

peerfest 14

‘Lobbying and Campaigning’

A workshop with Michelle Bradford

Michelle Bradford, founder of LGBT Health Forum Bristol facilitated a workshop that explored multiple discrimination and looked at the following questions:

- What are the barriers to support that people with mental health problems from marginalised communities may experience?
- Where and how can people with mental health problems from these communities start lobbying for change?

Working in smaller groups, attendees looked at the above questions for people from African and Caribbean communities, Polish communities, women from South Asian communities and people from transgender communities.

Following discussions and feedback, Michelle shared the campaigning successes of the service user movement in Bristol. As a result of lobbying, various user-led organisations and other community organisations are setting up a ‘mental health hub’ to improve access to services.

Although the barriers varied across the communities identified, the following themes emerged from discussions:

- Find your peers – there is power in numbers
- Identify and support leaders from amongst your peers
- Use evidence to campaign for change
- Create partnerships, within and across communities and strategically, e.g. clinical commissioners
- Identify a ‘friend on the inside’ that can support you to get the evidence you need, keep up to date with developments and broker other relationships
- Communicate with peers and externally

For more information about of LGBT Health Forum Bristol, have a look at their website:

<http://www.lgbthealthforumbristol.co.uk/mental-health-support/home.php>