

# A rapid review of the effectiveness of interventions to enhance equitable or overall access to mental health services by ethnic minority groups

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## Background

Approximately **1 in 4** people will experience poor mental health in their lifetime.



Evidence suggests that interventions improving **access and engagement** with mental health services may help to **reduce disparities** affecting ethnic minorities.

## Aim

To assess the **effectiveness of interventions** intended to **enhance equal access** to mental health services by ethnic minority groups.

## Evidence Base

14 studies published across 17 reports



9 x USA



5 x UK



5 studies compared outcomes **between ethnic minority and white** participants

Participants of the reviews included

- Individuals with **specific mental health conditions** (i.e. childhood emotional and behavioural disorders, depression (including post-partum), anxiety)
- **'Healthy'** participants
- Individuals referred to Improving Access to Psychological Therapy
- Individuals in mental health **crisis**

Interventions were categorised according to change made at the following levels:

- Personal
- Intra-personal
- Community
- Organisation

**Information on Gypsy, Traveller and Roma groups was also sought, but there was no research for this specific population available.**

## Key Findings

In summary, the findings **support**:



Interventions delivered in a way that is **culturally appropriate**, using **leaflets, videos, or presentations** to encourage 'health-seeking' behaviour.



Incorporating **speciality mental health services** within primary care setting.



Providing **language support** (e.g. professional interpreters).



**Training to healthcare providers** on cultural sensitivity and competence to raise awareness of disparities in mental healthcare access and outcomes.

Furthermore, it is noted that ethnic minority groups are disproportionately affected by **economic determinants** of poor mental health, including **increased likelihood of low income**.

## Research Implications and Evidence Gaps

Future research should prioritise rigorous study design, including **Randomised Controlled Trials and longitudinal studies**.

The full rapid review is available here:

<https://www.medrxiv.org/content/10.1101/2024.05.16.24307468v2.full.pdf>