

Health Messaging for All

Insight workshop
Mile End Community Project

24th June 2021

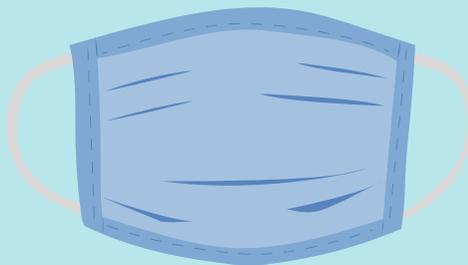


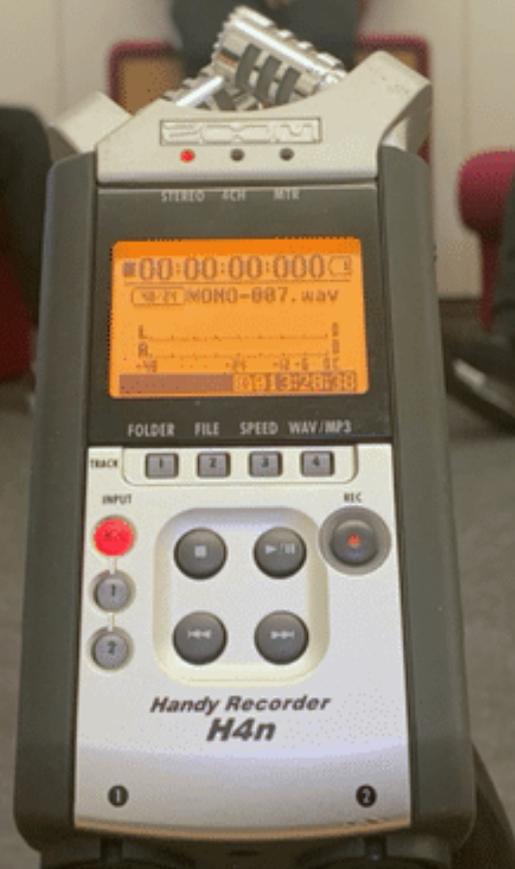
About the participants

Number of participants: **5**

The group is made up of people who are members of the Mile End Community Project (MCP) in Tower Hamlets. MCP delivers a range of social and educational activities for Tower Hamlets residents who may not otherwise engage due to social, cultural, racial or economic challenges. Many of their members are young people with mental health conditions. There were 5 participants at the workshop.

The language used at the workshop was English. All participants were male and 19 years old. 4 identified as British Bangladeshi, and 1 as British Moroccan. 4 are in higher education, and 1 is in full time employment. They are all residents of Tower Hamlets.





COVID-19 HEALTH
MESSAGING PROJECT

We asked participants to tell us what their main sources of Covid-19 health information are



Main sources of Covid-19 Info



Twitter



Instagram



TikTok



WhatsApp

Accessibility



All participants found most health information about Covid-19 accessible and easy to understand.

Understanding Covid-19 health messages

We asked participants to tell us where they got their info from and what the barriers were



Almost all on social media (Instagram, twitter) - screen sharing BBC and 3rd party information.



Twitter/Instagram - world is revolving away from getting information directly from the main media outlets because it is misleading.

On Whatsapp, it is difficult to validate the source if it is from a family member or friend. It doesn't have the same weight as something that has been backed up and gone through this vigorous world of social media.

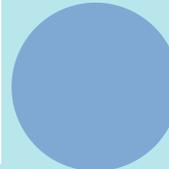


WhatsApp - families would send it - Chinese whispers things get changed. Take it with a pinch of salt

Certain correspondence have built up a trust for giving non-misleading information. Instagram - SkyNews. When you see 60/70 people sharing something, you think it is credible.

If he felt like a post was not credible, he would verify it. What usually happens is if a major piece of news comes on social media it will be challenged within social media and then backed up by other individuals and sources.

Misleading information is often circulate around as a joke. E.g 5G causing Covid/cancer. People make fun of it. There is a clear discrepancy between information that is real or going around as a joke



There was a a voicenote on WhatsApp circulating about 'knowing someone working from within the NHS" and his cousin fell for it, and he told him it was fake, and it ended up being fake.



Understanding Covid-19 health messages

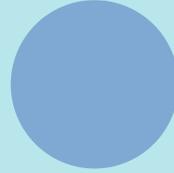
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Yes I grasp it. I accept whatever happens and learn to live with it.
Everyone has adapted - it's a part of life. It's a normal thing.
I have forgot what normal life used to feel like - I accept this is my life now

Who else qualifies for official information?

Social media - blue tick with lots of followers. More inclined to believe someone with a larger following because they wouldn't put something out there where they would potentially get backlash. Not celebrities so much, but specifically news pages gives people trust. If someone has a lots of likes and comments, they would believe it.



Finding info out there is easy as it has been shared on so many platforms and finding news now is easier than any point in history. But accessible messaging has not been provided promptly.

You can find anything you are looking for on the internet, but it's about whether it is credible or not. Even the most credible sources, you question whether it is true or not. We have to trust it, but less people were getting tested at the start, so of course there were less cases. Now, so many more people are getting tested so there are more cases. It doesn't accurately reflect the situation - it misrepresents the truth.

December time - many tweets about Boris stopping restrictions for Christmas. He knows Britain is not an Islamic country, but doesn't understand why for this one tradition everything opened up, but for Eid he made sure everyone stayed at home, and didn't celebrate. At Christmas cases were the highest as he eased restrictions - twitter was going crazy about this.

We asked participants to tell us how lockdown has been for them

Initially thought Covid would be for 3/4 weeks. Very weird but adapted and got used to situation. In a way he enjoyed staying at home, but not seeing friends and playing football was hard. He got used to it, but at times it was very challenging.

On the whole, he has enjoyed Covid - gets to chill at home, play games all day. Has a family business so they made a lot of money over lockdown because of takeaways. So overall he enjoyed it.

Last couple of years, monumental change in way everyone lives, breaths, works. Every aspect of life has changed. The way society works, the ways things are governed.

Life has changed - Met so many people because of the way things have changed. Last 2 years are meant to be prime time to explore world. He feels like he is a bit behind.

Affected everyone. There are positives to come out of it. E.g being forced to spend time indoors, spend time with kids. Negatives - missing school, people made redundant from work/furloughed.

Perception of Covid-19

1 At start, everything was new, nobody experienced it. Trusted Boris Johnson/government, but over time it has lead to a lot of mistrust between the government and younger people - saying lockdown will end, then it doesn't

2 Heard people say that if people die, for example of a car accident, they write in the report that they have died of Covid - so maybe everything has been an overestimate. We have been told it is a big thing, but maybe not as big as they say

3 Go back to start - fed a lot of info from higher up about how Covid is not a big thing. Originally at beginning, the majority of young people trusted information that came out, but as time has gone on, he feels personally that so much info has been misleading. So there is no trust in that anymore.

4 Misleading information out there. Young people always have the initial trust towards what they hear from the older generations, and they say that time makes you wise. But the amount of info that there is now on social media (unlike newspapers back in the day). Can now see that a lot of the info we are being fed is misleading. You can go back to the videos of Boris Johnson/government/press releases and you can see how far off they are, which for young people is disillusioning that some many high ranking people can make so many fatal errors. This is a massive reason the perception around Covid will be so negative amongst young people.

TRUST IN GOVERNMENT

WE ASKED PARTICIPANTS TO
RATE THEIR TRUST IN THE
GOVERNMENT OUT OF 10

3

Don't trust anything they say because been wrong on so many occasions. Can't keep lying. Stuff will go wrong - hard to estimate. If the government had been strict, not eased things before, we could have been out earlier and then not got back into lockdown. Do it in a controlled way. Partial policing if you need it. Don't just say these are the rules, and then allow people to break the rules without consequences.

3/4

There are much better ways to do it. If you think of government officials, they have degrees from Oxford/Cambridge and are the elite, and supposed to have high IQs. They are supposed to manage the whole country, but people like us, just about to go to university can think of better ideas than the government.

6

I still trust the government. I still follow them, but in the back of my head I don't know whether it is right. I have to follow them. I do trust them. You have to trust them.

2

Expense report came out about Pritti Patel spending loads of money (70,000 on eyebrows). Social media went crazy. The youth see it on social media. This is what they are doing with our money. During the 'Eat out to Help out', the government spent money on a yacht at the same time. Pre-pandemic, my trust in government was very high, but now it is 2.

4

First lockdown everyone listened, but when is started to ease, trust became lower, and fear of Covid became less, just as cases were rising, and probably cases are higher now.

What information is still not clear

What will happen in the future - things are so unclear but he has stopped caring, it's normal now so he doesn't think about where it is heading anymore.

How Covid came about still hasn't been established - there are many conspiracy theories. So many people lost lives, society has been transformed, developed a vaccine and vaccinated our entire country but we still don't know how it came about which is baffling

His worry is about the future - what will happen - with university - doesn't know whether it will open and he can go back in. His university doesn't even know so how can they tell him.

Some of the rules - inside restaurant, wear a mask, then take it off when you sit down. Doesn't make sense.

Making
Information
more
accessible

Who is responsible for how universities will be? The government don't know. When you are in that power, you know the consequence of your decisions, and they should get things right - they get paid a lot of money. They have to make decisions for the whole country, and have so many resources available to help them make the decision, and they make the wrong ones, so they have to take the backlash.

Future not clear - the government advisors are not clear anymore. Different types of advisors - scientific, health, environmental. The advisors don't even know what information they are giving out now

Roadmap out of lockdown was supposed to be 'irreversible' - said by Boris - not going to go back into lockdowns, but then hearing the opposite from his advisors, that in the winter when our immune systems are weak we might go back into a certain type of lockdown. In the future, he would prefer to be in lockdown for longer and know that when restrictions end that we will not go back into another lockdown, than be released, and have some freedom and then being chucked back into lockdown.

We asked participants did the Council make information available to you

The most he saw in Tower Hamlets was a couple of billboards, and on a bus. He goes out a lot and hasn't seen much around Tower Hamlets around Covid - all it is, is 'wear mask, stay insides, work from home' - they already knew that, it is nothing different. He doesn't know what they could have done as he doesn't know whether Tower Hamlets, as a local authority can be trusted based on past decisions on other things. Everyone would have taken it with a pinch of salt, as it is not as reliable as an entire news broadcaster would be. They could have done more, but doesn't think it would have been worth their time and resources.

He thinks that everyone gets their information from elsewhere, so doesn't think the Council's resources would have been used by anyone but they still should have done more. They didn't give them any information, but they got it from elsewhere.

Huge mobilisation of community e.g. looking after neighbours, getting shopping - he thinks that is more down to the good hearts of the people not the public authority.

He thinks that whatever information Mile End Community Project got through the Council, they would have got the information faster through social media. It is the way the world works. By the time the organisation gets and distributes it, half the world already know about it - so it not the most efficient way of passing information around now.

We asked participants did the Council make information available to you

For months we had zero cases. He saw this easily by going onto social media, but if a community was to share this information – you would have to print of leaflets, distribute it, and it would take so long. But he can just open his phone and read about it in 5 seconds.

If leaflets come through their door from the local authority, they don't read it – just kick it to the side. He looks at the picture but doesn't read it. The convenience of social media means that they don't go with the intention of reading news, maybe to look at something funny, but in end, they read news, and it is concise. With leaflets, there are endless paragraphs of reading to summarise one point, and in social media, there is one line for a statement and if you want to read more about it, you can click onto it. Leaflets are not appealing to pick up and read.

A forwarded message from a community hub would not provide a good source of Covid information – if it was big Covid news, they would hear about it through social media first. If they received a text message about something they didn't know about, they would question the source especially if they hadn't heard about it on social media already.

By the time leaflets are given out, the information could be out of date.

We asked participants how could Covid-19 health information be more accessible



Information should be concise, bold, so people can read more into it if they want. It has to be short, nice, concise, and interesting. Has to catch an eye. E.g when Sky news tweet, they have an alarm with an emoji so he would look at that, but a newspaper/article is long and he can't be bothered reading that.

The youth - there is so much going on, their days are jam packed with so many things, they don't have time to go and read a leaflet. The bold text, alarm emojis signify importance and that is what they will pay attention to.

Attention span is smaller than previous generations. If after 5 seconds it is not interesting, they will just keep on scrolling.