

MENTAL HEALTH INFORMATION SESSION WITH LGBT HEALTH AND WELLBEING



See Me Proud and LGBT Health and Wellbeing collaborated on an information session delivered to New Scots who are community members with the Refugee and Asylum Seeker Project at LGBT Health and Wellbeing. The session was held on Friday 17th November, 2023.

AIMS

The aim of this session was to provide LGBT+ New Scots with access to support and information about mental health, as well as discuss mental health stigma, and the way it particularly impacts LGBT+ asylum seekers. LGBT+ asylum seekers often face additional barriers to support, including multiple layers of stigma, mistrust of services, financial barriers and a lack of information.

ATTENDEES

There were 46 attendees, all whom identify as LGBT+ asylum seekers.

RESOURCES

- *It's Okay To Talk* resources were discussed and distributed
- *Time To Talk Day* materials
- See Me materials on different types of stigma, particularly information around self-stigma were utilised.

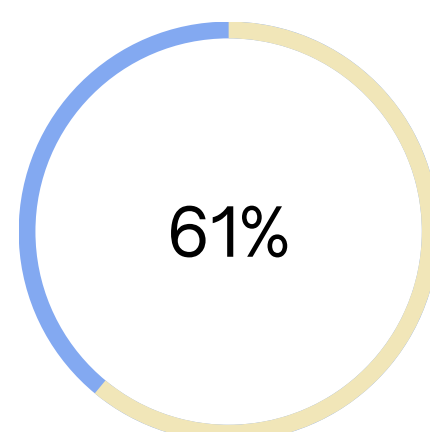
EVENT

We ran a 1-hour information session and discussion, focused on stigma around mental health specific to refugee and asylum seeker communities. Discussions included myths around mental health, what mental health means in individual cultural contexts, how to access LGBT+ affirmative mental health support, and supporting mental health when navigating the asylum system.

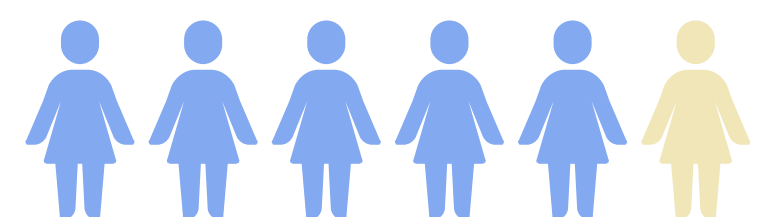
DISCUSSION

Discussion from the group was focused around stigma, and the additional barriers to talking about mental health:

- NHS services not being accessible, difficulties with language barriers, as well as long waitlists and lack of information about medications.
- Mental health difficulties only being associated with people who may have long term and enduring mental health conditions, and are secluded from society.
- Fear that discussing mental health will be detrimental to their asylum claim
- Fear of discussing sexuality with professionals due to negative and dangerous past experiences



61% of asylum seekers in the UK report significant mental distress (Refugee Council, 2022)



Refugees and asylum seekers are 500% more likely to experience mental health issues than the general population (Refugee Council, 2022)

FEEDBACK

The event was evaluated using both feedback forms and verbal feedback, which asked how the event impacted the attendees, and how they feel talking about mental health compared to the beginning of the session

100%

of those who completed feedback forms, or gave verbal feedback said the event made them feel more confident talking about mental health.

100%

said the event made them more aware of their support options

*"It made me feel open to want to talk about my mental health"
(participant, 25)*