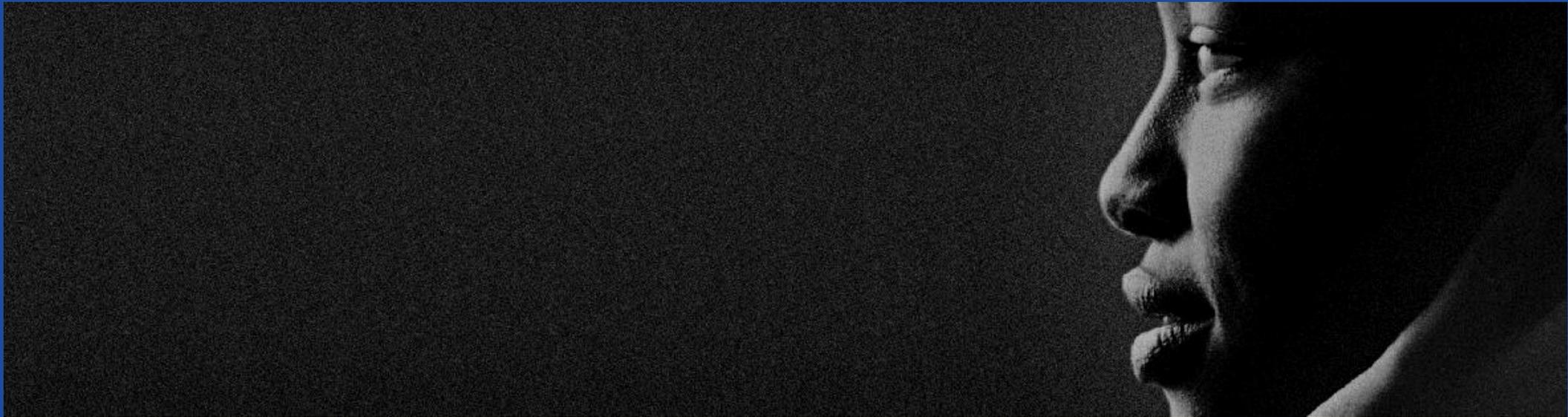


Wellbeing Workshop

Early Career Research Conference 8<sup>th</sup> July



Dr Jenny Douglas

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The Open  
University



# Why do we need to focus on Black academics health & wellbeing?

- Black people's health has been ignored for too long
- Black people have been invisibilised in health studies
- Limited data on health issues which affect Black people



# Data on Black People's Health & Wellbeing

- Generally speaking there are limited data that explore intersections of gender, 'race', ethnicity and social class.

# Limitations of some current research on health and ethnicity



- Does not consider 'race', gender and ethnicity
- Research on poverty and social class does not consider ethnicity or gender.
- Research is often focused on ethnicity or gender and does not consider intersections of gender and 'race'
- Research in ethnicity and health must be undertaken which considers a range of intersections.
- Appropriate methodologies must be developed which enable more meaningful and relevant research which highlights where there may be issues of concern – e.g. maternal mortality.



# COVID 19

- **Shone a light on existing, longstanding health inequities.**
- **Can't think about COVID 19 without thinking about Black Lives Matter**
- **BME communities make up 14% of population but make up 34% of critically ill covid sufferers and BME people are twice as likely to die from COVID 19 than their white counterparts**
- **Majority of doctors – GPs and hospital doctors who died were from a BME background- many coming from overseas**

## Black and Minority Ethnic Academics and COVID19

- At greater risk of COVID 19 and subsequent long covid.
- Although we may be able to work from home we may have family members who are frontline workers in health and social care and transport services.
- Many of us have seen friends, colleagues and family members become ill and die from COVID 19 both here and in the wider diaspora
- Limited opportunities to celebrate the lives of those who have departed.
- Wider impact of a hostile environment impacts us – Grenfell, Windrush Betrayal, police brutality



# Covid and Higher Education

- COVID and BLM shone a light on racial inequalities in higher education
- BME academics experiencing racial inequalities in higher education and also being drawn on to input to higher education responses to Black Lives Matter.
- Many BME academics are on short term, fractional contracts and at greater risk of unemployment.
- Universities response to financial pressures caused by COVID—redundancies, reduced working week.
- Calls for research proposals on COVID 19 and BAME communities: NIHR/UKRI. Concerns raised after no Black principal investigators awarded funding.



# How can we build research capacity?

- We need to train the next generation of BME researchers to lead on intersectional research
- BUT
- Leading Routes in their Broken Pipeline report highlighted "over a three year period just 1.2% of the 19,868 studentships awarded by all UKRI research councils went to Black or Black Mixed students and only 30 of those were from Black Caribbean background.



# Obstacles to overcome in building research capacity?

- Research studentships
- Research grants
- Membership of Funding Councils
- Membership of Advisory Groups of Journals – citing BME scholars and researchers
- BME researchers and scholars recognised as legitimate producers of knowledge.



# Black women professors?

- Only 35 in UK- we need to ensure that Black women have access to opportunities to become researchers and professors.
- In relation to research grants, Black and minority ethnic researchers were less likely to be awarded research grants as principal investigators than their white colleagues ([UK Research and Innovation data](#), THES, 2020).

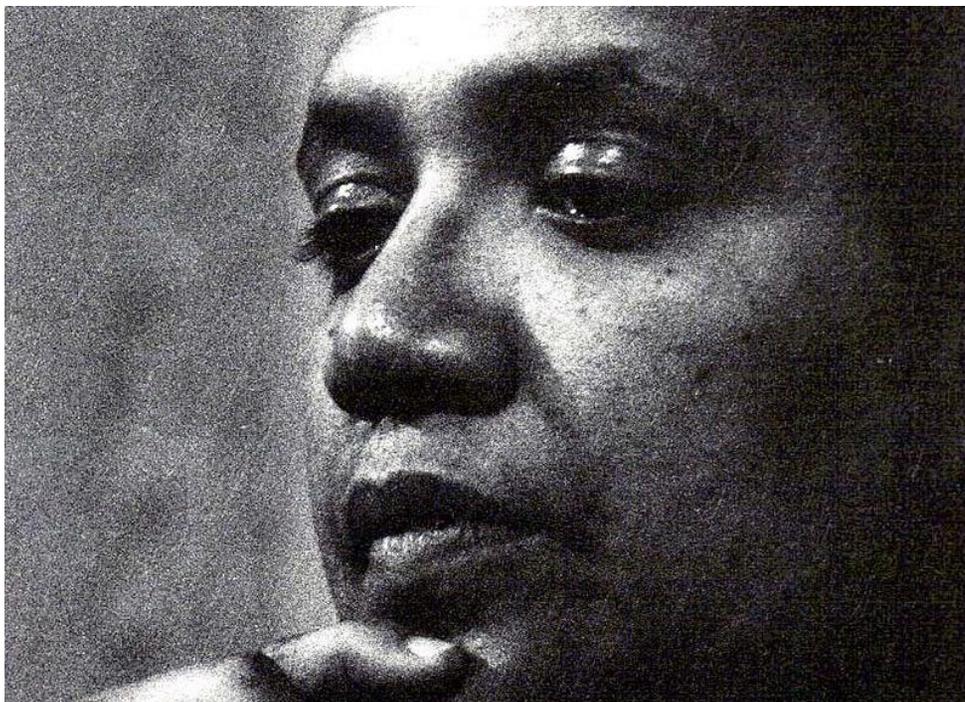


# WE ARE TIRED AND WEARY!!

- We need to place priority on our own health and wellbeing.



# Audre Lorde



Caring for myself is not self-indulgence it is self-preservation and that is an act of political warfare



How are you caring for yourself?

## Importance of safe spaces and networks for Black and minority ethnic staff

To share our experiences of racism and discrimination within academia without having to explain or justify what we feel.

To discuss different perspectives without negative feedback or being belittled.

To acknowledge that we will not have the same perspectives.

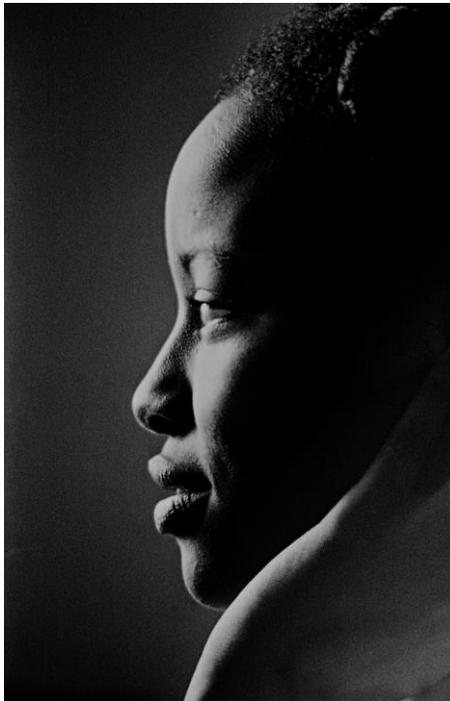
To recognise that we will not experience racism and discrimination in the same way because we all occupy different social locations.

To bring Black feminist epistemologies, post-colonial perspectives, anti-racist perspectives, decolonial perspectives and critical race perspectives.

To be able to mentor and support each other.



Black Women's Health & Wellbeing Research Network  
[www.open.ac.uk/black-womens-health-and-wellbeing](http://www.open.ac.uk/black-womens-health-and-wellbeing)





# Thank You!

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