshop and a wellbeing check in at the end help create a safe and comfortable space for young men to share their views.

Literature review summary

Our literature review explored the meaning of culturally appropriate or culturally competent approaches to outcomes measurement. In addition, it reviewed the principles and strategies which facilitate culturally appropriate evaluation approaches. There is limited published research focusing on culturally appropriate outcome measurement for young Black men, therefore learning from work with other minority groups was included. The full version of the literature review can be read here, and key messages are presented below.

Existing validated measures for young Black men

There are very few validated measures focusing on Black men's experiences relating to mental health, health more broadly, social care or community services. Only three main examples were referred to in the literature:

1. The Masculinity Inventory Scale (MIS) (Mincey *et al.*, 2014) is a culturally-specific assessment of masculinity in Black undergraduate men
2. The African American Men's Gendered Racism Stress Inventory (Schwing *et al.*, 2013) is a measure of experiences of stress. It is informed by an intersectional approach between race and gender
3. The Black Men's Experiences Scale (BMES) (Bowleg *et al.*, 2016) is a measure which explores positive aspects of what it means to be a Black man and negative experiences of discrimination. Bowleg and colleagues have recommended that it might be used to ensure participants of a programme are given culturally tailored support which develops their resilience and coping skills.

Focus groups or interviews can be used to identify the range, depth and meaning of possible responses and allow for the development of culturally informed assessment tools (Hollifield *et al.*, 2002). For example, the

BMES (Bowleg *et al.*, 2016) was developed by conducting focus groups and individual interviews with a sample of Black men, using neutral open-ended questions such as, "How would you describe what it's like for you as a Black man?". The answers were then analysed and brief phrase codes developed, such as 'it's not easy' being a Black man and 'feeling blessed' despite challenges. These were then converted into frequency related items, for example, "How often have you felt it is a constant struggle to be a Black man?", thus grounding the voices of Black men within the measure. These are then rated on a Likert scale. (This is a survey scale which gives a range of options to choose from, from one extreme attitude to another, with a neutral option in between.)

The development of the MIS (Mincey *et al.*, 2014) followed a similar process, with data from focus groups and interviews with young Black men being analysed, key themes identified, and then used to create items in an outcomes measure. Survey items came directly from the quotes given by young men in their responses, made as succinct as possible. The potential items were then reviewed by two Black masculinity researchers, which highlights the importance of having peer researchers in the project team.

Others suggest that adapting existing outcome measures or approaches for cultural equivalence can be more practical than developing them from scratch (Daher *et al.*, 2014). In these cases, researchers should consider how any given outcome measure has been developed, tested or "normed" against the scores of individuals from a particular population, to determine whether it is appropriate for the research participants (López *et al.*, 2017). Then, a participatory approach should be used to develop or change the measure, where representatives of the target group define meaningful issues (Betancourt *et al.*, 2009; Hollifield *et al.*, 2013).

Key learnings from the literature review

Important principles when carrying out successful culturally appropriate research

- ▶ Only people who are part of the culture being researched will know what is culturally appropriate
- ▶ Researchers should always honour individuals as able to speak critically about their social worlds. It is important to understand Black men's experiences at the intersection between race, gender, sexuality and culture, otherwise the fullness of their experience cannot be captured by the measure
- ▶ Be vigilant to the dynamics that result from cultural differences, as influenced by recent work on white fragility. As DiAngelo (2018) puts it, 'White people should move from asking 'if I am racist...' to asking 'how have I been shaped by the forces of racism?' and consider the implications of this'
- ▶ Cultural misinterpretations should be corrected on a case-by-case basis through questioning, learning and forming a good rapport between researchers and participants.

Principles to remember when developing a culturally appropriate measure

- ▶ Understanding cultural meanings reduces the risk of construct bias (where what is being measured is interpreted very differently by different people)
- ▶ Systematically reviewing items of a measure and cognitive interviewing (with representatives of the group the approach is aimed at) can be used to assess cultural appropriateness
- ▶ Successful coproduction requires a robust commitment to active listening to what is being said by young people, including on their experiences of culture, race and racism
- ▶ Transparent and open discussions with the young people are important. Be vigilant to the dynamics that result from cultural differences rather than avoiding them. Be empathic, curious and non-judgmental and share dilemmas, as per **MAC-UK's Integrate model** for successful coproduction (MAC-UK, n.d.)
- ▶ Guidance to help white researchers be culturally competent was highlighted. It requires ongoing self-reflection, commitment, enthusiasm, and a willingness to challenge oneself and be challenged on areas where white researchers may have preconceptions and limited understanding
- ▶ White researchers need to passionately convey their belief in working 'arm-in-arm' with young Black men, which may be particularly important when introducing themselves to participants. This will help build trust with participants, help them feel able to share their views openly and freely, and enable white researchers to expand their cultural knowledge. All of this would help shape a measure which captures Black men's views as authentically as possible.

Expert interviews summary

There are valuable insights and experiences in this area which have not been formally published. Therefore, we carried out interviews with four experts in the field of young Black men's mental health who work closely with young Black men. This included two academics, a psychologist and a professional who works at a strategic level directing programmes and coproduction work.

The experts provided valuable insight into how developing a new approach could effectively reflect young Black men's needs and experiences. A summary of the key themes which emerged is below, and the full version can be read here.

Key learnings from the expert interviews

Recommendations for the process of developing a measure

- ▶ Focus groups and one to one interviews are 'the best way to capture as many different narratives as possible'
- ▶ Think carefully about how to create a safe space in workshops and acknowledge the impact of race

"It's how you're asking them [questions], and in what space? Using what language?"
- ▶ Be comfortable talking about race and racism because it shapes young men's lives in many ways
- ▶ Make research attractive to young people to get them on board using different media like video to introduce the research
- ▶ Aim to disrupt power relationships between researchers and young people by putting young people in a steering position rather than just being consulted
- ▶ Existing measures are not fit for purpose and so it would be best to start from scratch, led by young people, in developing the measure.

Recommendations for how researchers work

- ▶ Try not to come with any preconceptions of what this measure ought to look like. Keep flexible and learn about what approach works from participants themselves
- ▶ Be realistic about what can be achieved – things won't be perfect. Be interested in the learning you can glean from the process, as well as the overall outcomes of the project
- ▶ Understand that different generations of Black men/boys will have different experiences and reference points. The same set of questions may not apply to every group, setting or context
- ▶ Realise that the research process can be beneficial for participants as they may not be frequently asked what they think
- ▶ Hold in mind the complexity of culture; i.e. that it can be problematic, is nuanced, and people's experiences need to be understood at the intersection of gender, race, culture, sexuality and mental health.

Recommendations for the outcome approach

- ▶ Ideally the outcome measure or approach will help build a relationship with participants
- ▶ As a starting point, find out what wellbeing means to young Black men, as that will help guide which domains are going to be useful when focusing on building a culturally sensitive outcome measure
- ▶ Regarding the content of the measure, the outcomes may relate to: employment, spirituality, safe spaces, identity, relationships and young men's level of agency/control. It may not be about resilience, as that can put the impetus on young men to deal with systemic racism themselves, rather than the system or service needing to change

“I’m not sure whether, if you asked Black men what they were hoping for out of intervention, they would say resilience... Resilience is something that’s been co-opted by services to do damage limitation against systemic injustices within the mental health service and beyond.”

- ▶ The tool or approach might measure how well mental health practitioners are able to engage with young people and their needs, interests, concerns because, “The problem is not with young men themselves, but how they are dealt with in society”.

Key findings from the first round of workshops

The process of outcome tracking

Findings from the literature review, expert advisers and the first round of workshops showed that an outcome tracking approach should:

- ▶ Focus on the effect the programme is having on each young men's wellbeing, their feelings and any positive changes they see in themselves
"It should be about your self-development, it's about growth."
- ▶ Be relevant to young Black men's needs and wants, and be committed to assessing how far the service meets these needs. It should not be service-driven, clinical nor symptom-focused
- ▶ Take place through conversation with a person young men trust in an open and respectful rapport. Conversations promote more honest responses. Ideally, any outcome tracking process would further strengthen the relationship between the provider and young Black men
"It's not a numbers thing... it's peer on peer learning from each other, it's a lot of voice, we're learning about being men from each other."

The outcome tracking approach should not:

- ▶ Interfere with the therapeutic vibe of the support offered, but seek to enhance it
- ▶ Feel like a test or about judging young men, but about ensuring the offer is meeting young men's needs and is used for improving the support provided to them
"[Practitioners should] keep saying 'we won't judge you for your answers, we want to help you.'"

Young Black men's experiences of living in a predominantly white society: racism and other difficulties

In order to shape the measure, we asked young men to share how they are coping with life as young Black men in a predominantly white society. Young men experienced many pressures and difficulties which included:

- ▶ Feeling pressure to change your identity to fit into white-centric society
- ▶ Feeling undervalued and unappreciated
"I wish that when I was growing up my Blackness was a powerful thing."
"As a Black man you have to protect your identity, otherwise no-one else will."
- ▶ Constantly being a minority in every space being a negative feeling, which creates a constant state of "uncomfortability [sic]". This included having to "mute my culture in professional spaces"
- ▶ Always being expected to be strong, tough and to not talk about vulnerabilities or mental health
- ▶ Always being watched and feeling unable to make any mistakes
"We are under a microscope more than other races."
"We can't make a step wrong."
"Failures [by Black men] are screamed out and accomplishments are whispered."
- ▶ Feeling disappointed and disheartened by the lack of change
"I see the fanfare of equality and diversity, but at the end of the day nothing changes [at work]."
- ▶ Feeling skeptical and triggered by disingenuous support of Black Lives Matter by white people
- ▶ Feeling hypervigilant and "paranoid of each other, which in itself is a mental health issue".

Some older participants spoke about there being an “every man for themselves” mentality, which had been designed by white people and institutions to keep Black people separate and pitted against each other, “because we’re stronger together”. This could keep Black men in a constant state of “surviving rather than thriving”.

In one workshop there was a difference between how younger men in their late teenage years and those in their twenties described their experiences of racism. For example, one younger man said: “I don’t really feel racism, it doesn’t really affect me”, but older participants in the group said that the effects of racism negatively impact them on a daily basis.

In a different workshop, a generational difference in experiences of racism was not evident. Two teenage participants said their project lead had been given the same warnings from his parents as they are today: “Even though he’s quite old, we still get told the same stuff... that you have to be two steps ahead, otherwise you won’t be good enough to survive in this culture and society”. These young men’s experiences were made harder on account of “being one of the only Black people in school – we used to wish we were white – but it will get better and if you have good friends that makes a big difference”.

The group they attended helped them “embrace our culture” and feel unity and belonging with other Black students in a safe space: “If I can embrace who I am, not have to worry about the way someone wants to act towards me, then it makes my life a lot easier and less stressful”.

Key outcomes associated with young Black men’s ability to thrive

Young Black men said they valued support which:

- ▶ Helped embrace positive Black identity
- ▶ Helped them feel more empowered
- ▶ Improved connection and relationships

- ▶ Promoted a positive ‘mind shift’ through being part of discussions promoting personal ‘growth and evolving’
- ▶ Improved access to resources and education and employment opportunities
- ▶ Improved their sense of spirituality
- ▶ Improved awareness of mental health and wellbeing
- ▶ Strengthened strategies for coping with racial trauma.

One expert advisor emphasised that the last of these outcomes must go hand-in-hand with broader organisational and systemic activity to address racism and inequalities that compromise young Black men’s ability to thrive. This is because “resilience is something that’s been co-opted by services to do damage limitation against systemic injustices within the mental health service and beyond.”

The themes listed above were mirrored in findings from the expert interviews.

The two youngest men consulted (aged 17) valued two outcomes which had not been raised by older participants: insight into life as a Black man and ‘preparing for that future’, and the therapeutic effect of learning about Black British history. Both of these relate to embracing a positive Black identity in a western society and were incorporated under that theme.

In addition, the feeling of safety in a group was particularly important to men aged 17-21. Some reported many young men do not go out for fear of being targeted by the police; therefore having safe spaces indoors to meet with other young Black men was highly valued:

“The police don’t care if it’s good or bad [why we’re meeting], either way we’re going to be in danger.”

Mechanisms – the necessary conditions for success

Mechanisms are the resources and conditions offered by an intervention which influence a participant's progress, and so influence the outcomes of a programme (Lacouture *et al.*, 2015).

As well as describing the outcomes valued as part of community wellbeing programmes, young Black men, experts and the academic literature referred to contextual conditions which help them to thrive.

These were having access to:

- ▶ A relatable group facilitator

“That’s the thing that attracted me to [the project lead] the most, the way he spoke to us when we first met him, using our lingo and knowing how to talk to us, he managed to build that bond.”
- ▶ An authentic group facilitator who is invested in the group

“It’s more than just a job to him”

- ▶ A trusting relationship with the group leader
- ▶ A safe non-judgemental space for young Black men to be honest and open about their thoughts and feelings

“Everyone can be themselves without being uncomfortable [whereas in western society] we’re constantly in paranoia, which in itself is a mental health issue.”

- ▶ A sense of brotherhood
- ▶ Group discussions and content relevant to their lives
- ▶ Therapeutic opportunities for creative expression, such as spoken word, rap and art. This can be an outcome for young men as well as a mechanism for effective therapeutic support.

This highlights the need for enough resource for the project lead to deliver the outputs and outcomes for the project, while also providing pastoral care for young men, and maintaining their own wellbeing. Quality supervision is part of this, to ensure one employee or team is not being over-burdened.

The development of the initial measure

After the first round of workshops, we designed an approach to track outcomes and collect feedback from young men on their experience of a community wellbeing programme. Following qualitative analysis where key themes were identified, we got a clear sense from young men of what effective support looks and feels like. These essential ingredients that help young men thrive were captured in a list of statements which became two measures: *My Journey* and *How Are We Doing?/How Did We Do?*. Young men would be asked to rate each statement between 5 and 1 according to how far they agree (see page 24). These statements would later be refined with young men during a second round of workshops to test out their cultural relevance and how easily they are understood by different age groups.

The statements would be asked within a one-on-one reflective conversation led by a group lead or by a paid member of the group who is trained and paid to collect feedback from their peers. This is because most participants in the workshops said they would ideally provide feedback through conversation with someone they trust, in an open and respectful rapport. Based on these conversations, the feedback collector would record rated responses from the young man to track their progress over time. Ratings could be noted after the conversation if the young person consented to a recorded conversation, or based on brief notes written by the feedback collector. This would avoid form-filling disrupting the conversational feel.

The first measure, *My Journey*, covers progress towards outcomes which young men told us are most important to them when attending a community wellbeing programme. They would be asked for responses before the first session. The first conversation would establish a baseline so that young men's starting points can be recorded. After the last session of the programme, young men would fill in *My Journey* again and reflect with the project lead or feedback collector on what has or has not changed and why. During the early stages we also wondered whether it might be beneficial to

ask young men to complete *My Journey* halfway through the programme as well (i.e. three times in total) to provide more data on their journeys or progress through the programme. This could also provide an opportunity to make adjustments to the service if needed.

The second evaluation tool, *How Are We Doing?*, explores young men's experience of contact with the programme, such as how far the session content is culturally relevant to them. This would be asked in the middle of the programme, so the project leads would have time to improve young men's experience of their sessions if needed. It would be asked again at the end of the programme so young men could rate how well the programme created the right environment for them to feel comfortable and thrive.

The *How Are We Doing?* feedback could be gathered as part of a whole-group discussion (rather than one-on-one conversations) as a less resource-intensive option. This would be led by the project lead or a feedback collector, and give the opportunity to share feedback in a conversational and free-flowing way, which was important to young men in the workshops.

As an alternative to the group lead or feedback collector, who are both associated with the project young men attend, Mind could create a national pool of feedback collectors. This might work through recruiting, training and paying graduates from Mind's young Black men's programme and young Black men's steering group. Young men attending community wellbeing sessions might feel more comfortable providing feedback in this anonymous way, as the person engaging them would have no connection with the specific project young men attend. Employing graduates from the programme to fulfil this role could also support the creation of a more inclusive mental health workforce. This also resonates with a key learning from Mind's young Black men's programme delivery: that participants were very interested in accessing more employment and training opportunities.

The refinement of the measure into the final version

During the refinement stage, we spoke to ten young men from the first round of workshops, who had self-selected to take part in a second workshop. Their ages ranged between 18-26 across three digital workshops. In the workshops, we presented the approach we had developed and asked for any improvements, changes or deletions they would like to see and why. Close attention was paid to understandings and preferences for the words used in the approach's statements.

In addition, two practitioners were interviewed for their thoughts on the practitioners' guidance we developed which explains how the approach works, how it should be used and how to encourage young men to see outcome tracking as worthwhile. This guidance also enables the approach to be used in a standardised way across different projects, so that more reliable data can be collected.

Key findings from young men from the refinement stage

Rating scales should be used rather than semi-structured conversations

During the refinement workshops, young men reported that it would be best for *My Journey* to be completed through survey links on each young man's phone. Confidentiality of surveys was seen as most important so that young men "can tell their truth". By contrast, if ratings were recorded via one-on-one reflective conversations with a group lead or with the feedback collector, there could be great variability in how different individuals engage with this process. For example, an outspoken person may have no trouble saying what they think but a more shy or younger person may feel under pressure to say they are benefitting from the programme, even if they are not.

In addition, young men doubted how honest they would feel able to be with someone connected to the project, and felt it could be "intimidating". This would particularly be the case before the programme had begun and no relationship with the project staff had been formed.

"You'll get better answers because you don't need to please the person or want them to like you, especially when you're being given something [the programme] for free".

The change in preferences, from using conversational feedback in the initial workshops, to using ratings in the refinement workshops, may have been influenced by which young men took part. Some young men who took part in the initial workshops self-selected to take part in the later stage of refinement workshops. Their enthusiasm to take part again means they had an intrinsic interest in the development of an outcomes measure and evaluation activities. Generally, participants in the initial workshops tended to see the outcomes measures as a way to feedback solely to the project they attended. Participants in the refinement workshops tended to have a broader understanding of outcomes tracking as a way to build an evidence base for effective culturally appropriate programmes, which project leads could use to apply for more funding from commissioners. These young men were more in favour of rating scales as a more objective and robust form of data to convince decision-makers of a programme's value.

Young men did not think it would be necessary to collect *My Journey* responses at the mid-point of the programme. While this would provide data to adjust the service if needed depending on the young men's progress, participants decided that *My Journey* should only be asked twice. They recommended that it is used before and after the programme, using a Likert scale, to ensure young men can make clear judgements on the statements. This ensures that they are not being asked for data too often, which could become burdensome and interrupt the free flow of the sessions. They also stated that the service would still be able to adapt its offer halfway through the programme if needed, based on their answers to *How Are We Doing?* which focuses more directly on the how well the service meets their needs.

The wording of the statements should be as direct, simple and relevant to young Black men's lives as possible

Direct and simple phrasing is crucial so all young men can interpret the questions in the same way, making their answers valid and comparable between different people and timepoints.

Generally young men liked the wording of the statements because “they are specific to me” and “relevant”. As one young man put it, the statements “recognise that we have our own set of challenges as Black British young men above challenges universal to everyone”. Another young person added that if they were given these statements to rate at the start of a programme, it “would inspire me to take part in the programme” because they are culturally relevant.

Young men recommended ways to make the phrasing of statements clearer and more direct where needed. For example, on one hand some appreciated ‘I have a growth mindset’ as a culturally relevant concept “ingrained in our community”. However, when we asked young men for the meaning of ‘growth mindset’, different definitions were provided. For example, some young men interpreted it as “being able to change your thoughts and feelings” while others as being a “go-getter, having aspirations”. There was concern that a ‘growth mindset’ may not be understood by younger age groups. For these reasons, the statement was changed to “I have aspirations for my future” which was seen to have a more concrete meaning.

In the initial measure, the statement “I’m coping with life as a young Black man in Britain” was included to try to capture what was reported in our early workshops – that young Black men will face many challenges and obstacles in life because of racism and inequality. In the refinement stage, this was changed to “I am generally happy with my life as a young Black man in Britain”. This is because young men thought ‘coping’ had negative associations that ‘you don’t belong’, are ‘just moving’ and at ‘the bare minimum’ of what you can achieve. Use of the word ‘coping’ also pathologises any discomfort that young

men might feel about their experience as young Black men in Britain. Linking their ability to thrive with their own coping mechanisms fails to acknowledge the systematic inequalities that can significantly impact the direction of young men’s lives. Over-emphasising young men’s resilience and downplaying the impact of systemic racism on young men’s lives was something we were also advised against by one of the expert advisors.

The wording of the statements should not include any slang words

We asked young men if including any slang words in the measure would improve its cultural relevance. They unanimously recommended that any outcome tracking approach should not include slang. They felt it would come across as “patronising” through “trying to be down with the kids” and “there’s a difference between being culturally aware and a weirdo”.

In addition, young men highlighted that people in different areas and at different ages use the same words very differently which “could throw people off” when rating their answers. Using slang words in the statements would also alienate those who do not connect or associate with people who use slang words.

Date of birth and initials should be used as the identifiers for *My Journey*

Young men were asked how their answers to *My Journey* at the beginning and end of the programme ought to be linked together. They thought that using their initials and date of birth would be the most practical way to do this, as it was difficult to think of other personal information which would always be consistent across time, or would be totally unique to them. They thought the need to track young men’s journey over time justified the collection of this data and would not deter people from filling in the surveys. Therefore there was agreement that *My Journey* should be confidential data, whereas *How Are We Doing?/How Did We Do?* should be anonymous. Young men thought the latter could be more difficult to fill out without anonymity as it asks directly how well the service is catering to them.

The group discussion of *How Are We Doing?* should happen after each young man has rated the statements on their phones

Young men thought *How Are We Doing?* should be collected at the middle and end of the programme to track progress in programme delivery. In both cases it would be asked as an anonymous survey on young men's phones, which they are asked to complete at the same time during the session.

In the initial measure, we weren't sure if young men would be invited to rate the *How Are We Doing?* statements before or after a group discussion about it. Some young men had said it would be good to have the discussion first, so participants could learn from each other and "bounce ideas off each other". However, at the refinement workshops young men thought it would negatively skew the results: that young men would influence each other's answers, and as a result the facilitator or feedback collector "might not get the whole truth or the full picture" of what young men think about the support.

The survey could be presented in a more visual or creative way

The workshops focused on refining the content of the measure – ensuring all the wording and concepts were the most important to capture – rather than its design. However, a couple of young men suggested the measure for *My Journey* could be presented in a more visual or creative way to prevent it feeling like a test.

Key findings from practitioners at the refinement stage

Both practitioners we spoke to found that the guidance included good information from start to finish. They fed back that the guidance was text heavy, so some colour or better design would make it more palatable to read. The guidance could be written in a more step-by-step format to make it clearer. Another suggestion was to add more explanation to certain statements to make them less open to different interpretations.

Issues for future consideration

Potential limitations of this project

During our workshops with young Black men, we did not explicitly explore the experiences of some young men who have been criminalised due to a range of intersectional challenges such as: lack of opportunities, structural racism, a negative home life, poor start in life, deprivation, and living in an unsafe community. Neither did these issues emerge as a theme from the young men we consulted with during this process. Nevertheless, these circumstances have a substantial impact on mental health and can remain undiscussed. Therefore, the focus groups may have missed an important group who have key points to contribute: young men who are surviving rather than thriving, and are likely to have poorer mental health because of it.

We asked one young Black advisor whether the statements we developed might feel as relevant to young men facing these challenges and if we should build this area of focus more centrally into the measure, as it is a reality for some young Black men. He thought focusing on these experiences risks stereotyping young Black men and so favoured the strengths-based approach of the current statements. He reported that in society at large, the positive contributions young Black men have made and continue to make need to be highlighted far more.

Although some of the *My Journey* statements may feel relevant to young Black men who are overrepresented in the justice system (such as how happy they are with their life as a young Black man in Britain), the relevance of the statements needs to be tested with young men who have experienced these challenges. In short, future work ought to explore the measure's suitability and relevance to young Black men overrepresented in higher-risk groups.

Difficulty recruiting participants from younger age group

Originally, Mind wanted the measure to be coproduced with boys and young men aged 11-30. One of the challenges we found while creating the measure was arranging workshops with those aged 11-16 years. It should be noted that a minority of Mind's young Black men's programme involved under 16s, and in general there appear to be fewer community wellbeing programmes for this age range than for young men aged 16-25. We contacted one of the group leads of a Mind programme based in a primary school to arrange a workshop to hear the younger voices, but we understand that recruitment for this was an issue – especially after the group lead left his role. During the pandemic, disruption to routines and additional pressures on schools also made organising workshops more difficult. This meant that all 12 of our workshops were with young Black men aged 17 and over, and so the measure's age range was adapted accordingly. One item for future exploration would be how to recruit younger Black men within this age group to get their thoughts and feelings on a measure like this.

Recommendations for process learning

It is important to mention that having an older Black man on the Mind team to provide historical context and guidance helped to bolster the insights we gained from the expert interviews. There is a question here, though, about whether Mind could have gained added value from having a young Black man as part of their team to lead them on current issues relating to the topic and to scrutinise the measure at its different stages from a young Black lens. To be culturally relevant we should not just consult; we should also embed where possible.

Recommendations for further refinement

We recommend that the evaluation approach is piloted in community wellbeing programmes for young Black men to explore how well it works and to build up the evidence base for culturally appropriate support. The measure needs to be used with young Black men's groups around the country, so that we can quickly learn whether it improves the ease and quality of data collection in comparison to measures previously used. We recommend consulting with young men facing

more intersectional challenges such as poverty, criminal involvement, or being out of education, to determine whether the statements remain relevant or need refinement for specific groups.

We have designed the survey statements and overall approach, but a link to a secure digital version needs developing in future, potentially by Mind, which practitioners can use easily rather than making their own digital versions. We also recommend creating a more visually appealing version of the measure using a designer who coproduces this work with young Black men.

Conclusion

The lack of culturally appropriate evaluation approaches has meant that it is harder to track and build evidence for effective culturally appropriate support for young Black men. In collaboration with young Black men, we have designed a new measure to capture their experiences and progress towards outcomes which are important to them.

The measure includes rating scales and culturally appropriate statements to be answered by young men before and after a programme of sessions. A midpoint discussion has been included to allow the opportunity for sharing feedback in a more conversational and free-flowing way, which was also important to young men. Our detailed practitioners' guidance on using the measure supports its standardised use by community wellbeing programmes specifically aimed to support young Black men aged 17-30.

We recommend that the measure is now piloted to determine how effectively it benefits both young men and practitioners in two main areas: in tracking young men's journeys, and in enabling the service to effectively adapt to meet young Black men's needs. The longer-term ambition is for this measure to be used across the country to build an improved evidence base for culturally appropriate support for young Black men. This would improve knowledge about what works and could support applications for more funding for culturally appropriate support in future.

Recommendations

1. **The new approach should be piloted with young Black men** to test its relevance and appropriateness across the age group, in different geographical areas and different types of community wellbeing services. This would enable it to be tested for validity and reliability so that it can be refined further. Further insight should be gathered on how practitioners find implementing the approach, any challenges, and whether the guidance can be improved. And young men facing more intersectional challenges such as poverty, criminal involvement or being out of education should be consulted to determine whether the statements remain relevant or need refinement for specific groups.
2. **Further work is needed to develop a design for *My Journey and How Are We Doing?*/*How Did We Do?* that is appealing to young Black men.** This might take as inspiration the My Mind Star (Burns, MacKeith & Greaves, 2019). The layout should be co-developed with young men by a culturally competent designer to create an engaging presentation of the surveys. This should help young men to quickly make sense of their answers in relation to their lives. The guidance for practitioners on how to use the measure should also be made more colourful and visually appealing so the information is easier to digest
3. **Further work should be undertaken to translate the survey into a secure digital format** which can be easily used by practitioners.
4. **Additional time and resources are needed to facilitate reflection and discussion in community wellbeing programmes,** to ensure effective outcome tracking for young Black men
5. **Similar work should be done to develop evaluation approaches for young people from other racialised groups** for whom there are not culturally appropriate wellbeing measures.

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Culturally appropriate evaluation for young Black men

Centre for Mental Health worked with young Black men (aged 17-30) to coproduce a measure which tracks their journeys and experiences of attending a community, wellbeing and mental health programme.

My Journey tracks how far key outcomes are gained as a result of young men’s involvement with a community wellbeing group. There are two versions of this so they can be asked before the start and again at the end of the programme.

How Are We Doing?/How Did We Do? explores how far a community wellbeing group provides the right environment to help young Black men thrive. There are two versions of this so they can be asked during the middle and again at the end of the programme.

My Journey

[To be asked by confidential survey]

Your initials (First letter of name; first letter of surname):

Your date of birth (in the format DD/MM/YYYY):

Before the first session:

Thinking about your life currently, rate the following statements between 5 and 1, where 5 = strongly agree, 4 = agree, 3 = neutral, 2= disagree, 1= strongly disagree

	5	4	3	2	1
1. I am generally happy with my life as a young Black man in Britain					
2. I feel safe as a young Black man in Britain					
3. I feel empowered as a young Black man in Britain					
4. I have aspirations for my future					
5. I have good access to the resources I need to do well in life					
6. I feel connected to the support of brotherhood					
7. I understand mental health and how it affects my wellbeing					
8. I have someone I trust who I can express my mental health and wellbeing to					
9. I think this group will have a long-term impact on me					
10. Is there anything else you would like to add?					

After the last session:

Thinking about the sessions you have been to, rate the following statements between 5 and 1, where 5 = strongly agree, 4 = agree, 3 = neutral, 2= disagree, 1= strongly disagree

	5	4	3	2	1
1. I am generally happy with my life as a young Black man in Britain					
2. I feel safe as a young Black man in Britain					
3. I feel empowered as a young Black man in Britain					
4. I have aspirations for my future					
5. I have good access to the resources I need to do well in life					
6. I feel connected to the support of brotherhood					
7. I understand mental health and how it affects my wellbeing					
8. I have someone I trust who I can express my mental health and wellbeing to					
9. I think this group will have a long-term impact on me					
10. Is there anything else you would like to add?					

A separate PDF of this measure can be downloaded from centreformentalhealth.org.uk



How Are We Doing?

[To be asked by anonymous survey]

During/after the middle session:

Thinking about the sessions you have been to so far, rate the following statements between 5 and 1, where 5 = strongly agree, 4 = agree, 3 = neutral, 2= disagree, 1= strongly disagree

	5	4	3	2	1
1. The facilitator is knowledgeable about topics relevant to me as a young Black man					
2. The sessions are relevant to me					
3. I feel comfortable and safe in this group					
4. I can express myself and feel understood in this group					
5. Is there anything else you would like to add about how you find the programme?					

- A group discussion on the statements would follow after young men had submitted their responses on their phones (excluding question 1 about the facilitator if the facilitator is present)
- As part of the group discussion, the facilitator would ask questions which explore issues important to the group. They would design this conversation based on the results young men gave to My Journey before beginning any sessions. For example, if young men had rated low on feeling empowered before the programme started, the facilitator could ask 'What does empowerment mean to you?' or 'What helps a young Black man to feel empowered?'

How Did We Do?

[To be asked by anonymous survey]

After the last session:

Thinking about the sessions you have been to, rate the following statements between 5 and 1, where 5 = strongly agree, 4 = agree, 3 = neutral, 2 = disagree, 1 = strongly disagree

	5	4	3	2	1
1. The facilitator was knowledgeable about topics relevant to me as a young Black man					
2. The sessions were relevant to me					
3. I felt comfortable and safe in this group					
4. I could express myself and felt understood in this group					
5. Is there anything else you would like to add about how you found the programme?					

Practitioner guidance for measuring young Black men’s outcomes

Centre for Mental Health was funded by Mind to co-develop with young Black men an approach to measuring their outcomes when attending a community, wellbeing and mental health programme. We did this because there are very few culturally responsive outcome measures for young Black men. This guidance summarises how to use the approach as well as outlining important attributes of an effective programme facilitator.

The new approach aims to be meaningful to young Black men, demonstrating the impact of community wellbeing programmes and how they can be improved. This can help build data and evidence for culturally relevant support, to support funding applications for projects tailored to young Black men.

Key attributes and competences of an effective facilitator described by young men

- **Be punctual and present:** “consistency will make it easy to rally behind him”. This is especially important for young men who have absent fathers
- **Be a role model:** “lead by example”
- **Be inclusive:** get all participants of the group involved. Do not be afraid to include quieter members of the group

- **Be authentic:** the facilitator shows they authentically care about the group members, the group’s aims and culturally relevant topics
- **Be knowledgeable:** about topics that are culturally relevant to the group
- **Be led by integrity rather than ambition:** Be yourself, be brave and honest about topics and discussions. Do not be afraid to disrupt the status quo, or to challenge or push back if something is not right.

How to use the approach

The approach has two parts: *My Journey* and *How Are We Doing?/How Did We Do?*. It was co-designed with young Black men aged 17-30 and is suitable for this age range. Young men described important outcomes and features that they valued from their contact with Mind or other community wellbeing programmes they attend. These were made into statements to measure the benefits and impact of young men’s experiences with you. Young men are asked to agree or disagree with each statement on a scale of 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree).



What you will need

Before the first session

- Link to *My Journey 1* to share with young men
- Copies of Appendix 2: introduction to reasons for outcomes monitoring

For the middle session

- Discussion questions you developed based on your group's answers to *My Journey 1*
- Link for *How Are We Doing?*

For the end of the last session

- Link to *My Journey 2*
- Link for *How Did We Do?*

Paper versions of the statements could be used instead of links to a digital survey. Completing surveys through a link sent to young men's phones (by text or Whatsapp) via a secure tool like Survey Monkey is preferred because it feels less like a school activity. It would also save the facilitator time entering responses into a spreadsheet.

Using *My Journey*

- *My Journey* tracks young men's individual journeys with the programme to see how far it impacts and benefits them. They fill this in before the programme starts, and at the end of the programme
- Young men are asked to fill in their initials and date of birth both times they complete *My Journey*, so their results can be linked together.

Using *How Are We Doing?*

- *How Are We Doing?* includes the things young Black men saw as important for a group's success and for helping them to thrive. It captures young men's experience of the group and its overall vibe
- At the midpoint of your programme, young men are asked to rate *How Are We Doing?* through a secure survey on their phones. This will help you identify what's working well and areas that could be improved

- *How Did We Do?* should be asked after the final session through a secure survey on their phones
- Initials and date of birth are not included on *How Are We Doing?*/*How Did We Do?* to ensure honest feedback is gathered on the service. This is particularly pertinent for one off or short-term contacts who may have dropped out due to dissatisfaction.

One-off/short-term contacts

How Did We Do? should be texted out to young men who attend less frequently or who may have dropped out. This happens midway and at the end of the programme. This will allow you to collect important learning both from those who engage well with the group and those attending less frequently.

The group discussion

- The project lead or a group rep could facilitate a group session to discuss people's views on *How Are We Doing?*
- This group discussion should happen after individual *How Are We Doing?* ratings have been submitted on each person's phone, to avoid the group's views biasing answers
- The group discussion element has been included to create a more human dynamic to feedback collection, and because young men said they value giving feedback through trusting relationships. Ideally this would be an in-person discussion to help the conversation flow more easily.
- As part of this discussion, the project lead or group rep would explore themed issues important to the group. They would have designed the questions for this by looking at the answers to *My Journey 1* – which was filled before the very first session. They would identify the statements the group tended to disagree with, and create questions for the group based on these. This aims to 1) help the project lead understand how to support young men with these aspects, and 2) show young men that when they answer the surveys it is used and taken on board by the programme

- For example, if young men had generally rated ‘disagreement’ with ‘feeling empowered’ before the programme started, the facilitator could ask ‘What does empowerment mean to you?’ or ‘What helps a young Black man to feel empowered?’

Who is the Group Rep? The group rep could be a member of the group tasked with this leadership role – so a young Black man who is familiar to other group members. He would be paid for his role in helping collect feedback from the group. The group rep should be referred to by their name rather than a title amongst the participants, to avoid creating a sense of hierarchy.

Benefit of the Project Lead leading the discussion: May have more authority than a peer, may be seen as more of a father figure or role model to young men.

Benefit of the Group Rep leading the discussion: Allows more freedom for participants to express their views without fear of causing offence to the group leader. It also supports leadership and vocational opportunities.

How to collect the data

- Young men should give informed consent and feel safe
- Young men’s data and feedback should be treated as confidential
- GDPR guidelines must be observed
- Record group conversations if young men consent, otherwise take written notes during the session, adding detail after the session. Do not include young men’s names or anything which could identify them
- Write notes on the key themes arising from the group discussion. These might be recorded in a spreadsheet or Word document.

How to store the data

- Keep recorded information secure by protecting it from loss, damage or inappropriate access
- GDPR guidelines must be observed
- The quantitative survey data can be collected via an online survey platform and downloaded into an Excel spreadsheet, and stored on a secure server with a password.

How to interpret the data

- This is an early-stage coproduced tool. If a young man’s ratings increase the second time he fills it in (after the end of the programme) it is a promising indication of positive change. You could see if a young man’s scores went up for the same question from his first *My Journey* to his second. Alternatively you could add up all his scores from the first *My Journey* and compare to his total scores for the last *My Journey*. It is important to note that we cannot specify how much of a rise is a meaningful change, as this tool has yet to be piloted to establish its validity and reliability
- As well as being able to see the scores for each young man, you can track how the group’s average score at the beginning changes from the start to the middle of the programme
- *How Did We Do?* gives an overview of areas of strength and areas for development so you can continuously improve.

How to share the data you collect with young men

Share your commitment to improving your service: when people are asked for feedback on the support you are offering, it is useful to share what you have done with it and the changes you have made. This can help the process of giving feedback feel more meaningful and relevant.

- Analyse your *How Are We Doing?/How Did We Do?* data for key themes and areas for improvement – what is it saying you could do better? Create an action plan for improvement (this could include ideas problem-solved with young men)
- Implement and test out those changes: do they make a difference to your engagement and feedback?
- Create an annual *You Said, We Did* update to young men which details changes you have made in response to the feedback they gave.

How to share the data you collect with commissioners and decision-makers

The before and after data you collect, both on the journeys of young men engaging with your support (*My Journey*) and on their experience of engaging with the service (*How Are We Doing?/How Did We Do?*) will be useful to share with commissioners.

Over time this data can:

- Provide you with trends and evidence on young Black men's needs
- Evidence the impact of what you do
- Help you improve and develop your service
- Potentially help you secure more funding for culturally responsive support for young Black men.

The group discussion can help:

- You identify and problem solve with young men how to improve the support you offer
- Commissioners to understand young men's experiences and needs through access to rich qualitative data.

How do you share the data and use it to influence?

- Ensure all data (including quotes) is anonymised
- If working with an evaluation partner, develop an information-sharing agreement between you detailing how data will be shared, managed and used in line with GDPR guidelines

- You can use the information you collect in a variety of ways to influence decision-makers, funders and those with political influence. For example, through reports, social media posts and short videos.

How to encourage young men to see outcomes tracking as worthwhile

Tell young men that the approach you are using was coproduced with young Black men aged 17-30 to make it as relevant to their lives and experiences as possible

Let young men know that the feedback surveys are an important part of the programme and explain the rationale for them from the first time you meet them, so they are not a surprise or seen as an afterthought. Let them know that any issues arising from the responses in the feedback surveys will be acted upon and not just forgotten – which links to *You Said, We Did* update suggested above.

- Explain that the surveys help you know how to best support young men and meet their needs
- Emphasise that providing feedback is not a test or a judgement of young men, but an opportunity for practitioners to understand how to improve the support they offer
- Link it to the bigger picture: taking part helps build up evidence of what helps support young Black men. This can lead to more funding for culturally relevant groups, and more young Black men benefitting from them
- For example, 'We really want to make sure that we inform others funding projects of what young Black men need. We want your help to transform systems of support for young men'. This would need to be repeated regularly and delivered with passion
- Appendix 2 contains a narrative you can use in a welcome pack for the programme. It would also be good to have testimonials of young men from your project sharing (with their consent and the option to do so anonymously) how the *My Journey* approach helped them.

- Help young men feel comfortable and encouraged to provide honest feedback:
 - Make it clear that you welcome constructive criticism and won't be offended by negative feedback
 - Their answers to *My Journey* are confidential
 - Their answers to *How Are We Doing?/ How Did We Do?* are anonymous
 - Allow flexibility by saying feedback can be given in person, by email or WhatsApp to the Project Lead or Group Rep
- You can clarify the meaning of words in the statements if people are unsure, however we have made the language as simple as possible
- You could share statistics about how common mental health issues are and that your group is also about looking after mental health, to de-stigmatise the topic before young men respond to the survey. Referring to celebrities or role models who advocate for mental health, such as Stormzy, could help with buy in.

If you use the model and wish to help us refine it by sharing your feedback, please get in touch at contact@centreformentalhealth.org.uk

Your voice matters!

We are passionate about improving what is provided to support young Black men – so your feedback really matters to us.

We collect this by asking you to use a rating system because it helps us to:

Improve what we do and make sure we get it right: It helps us understand what is working about we do – and gives us clues on how to change what we offer to be more in tune with your needs. We really value hearing what is and is not working for you.

Make sure what we offer is making a difference to your wellbeing journey: Data and feedback helps us work with you to track your personal journey with us. It helps us understand what we can do to help you and other young men thrive.

Give evidence to funders on what an effective programme designed for young Black men looks and feels like: There is less knowledge and good quality information about what works for young Black men. These things have wrongly been overlooked and means that the help you get may not be properly adapted to your needs. Without your feedback, there is a risk that funders only invest in help designed for white majority needs.

So, when you are working with us, we will ask you to fill in short feedback questionnaires about your journey at the start, middle and end of the programme. Rest assured that GDPR guidelines will be observed at all times. Surveys may not be the most satisfying part of your contact with us, but your feedback helps us make sure we do the best we can for you and other young Black men.

How are we doing?

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