

Rafiki Project - Information Sheet

Who we are?

The Rafiki project is an exciting new project developed to start conversations with African Communities in South London about Mental Health. Africa Advocacy Foundation delivers the project in partnership with Community Therapies and Training Service. The Rafiki project is funded by Time to Change, England's biggest programme to end the stigma and discrimination faced by people with mental health problems. The programme is run by the charities Mind and Rethink Mental Illness, and funded by the Department of Health and Comic Relief.

What does Rafiki mean?

Rafiki means 'Friend' in Swahili. We believe that by starting conversations, sharing stories and experiences around mental health we can create new friendships to challenge stigma and discrimination.

What we are doing?

Rafiki project will bring together people with personal experience of mental health problems and those without experience of mental health problems from African communities to challenge stigma and discrimination. We are recruiting 50 people to train up as community champions to volunteer within African Communities. We are looking for people with lived experience of mental health problems and/or an interest in mental health to train.

Why are we doing it?

We know stigma and discrimination impacts all people but we know within African communities the issues around culture and mental health impact us in a different way. It means that more people from African communities are likely to end up in hospital and less likely to talk about their problems with family and friends. We also know that sometimes when people talk about the problems they have, they may experience discrimination. We think that by getting support earlier can not only prevent mental ill health from developing but, also support people with mental ill



health through recovery. We want to challenge the stigma that stops us sharing and believe that by sharing experiences both good and bad can help challenge stigma and discrimination around mental health!

How will we do it?

We are looking for a range of people from all backgrounds to play a role in the project. The project is aimed at starting conversations with African Communities so we welcome speakers of other languages. As a Champion you will be expected to attend training over 6 weeks and then commit to a minimum of 30 hours over 6 months which works out at about 5 hours per month and this includes support sessions. If you are not able to make sessions we are happy to be flexible with this and if you would like to become more involved we would welcome this as well.

The champions will then lead and develop community engagement and mental health awareness activities these will include art, poetry & music events and community outreach activities and make links with faith and spiritual groups. The aim is for groups to carry out different activities to engage people from African communities in conversation about mental health.

A weekly peer-support group will provide a space for the Community Champions to share experiences and support each other.

Where next?

If you are interested in registering for the programme we would love to hear from you! If English is your second language let us know and we can arrange for someone to translate!

Contact Naomi on 020 8698 4473 or email Naomi@a-af.org

Follow us on Twitter [@RafikiMH](https://twitter.com/RafikiMH)

