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BME Forum



World Refugee Day 2020

20 June

Working to improve the
experience of Black and
Minority Ethnic Staff and
communities

Sharifa Hashem and Mark Johns
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What is world refugee Day?



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“A refugee is someone who fled his or her home and country owing to “a well-founded fear of persecution because of his/her race, religion, nationality, membership in a particular social group, or political opinion”, according to the United Nations 1951 Refugee Convention. Many refugees are in exile to escape the effects of natural or human-made disasters.” United Nations.

World Refugee Day is a time to raise awareness, gather support and honour the millions of refugees and internally displaced people globally who have been forced to flee their homes due to war, conflict and prosecution.

This year it is particularly important to honour World Refugee day in light of global COVID19 pandemic and the developments within the Black Lives Matter both of which have highlighted continued discriminations against members of the BAME community. The refugee community experiences additional difficulties in this situation due to access to fewer resources and less support.



Definitions

A **refugee** is someone who fled his or her home and country owing to “a well-founded fear of persecution because of his/her race, religion, nationality, membership in a particular social group, or political opinion”, according to the United Nations 1951 Refugee Convention. Many refugees are in exile to escape the effects of natural or human-made disasters.

Asylum seekers say they are refugees and have fled their homes as refugees do, but their claim to refugee status is not yet definitively evaluated in the country to which they fled.

Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs) are people who have not crossed an international border but have moved to a different region than the one they call home within their own country.

Stateless persons do not have a recognized nationality and do not belong to any country. Statelessness situations are usually caused by discrimination against certain groups. Their lack of identification — a citizenship certificate — can exclude them from access to important government services, including health care, education or employment.

Facts and figures

There are **25.9 million** refugees worldwide, alongside this a further 70.8 million people forcibly displaced worldwide

80% of all refugees are hosted in developing countries

57% of UNHCR refugees came from three countries: (Syria 6.7 million), Afghanistan (2.7 million) and South Sudan (2.3 million)

37,000 people a day are forced to flee their homes because of conflict and persecution.

Around half of the world's refugees are **children**.

Approximately **1.4 million** refugees, who are at particular risk of violence and especially vulnerable, urgently need to be permanently resettled.

92,400 refugees were resettled (admitted to a third country which allows them to stay there as refugees) in 2018, less than 7 percent of those awaiting resettlement

Figures from UNHCR and Amnesty International



Ambulance service staff members

Shy Das-Bharadwa - From Kenya to UK - London/Manchester



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With Kenya moving towards Independence in the 1960's, the South Asian community started facing turbulent times. The 1965 Exchange controls hit the community hard. There was a choice then to either take up Kenyan citizenship or leave. The Immigration Bill was passed in 1967 and all non-citizens required work permits. The Asian Exodus started building up in 1968 and Asians started moving to the UK.

My husband is of Gujarati origin and he was about ten years old at this time. Each family was given about \$100 each and allowed one suitcase each for the move. They were given tickets on a plane from Nairobi and arrived in London. They left behind everything they had owned over the past years – a home, belongings, animal livestock and other possessions. There were strict rules and restrictions prevalent at that time.

They landed in London on 10 June 1970 and stayed with relatives. There were tiny little houses filled with 10-15



Shy Das-Bharadwa is PA to Chair and Chief Executive at Scottish Ambulance Service



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Shy Das-Bharadwa - From Kenya to UK - London/Manchester



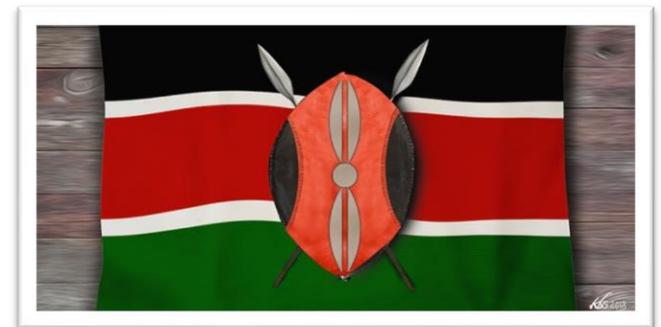
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people at a time. There were no toilets in the house as these were located outside the back of the house. Hot water was at a premium which was a hardship for Indians who are required to bathe after the use of the toilet every morning. My father-in-law started looking for a house and a job in London. He had been a printer back in Nairobi and though he found low-paying jobs, he could not afford to rent a house and manage a family with this salary in London.

Advised by some of the community, he came to Manchester to explore the options. He hired a house for £7 a month in Stalybridge for his wife and three children. It took him about 10 years to be able to afford buy a house.

The upheaval in the life of my husband and his family did affect my husband's education. He had to learn English to get in to school at that age.

He never recovered from this ordeal in their lives.



Recipe - kathiyawadi gujrati khichadi



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Ingredients

- 2 Cups of Rice
- 1 Cup of Toor Dal (Yellow Split peas)
- 2 Chopped Potatoes
- 100 Grams Green Peas
- 1-2 Lengthwise Chopped Carrots
- 100 Grams Chopped Spring Onions
- 3-4 Finely Chopped Green Chilies
- 1.5-2 Teaspoons Ginger-Garlic Paste
- 1 Teaspoon Mustard Seeds
- 1 Teaspoon Cumin Seeds
- 2-3 Dried Red Chilies
- 3-4 Black Peppercorns and 3-4 Cloves
- ½ Teaspoon Turmeric Powder
- 1 Teaspoon Coriander Powder
- 1 Teaspoon Cumin Powder
- 1.5-2 Teaspoon Red Chili powder
- Coriander Leaves finely chopped for garnish
- Hot Water
- Ghee and salt, to taste

Method

1. Wash the dal-rice mixture a few times and keep aside.
2. Heat ghee and add mustard seeds, cumin seeds, dried red chilies, black peppercorns and cloves, and stir. Next add chopped spring onions and stir it well.
3. Now add in finely chopped green chilies, ginger garlic paste and sauté it well.
4. Add carrots, green peas and potatoes. Stir and coat them well in ghee base.
5. Add turmeric powder, red chili powder, coriander powder and cumin powder and stir. Add some coriander leaves, rice and dal. Again ensure everything is coated. Once done add your salt and the water and give it all a mix.
6. This khichadi can be cooked in a pressure cook or in a thick-bottom pan with lid. If in a pan, keep adding hot water slowly as required till the mixture is cooked through.
7. Once your Kathiyawadi masala khichdi is ready, top it with some ghee and serve it with pickle and roasted poppadum



Shy says "This recipe is a favourite in the family, it is a source of comfort and a reminder of our families' roots. In those days, money was scarce and this food was simple but nourishing with all that was available."

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Sharifa Hashem - From Bahrain to UK - London/Exeter

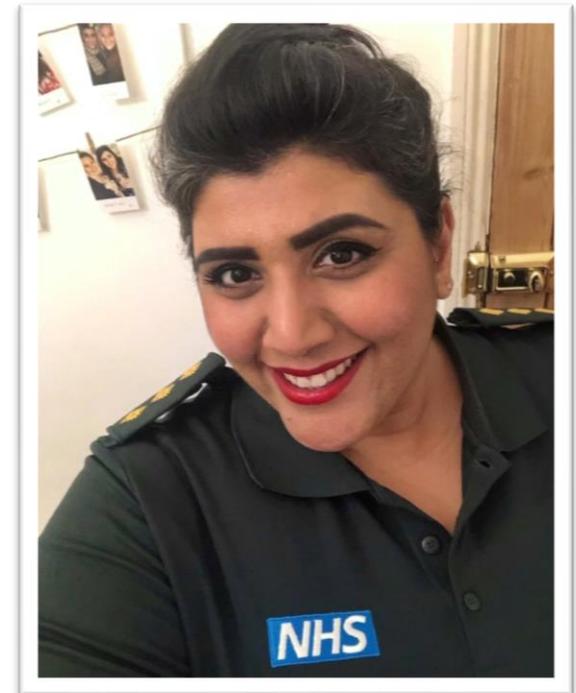


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I was born in Bahrain in 1984, an archipelago in the Persian Gulf, with beautiful sandy beaches and clear warm waters. Approximately every 10 years civil unrest breaks out, fuelled by government inequalities. Unrest was met brutally with well documented and wide spread human rights abuses. I have vivid memories of walking home through demonstrations with gunmen on one side and Molotov cocktails on the other.

In February 1996 my father said we would be leaving Bahrain in a few days, we should pack our bags and not tell anyone. What I didn't realise, as an 11 year old, was that he had just been released from political imprisonment and was told he had 3 days to say goodbye to his family. He was in prison because he didn't support the government, with many others alongside him. We arrived on a very cold February on the outskirts of London, seeking political asylum at Gatwick Airport.

We lived in temporary accommodation until a more permanent solution in London was found.



Sharifa Hashem is
Patient Engagement Manager at
South Western Ambulance Service



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Sharifa Hashem - From Bahrain to UK - London/Exeter



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It was a culture shock to have moved from a small island in the Middle East to a big city like London, I didn't speak English and had to navigate a new schooling system. I struggled not being able to communicate so I learnt the language through reading until I'd read most of the school library. I was adamant that I would go to university but I had to defer my entry because we didn't have the leave to remain, this is an official document which allows you permanent residency in the country and access to further education and jobs. just as I was about to defer for a second year our leave to remain arrived in the post. I went on to complete three degrees, BSc Psychology, MA Gender and Identity in the Middle East and MPhil Social Policy.

Although I'm a British citizen now, I continue to identify as a refugee. I spent some years campaigning for Human Rights and gave speeches at the United Nations and The House of Lords. My experiences continue to shape me as a person and fuels my passion for equality, diversity and inclusion at every level."



Communicating with patients



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Effective communication with patients is one of the most important tools in healthcare setting, ensuring better patient outcomes and satisfaction. This is particularly important in an urgent care or emergency setting where people are feeling vulnerable and scared about their own health or that of a loved one.

Refugees may experience this at a heightened level as they deal with unfamiliar system and processes, and for some in a language in which they are not proficient. It is especially important in those cases that you:

- **Speak at a measured pace**
- **Use basic language and avoid colloquialisms and medical terminology**
- **Ask the patient if they have any questions**
- **Remain patient and professional**



“It’s raining cats and dogs” a colloquialism that may not make sense to many but so incredibly common in our everyday language.

Race Equality Foundation (2015) estimate between 400,000 – 1,200,000 people in England and Wales are unable to communicate with health professionals due to language barriers.



Communicating with patients

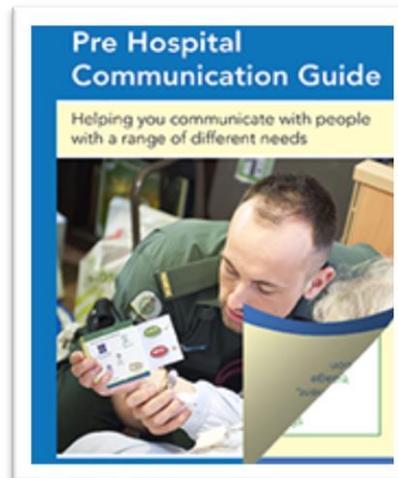
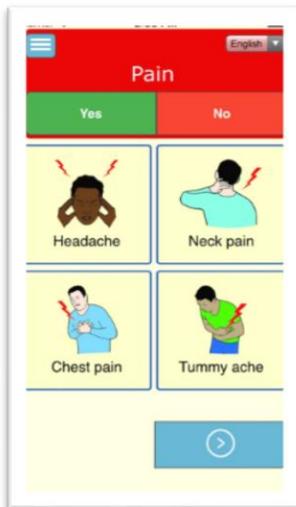


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In some cases you may wish to rely on extra resources to support your and the patients understanding:

- **Consider using interpretation services if English isn't the patient's first language.**
- **Make use of the Pre-Hospital Communication Guide booklet or app.**
- **Do not rely on family members, friends or carers as your first option to avoid bias or miscommunications.**

Improving communication with patients is not only beneficial for their well being but it can also improve your clinical assessment and practice. It is also important to be mindful of cultural sensitivities and consider how you can preserve dignity, improve patient experience and avoid harm as a result



Overcoming barriers



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Refugee communities can face a range of barriers when accessing services and may have heard many myths, which we need to overcome. These can include:

- Although the NHS is free at the point of access you may still have to pay for some health services in the UK. Ambulance services do not check recourse to public funds but some hospitals may ask for information (this is requested in an emergency situation).
- Some people may be guarded or apprehensive when talking to people in uniforms due to negative experiences.
- Limited understanding about the extent of services the ambulance service provide. In some countries the service and support is not as comprehensive as what is provided in the UK.

- Concerns may be prevalent about the type of help and support they will receive from an ambulance compared to a GP or in a hospital setting. Again this can be based upon services that would have been traditionally offered in their home country.
- Ethnic minority communities are less likely to access health services (Szczepura, 2005) and they are more likely to have negative experiences when they do. (Race Equality Foundation 2015)
- Some communities do not feel able to talk to their family about their health needs and can be less likely to seek help. In some cultures there are health issues that are not discussed openly and would be considered inappropriate.



Books and Reading

Books can offer a great insight into the experiences of refugees, and these are some which you may find helpful

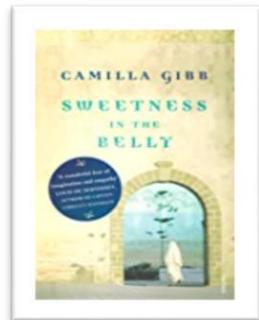


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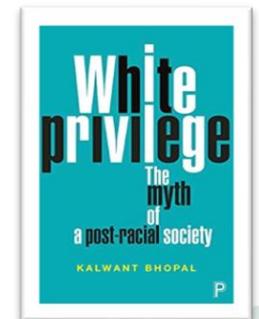
The Amazing Adventures of Kavalier & Clay, Michael Chaon

This novel is a thrilling tight-rope walk between high comedy and bitter tragedy. A heart wrenching story of escape, love and comic book heroes set in Prague, New York and the Arctic.



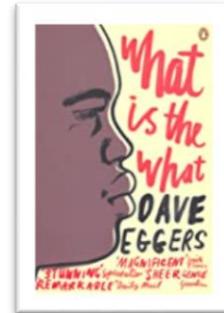
Sweetness in the Belly, Camilla Gibb

In London, Lilly, a white Muslim nurse, struggles in a state of invisible exile. As Ethiopian refugees gradually fill the flats of the housing estate where she lives, Lilly tentatively begins to share with them her longing for the home she herself once had in Africa.



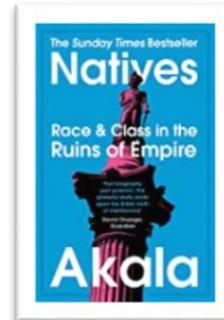
White privilege: The myth of a post-racial society, Kalwant Bhopal

Bhopal explores how neoliberal policy-making has increased discrimination faced by those from non-white backgrounds. This important book examines the impact of race on wider issues of inequality and difference in society



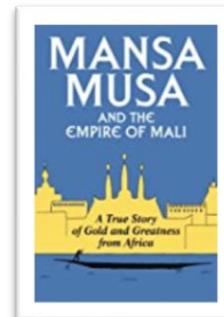
What is the What, Dave Eggers

Valentino Achak Deng is just a boy when conflict separates him from his family and forces him to leave his small Sudanese village, joining thousands of other orphans on their long, long walk to Ethiopia, where they find safety - for a time



Natives: Race and Class in the Ruins of Empire, Akala

From the first time he was stopped and searched as a child, to his first encounters with racist teachers - race and class have shaped Akala's life and outlook. He looks at the social, historical and political factors that have left us where we are today.



Mansa Musa and the Empire of Mali, P.J. Oliver

This biography of Mansa Musa reads like an exciting tale of gold, glory, and adventure. During reign as Mali's emperor, he led his empire into its Golden Age and presided over a 60,000 person, 9,000 mile pilgrimage



Films and Series

Here are a few recommendations from our forum members



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Leave to Remain (2014)

Three teenagers are forced to leave their family, friends and homes behind learn to live in yet another hostile country. That country is the UK.



Born in Syria (2016)

Since civil war started in Syria in 2011, an estimated 9 million Syrians and 4.5 million children have fled their homes. Fleeing unimaginable horror: the indiscriminate bombings of government, and ISIS' brutality



The Human Flow (2017)

A detailed and heart breaking exploration into the global refugee crisis.



Refugee (2016) – short movie

Five acclaimed photographers travel the world to accurately record the difficulties faced by refugees who dream of a better life.



Schindler's List (1993)

In German-occupied Poland during World War II, industrialist Oskar Schindler gradually becomes concerned for his Jewish workforce after witnessing their persecution by the Nazis



Hotel Rwanda (2004)

A story of a hotel manager who housed over a thousand Tutsi refugees during their struggle against the Hutu militia in Rwanda



Organisations to follow for more information



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