

A Holistic Approach To Cancer

MWC Tea & Chat

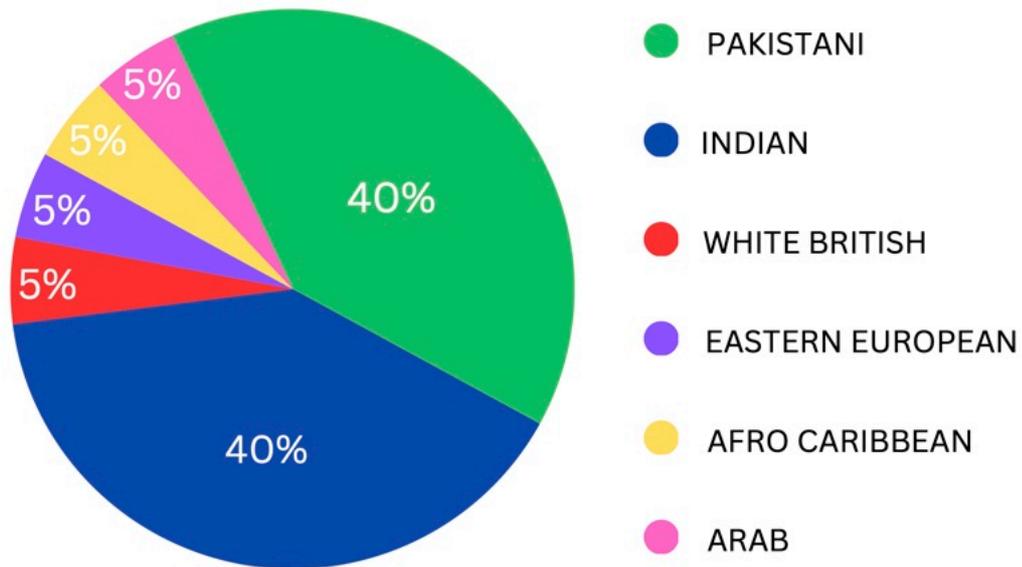
Overview

The “Tea & Chat” session held on 18 September 2024 focused on exploring a holistic approach to cancer care. Led by Saima Malik, Saima Malik is a holistic therapist whose journey into healing began with her own battle against cancer over 20 years ago. That life-changing experience sparked a deep exploration into the connection between mind, body, and spirit. What she learned through her recovery not only helped her heal, it inspired her to help others do the same. Today, Saima combines empathy, experience, and holistic practices to support others on their paths to wellness, believing that true healing comes from within.



This event brought together women from Bradford to talk about how complementary therapies can be used alongside standard cancer treatments. The aim was to share information, listen to each other's experiences, and support people to make informed choices about their care.

Ethnicity of Participants



Total attendees were 79 women



The group had an open and honest discussion about the pros and cons of using alternative approaches alongside treatments like chemotherapy and radiotherapy.

A variety of different views were shared, these included:

- Some were in favour of combining approaches and spoke about how things like nutrition, mindfulness, and gentle therapies had helped them feel better during or after treatment.
- Some were unsure about conventional treatments, raising concerns about the effects of chemotherapy and radiotherapy on the body.
- Others felt a balanced view was important, saying both medical treatment and complementary care had a role to play, depending on the person.



There was not full agreement, but everyone respected each other's opinions. The main message was that cancer care should be personal and based on individual needs.

The session covered a wide range of subjects, including:

- Common cancer treatments: surgery, chemotherapy, radiotherapy, immunotherapy, and palliative care

- Diet and nutrition: anti-inflammatory foods, staying hydrated, and using supplements safely
- Mind and body approaches: meditation, yoga, counselling, and peer support
- Physical activity: gentle exercise and rehab after treatment
- Complementary therapies: massage, acupuncture, aromatherapy, and herbal remedies (with medical advice)
- Immune health: looking after your gut, sleep, and stress levels
- Spiritual care: prayer, meditation, and support from faith leaders or chaplains
- Lifestyle changes: cutting out toxins, spending time in nature, and balancing work and rest
- Learning and speaking up: encouraging women to understand their options and ask questions
- Teamwork in care: bringing together doctors, dietitians, and holistic practitioners

Everyone was reminded to speak to their doctor or specialist nurse before trying any new therapies or making big changes to their lifestyle.



Participant Feedback

Feedback forms and verbal comments provided valuable insights into attendees' experiences. Women who attended gave very positive feedback. Many said they felt more informed, supported, and connected after the session:

- High appreciation for the safe and respectful space provided for sharing.
- A strong interest in learning more.
- Positive responses to the variety and depth of topics covered.

Here are some comments and feedback:

- *"It helped me see I'm not alone. Other women are thinking and feeling the same things I am."*
- *"I feel more confident to speak up at my hospital appointments now."*
- *"I liked that it wasn't just about the medical side, it was about the whole person."*
- *"This was the first time I've been able to share my doubts and ask honest questions."*
- *"I really learned something today, especially about food and inflammation."*
- *"Please hold more events like this. It made such a difference to hear real experiences."*
- *"I'm leaving with more knowledge and more hope."*
- *"It was great to hear from women in Bradford, it felt local and personal."*
- *"The bit on emotions and the immune system really made me think."*
- *"I'll be telling my sister and friends about this. We need more of this in our communities."*

- *“It was reassuring to hear others share similar fears and hopes, I don’t feel so alone on this journey anymore.”*
- *“I’ve learned that healing isn’t just physical, it’s emotional and spiritual too.”*
- *“It helped me see that even though I’m following treatment, I can also take care of myself in other ways.”*
- *“I’m leaving today feeling heard, hopeful, and informed.”*

**Report created by the Tea & Chat
participants supported by the MWC Team**

