



*Creating Solutions with You*

## **HS Consultancy Offer: African Staff Engagement Project**

HS Consultancy is keen to work with mental health provider organisations to work towards solutions in relation to issues that are often 'under the radar'. We have heard repeatedly that managers, human resources departments, colleagues and African staff in mental health services struggle with issues that fracture staff teams and offer potentially poorer treatment and care to users of services irrespective of ethnic background. The types of issues we have been told about are:

- High numbers of African staff in 24hr services, particularly on night shift – with some service users finding this challenging in terms of identity (visibility), language (accent) barriers and cultural gaps in approaches to care and human relationships
- Performance and capability issues that remain unchallenged or unresolved as managers find difficulty in negotiating race, culture, concerns about being prejudiced and resentment from other staff who feel justice is not being served.
- Resentment of African staff in nursing and other clinical/practice roles who feel overlooked for development and promotion opportunities.
- Tensions between different African ethnicities and between African and Caribbean people, with difficult dynamics occurring between staff members or between staff and patients.

We believe that despite the delicate nature of some of these issues it is important to address these, albeit with sensitivity, to ensure that service user care is not undermined in any way.

We at HS Consultancy, led by Hári Sewell, make you a compelling offer set out below. Hári was responsible for leading a review of similar issues in an inner city trust and other organisations. Hári has a deep understanding of the issues from academic, practice and managerial perspectives. Equipped with strong skills in facilitation and group work Hári will bring his knowledge as a director previously responsible for human resources management to bear on this initiative.

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## Offer – African Staff Engagement Project

**Purpose:** To provide a mechanism for organisations to create a dialogue about sensitive issues without creating an adversarial dynamic, by benefiting from multi-site feedback. In doing so, organisations may use the recommendations from their briefing to begin to tackle matters that were previously avoided and which had the potential to be detrimental to service user care and treatment.

On offer is a tested model of triangulating perspectives around the issue. The model is as follows:-

- ✚ Set up meeting with HR lead and operational lead, most probably director of nursing or equivalent
- ✚ Structured focus groups with African staff / line managers / senior staff (at director level or equivalent)
- ✚ Review workforce data by ethnicity to note patterns
- ✚ Feedback to each cohort of focus group members - stating explicitly the previously unspoken about other's perspectives and exploring meanings
- ✚ Production of a brief report, including recommendations for action.

### What is required?

- ✓ Senior management team endorsement of this project
- ✓ One senior HR lead to sponsor the project
- ✓ Decision to commit one admin worker to co-ordinate focus groups and one to one interviews as well as facilitating access to relevant workforce reports

### Contact

If you would like to know more about how to commission this project please call Hári Sewell on 07737 281123. Email: [Hári.sewell@hsconsultancy.org.uk](mailto:Hári.sewell@hsconsultancy.org.uk)

See [www.hsconsultancy.org.uk](http://www.hsconsultancy.org.uk)