

## **Resource summary - Cultural/ religious sensitivity**

‘BAME people have a unique set of needs, experiences and cultural background which shapes the way in which they experience and respond to abuse’ (Gill, 2009, cited in <https://www.ksscrc.co.uk/2020/10/29/domestic-abuse-in-black-asian-and-minority-ethnic-groups/>)

BAME women may be less likely to disclose abuse, particularly to someone who might be classified as an ‘outsider’. It may therefore take more trust building, patience and a unique set of skills to encourage the victim to disclose/ discuss the abuse. Nonetheless, professionals should be skilled and confident to ‘ask the question’ regardless of the victim’s ethnicity.

It is imperative that frontline professionals are upskilled to work with BAME victims by receiving specific and appropriate training on working with minority groups. There are BAME organisations such as [Imkaan](#) who deliver bespoke training on working with BAME victims/survivors.

Training alone is not enough, there is work to be done in order to tackle institutional racism, starting with the CJS. This needs to be tackled through a combination of training and a ‘zero-tolerance’ approach to racism. It is recommended that BAME representation in organisations who work with victims should increase. Having BAME frontline staff and leadership can increase BAME victim’s confidence in frontline services and encourage more culturally sensitive policies.

A delicate balance between informed and stereotypical approaches is required. An important consideration when responding to abuse in BAME communities is not to homogenise, as not all BAME victims are the same. Although BAME is a term that is widely used to group people from minority ethnicities, their experiences are not homogenous. Inequality is a spectrum amongst the BAME population and is constructed through complex factors including: lived and cultural experience such as class, sexuality, sexual orientation and immigration status (Gill, 2009). BAME also encompasses the experiences of multiple ethnicities which are inherently different and diverse across the ‘BAME community’ (Gill, 2009). Policies should also reflect the broad spectrum of experiences of BAME people. Cultural practices need to be understood in order to support an individual but approaches should still be person-centred, which requires a delicate balance. Research shows that domestic abuse disproportionately affects those from minority ethnic groups due to long standing structural inequalities. Evidence has highlighted how the pandemic has further entrenched those inequalities, particularly for those with no recourse to public funds. The evidence also shows that BAME victims are different to their white counterparts due to their cultures and language, which make them unique but can also serve as a barrier to accessing support.

It is important that professionals responding to domestic abuse in minority communities: continue to challenge institutional racism; receive training on working minority communities; strive for representation in their organisation and invest funding in BAME organisations.

<https://www.kssrc.co.uk/2020/10/29/domestic-abuse-in-black-asian-and-minority-ethnic-groups/>

[Research in practice](#) have a wealth of information on their website including training resources for practice professionals to encourage cultural and religious sensitivity. PDFs are available to download, to assist professionals working in the field of domestic abuse to reflect on 'ways of knowing' and how to develop cultural capability. Tips are provided on how to organise a learning together event for training within teams. There is also information available on revenge porn, and working with victims with additional vulnerabilities such as disabilities, or older age.

[Karma Nirvana](#) provide training around supporting victims of honour-based abuse and forced marriage - 'Karma Nirvana can develop your team's skills with a powerful training session focusing on the specific needs of your area or agency. We can help you identify the risk factors, assess risk more confidently or show you how to train others to be more aware of honour-based abuse and forced marriage'.

[Rights of Women](#) provide training on working with immigrant women.