



WISE MILTON

MENTAL HEALTH STORY BY YOUNG PEOPLE
INSPIRED BY THE EFFECTS OF THE PANDEMIC

**Creating Mental
health awareness by
BME young people
through Story Telling**



ILLUSTRATED BY

Joseph

WRITTEN BY

*Manju, Ethan, Kaylah, Ben, Jacob, Kenneth
and Derek*

A big thank you to YouthLink Scotland, Mara the Story Teller and Reham @Transform you now for all the support .

Thank you also to Helene Rodger and Jonathan Ssentamu for supporting the young people to open up and talk freely about this hard subject.

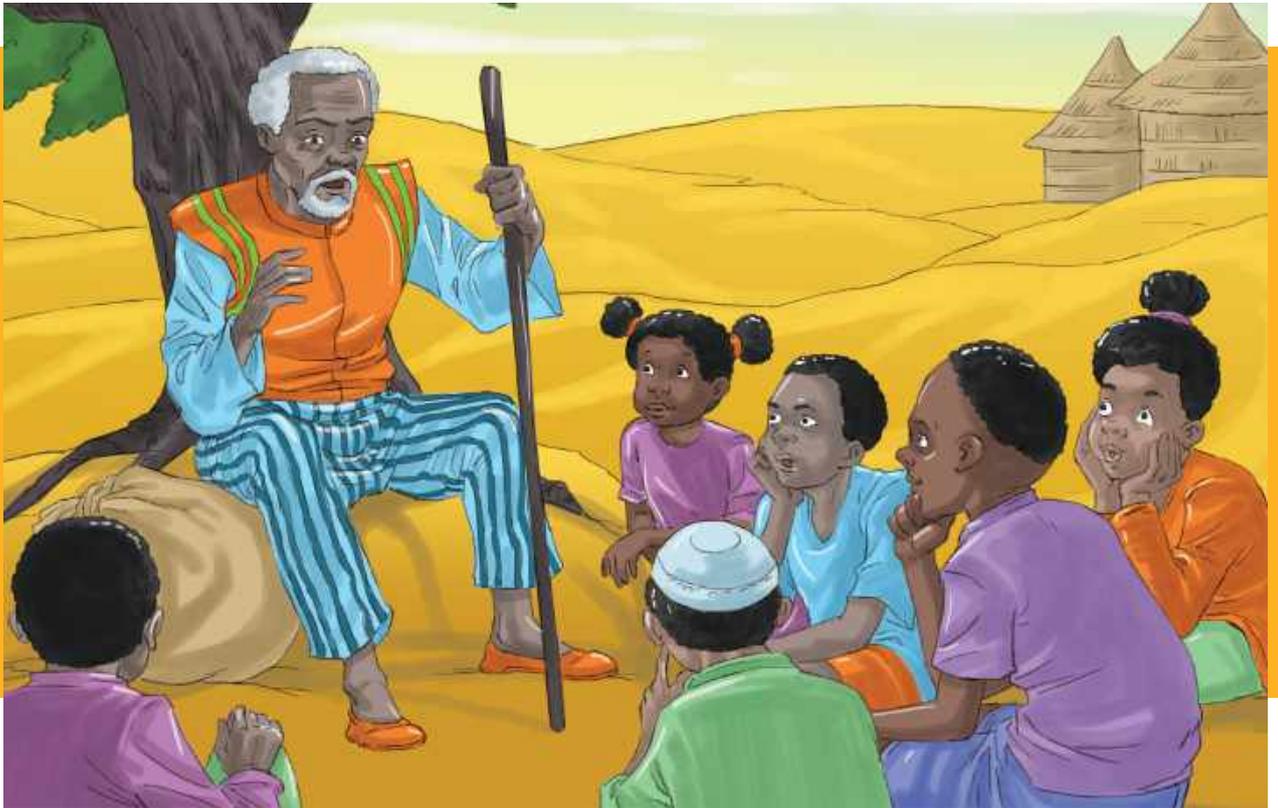
This fantastic Story was written by BME young people in Edinburgh in order to raise awareness of the issues they face that may cause stress. Having cultural barriers plays a big part of how mental health is perceived and either seek help or not.

Mental health problems are more common among BME communities than the general population yet providing culturally sensitive mental health services is something that is hard to come by.

It is normal to feel sad, stressed, scared or angry, but talking to people you trust can help. If you are overwhelmed talk to a health professional. Explore what are those cultural barriers that may be stopping you from getting the support you need

In partnership with





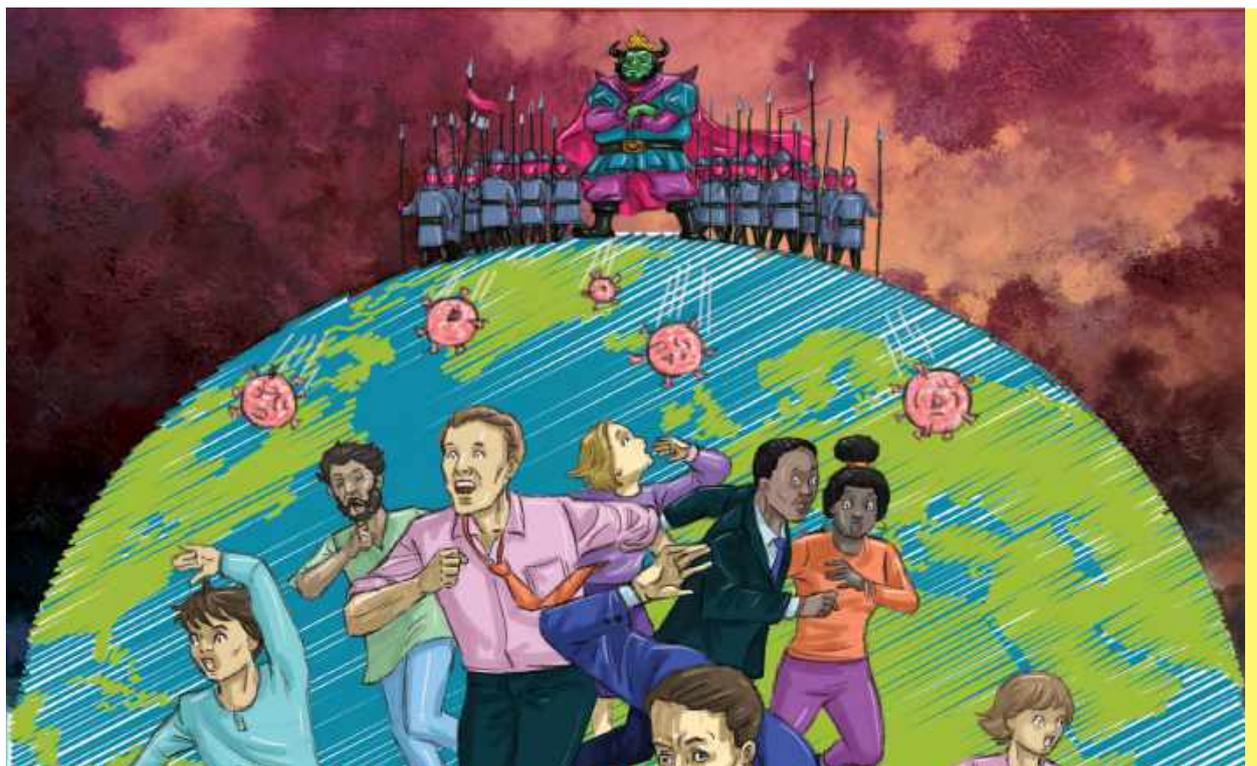
Under the Big Oak Tree sat Manju, Ben, Jacob, Ethan, Kenneth, Joseph and Kaylah. They liked to come here and play and talk. It was their hang out place after school. They saw an old man walking towards them, they are taught to be helpful and kind. The Oldman looked tired. Jacob intrigued by the stranger felt safe enough to approach him. Even though they had been taught to avoid strangers they were confident as they were a large group surely this old man could do them no harm? Being respectful to elders was part of their village values and so Jacob offered him some water because he looked very tired. Milton thanked Jacob for the water. After he had finished drinking, the boys started to congregate around Milton asking him what brings him here. I was displaced by a small tiny virus called the Corona King, I feel very lucky to have escaped the corona king and so I decided to go village by village enjoying the simple but finer things in life. Oh dear, a small virus can do no such harm? Asked Manju

Well well, you wouldn't think so, would you? Milton answered

This tiny king had a crown on his head and came with an army of fearless soldiers. They had but one intention, to kill! They moved swiftly across the world spreading through coughs and handshakes, using the humans themselves to spread the disease. The entire world was filled with fear. The rulers insisted the populations locked themselves into their own homes. They were forbidden to go to work, forbidden from going outside, forbidden even from seeing their family and friends. Only the doctors and those delivering food were allowed to go out to ensure the health and safety of the people. It was such a stressful time for many. Enough about me boys and girls, how about you tell me about yourselves, what brings you under this beautiful tree?

We usually come here to play after school and hear about what others have been up to. Said Jacob

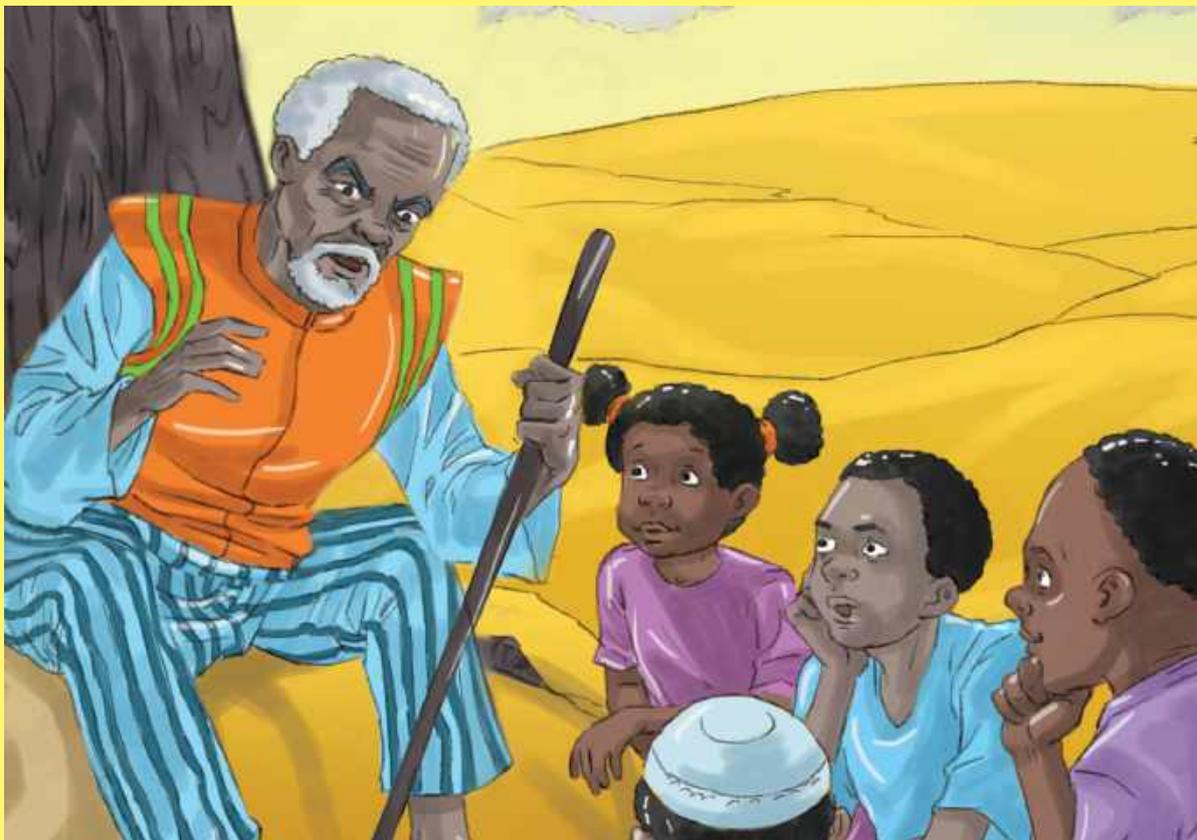
But you look tired. You probably need a little sleep just like I do now. said, Milton Well, Jacob started to speak, actually, I haven't been sleeping well' Why? Milton interrupted



Jacob looking a little sad started to speak. 'I lost my big brother a month ago and ever since it happened, I haven't felt the same, I often feel sad and want to cry, I also want to be seen to be strong, I don't know what to do. I am constantly tired from thinking and not sleeping so I come here to hang out with my friends and forget.

My child, Milton said with compassion, I am very sorry for your loss. I want you to know that it's okay to feel sad and it is ok to cry. When we lose someone we love, it's never easy, and everyone acts and reacts different to loss of a loved one. Don't feel bad about it, it's good that you are talking about it with your friends and It's also nice that you have good friends around you. Always ask for help if you need it

"What if I am scared or I am too shy to ask for help?" Manju said





Dear child, Milton said, if you were truly shy, you wouldn't have had the courage to ask your question. Shyness is not something that you struggle with. Shyness is something negative you've been told by others and you've come to believe it is true. It is a way of suppressing your voice. It is a negative thought. Many people are told they are useless or a failure or not strong enough or not smart enough, they should be more like so and so, and all those things, it is not true and they have to overcome these negative thoughts including shyness as it prevents you from getting the help you need. The universe is voice activated young lady always speak good things about yourself and they shall come true.

Can I ask you a question too? Derek pop his head out
Of course Child. Milton answered,
Derek with a shy voice started to speak. I am going to high school in the next village and I really worried about making new friends, I fear that everyone will know everyone and may be they already have their own friend groups and I feel like no group will want to accept me' My mum has told me that it is ok but she doesn't really understand my anxiety.

Ethan jumped in to share his experience of high school. I am not going to lie, he said. When I first went to high school I didn't have friends straight away. I also didn't have the nice branded trainers that most of my peers had, I was bullied for almost three years. It brought my mental health down and became depressed, dropped out of football and always enjoyed going back home after school because in school I felt threatened by everyone. This led me to not get involved in activities in school because of fear of the bullies. Having a strong relationship with my mom who would encourage me through the hard times helped me a lot. I also had a few friends who genuinely liked me for who I was not what I had. Through this experience I have learnt to be a good friend and good listener to others.



Boys and girls, Milton said, See, I have just come from a far far away land, and I am still travelling, first I want you to know that making good friends isn't easy. Look at this big tree, it took a long time of watering, nurturing and love to grow to this extent, so are friendships. The best relationships take time to get stronger. Secondly, it's very important that you stay true to yourself. Don't change your behaviour so that other people accept you. If you stay true to yourself then like-minded people will be attracted to you and then those people will become your friends. In the meantime, try your best not to offend anyone and be friendly. Oh I better get a move on to the next village, it's getting a little late.

Oh Baba, it will take you a very long time to walk to the next village, The gates of the next village don't open till tomorrow morning, the ruler is very strict and won't allow people in at night. You probably haven't had any dinner, My mum loves having visitors and she always cook a big humongous feast. I am sure she wouldn't mind you coming over to our house.





Ah I am sure your mum is a very nice lady, Milton continued, but I am not sure she wants someone who is not her own family showing up to dinner. And the gates in the next village, sound like the times of the Corona King. Where everyone had a sort of curfew.

What happened? Derek asked in shock.

Hmmmm Milton in deep thought said. "Well, when the gates were closed, there were many people who did not belong to the village, the rulers were not happy that they had stayed . And now that the people had no where to go, they were scared because they were not supposed to be there. Some didn't have the proper legal papers to allow them to stay permanently. A few had simply stayed too long after visiting friends and family but others had fled problems in their own lands and come to mine to start a new, more prosperous and safer life. They were afraid of being punished or being sent back to the terrors from which they had fled. Others continued to work to ensure that the village continued to thrive, but their anxieties caused them to feel exhausted, both mentally and emotionally.

What did they do?" Derek continued

"They had two choices, Milton was reminded of the state of confusion, they could do nothing, just be patient while staying with their friends or family and continue to receive their help with kindness, shelter and food. This was the best decision they could make given the circumstances, but it was difficult because their friends or families had to stretch their money and food for everyone and sometimes they felt guilty about that. But hospitality is important in our land, as I see it is here, and by keeping safe and staying at home, until the Corona King had no power.

What was the second choice?" Jacob asked



Ah, If they were out of money or didn't have a place to stay, they could ask for support from the town. Thankfully our land had shelters, a small and simple place for them to stay with food for them to use to eat. But people in that village are proud, they do not like to ask for support or help from others but by refusing to ask for help, it further isolated people from the support and even services that are readily available to them. Those that asked for assistance were able to receive food and shelter as well as advice from people who worked in the shelters on what to do next. It was difficult at first because they were uncomfortable and it made them feel scared at times. But they benefited from a network of support that they did not realise existed.

What did they do when they were stressed or sad? Jacob wondered

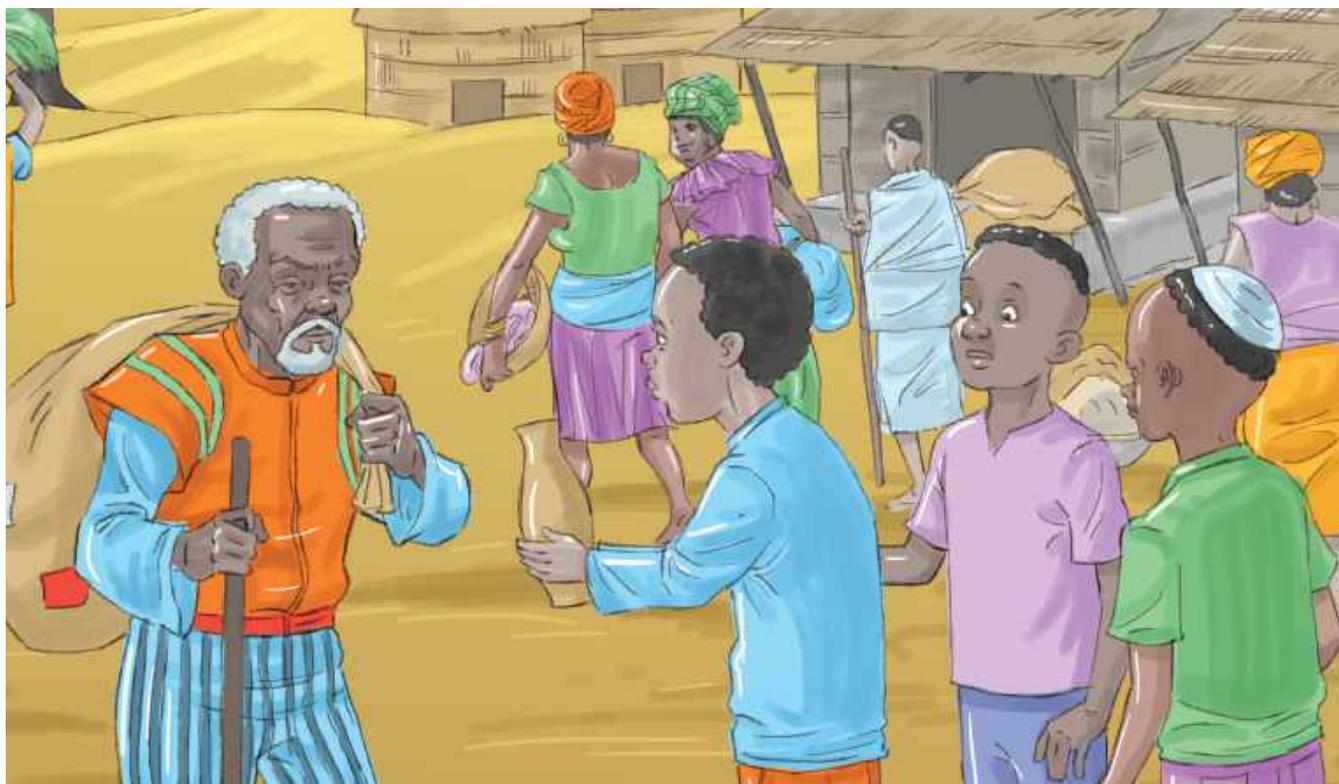
Milton pointed at Ben and said. Well may be let's ask what he would do ?

Well when I am feeling sad and stressed, I like to listen to my nice music, eat yummy food, go get some fresh air and meet up with my friends. Ben said



Milton smiled at how amazing the young people expressed themselves. See, he told them, sounds like you people were there with me, that's exactly what they did. Thanks for sharing that, very wise advice Ben

Wow, Milton exclaimed, I am glad I came to this village, you younger people are wiser than many will think, Thank you for trusting me with your stories, In whatever you do, remember that you are brave, you are strong, you are confident and you have got this.



The old man loved this village, they had such a great community spirit. As they approached Ben's house, the sun was beginning to set. Ben run to his mum before everyone got home and told her all about the wise words that Milton had shared with the young people and explained that he had invited him for dinner. As Milton and the other young people approached Ben's house, they exchanged pleasantries and Ben's mum welcomed him in the house. They enjoyed the dinner together and even though the adults had their own questions to ask the old man, it was very late and everyone needed their bed.

They all organised to come back when the day was brighter.

As he went to sleep, Milton reflected on the hospitality he received from the villagers, young and old.

The old man was reminded of the time despite the Corona King's rule, kindness, compassion and support also spread throughout the lands.





A few things to do when you feel stressed, sad, lonely or anxious

Write it out

Go for a walk or get some fresh air

Hold onto someone

Talk to a friend

Paint your nails, have a bubble bath

Phone a good friend

Talk to a trusted person

Drink cold water

Watch something funny, a movie, play a game

Practice some deep breathing.

Play some calming music

Play some dance music and. Dance like you don't care