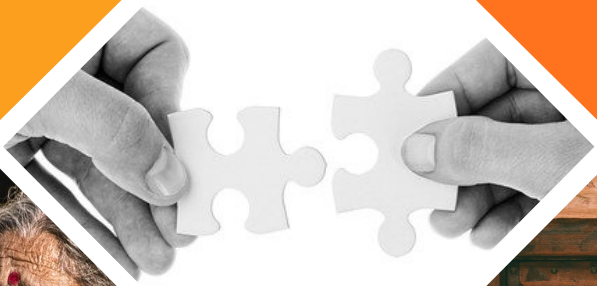

Carer information

Meri Yaadain CiC

Supporting Black Asian Minority Ethnic (BAME) people living with or caring for someone with dementia

Meri Yaadain

Impact of dementia on BAME carers of a relative with dementia

Dementia is a life changing occurrence for the person living with it as well as the carer and/or family members. In order to be able to care for the relative with dementia the family carer(s) first need to be mindful of their own well being. This means carers need to establish some routines that empower them to think about emotional, physical, financial challenges as dementia progresses.

Carers may feel they are obliged to have to care. As a family member you may feel it is your duty to care. But do you have the rights skills and knowledge to care given the challenges presented by dementia?

Some carers talk about the willingness to care. They may be willing to care, but do they have the resources to be a good carer. This is not about judging the carers caring skills, but ensuring that skills, training, resources, respite and finances are in place to enable a carer to cope well with caring.

Stress amongst most family carers is very high where they are unable to see any merits of caring yet feel obliged to have to care for whatever reason.

Stigma faced by BAME family carers is usually an huge burden on such carers. This is especially true if carers are influenced by what their relatives, friends, neighbours or the wider community have to say about the person with dementia or their carers. Notions of witchcraft and Jinn possession can be a huge deterrence in supporting carers to access 'non-cultural' support services.

A lack of appropriate services means that BAME carers are not easily able to take advantage of respite from care, or make use of culturally competent services if they do not exist.

What to do and where to go for help

There is no one correct way forward, so it may be that you have to try a number of steps to get the right support for you. The usual first point of call is your doctor. The GP can help get you a carers assessment as well as an assessment for the person living with dementia. Other things you can do:

SUPPORT SERVICES

Your GP and/or your local Social Services office will be a good place to start with. They will be able to advise on assessments, services available to you, support in the community and direct you to groups that can assist you further. This can include where to go to get advice on welfare/carer benefits, aids and adaptations.

UNDERSTANDING AND PREPARING FOR DEMENTIA

Carers can best help themself by learning about dementia and it's impact on them. It is also worth looking at accessing any support that can help prepare you for the progression of dementia and the kind of decisions that you might need to make. This can include issues like 'Lasting Power of Attorney'.

LOOKING AFTER YOURSELF

A good way to manage caring is to understand your coping strategy. By learning what helps you with caring and what makes things difficult will help you realise what you need to do when things get difficult. Activities that can help you remain physically and mentally active will help you to cope with caring.

REMEMBER

Caring for a relative living with dementia is not an easy ask. As dementia progresses the behaviours and symptoms are likely to become more and more challenging.

There are a number of organisations that can help in supporting in you to look after yourself as a carer or to facilitate in getting you help. You can start by going to your GP or your local Social Services for advice. Alternatively contact us and we will do our utmost in guiding and directing you to the most appropriate support available.

Carers need to challenge stigma so that you can use your voice to help yourself and in doing so become a better carer for the person you are supporting or looking after.

Meri Yaadain CiC, Girlington Centre
Girlington Road BRADFORD BD8 9NN

www.meriyaadain.co.uk

info@meriyaadain.co.uk

@MeriYaadainCiC

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