

# ‘What does that even mean?’ Intersectional approaches in health research



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- **“intersectional approaches help health and care providers shift their focus from people’s behaviours to identifying and addressing ways of working that create and reinforce inequalities and poor experiences of care..”**
  - Loreen Chikwira, The King’s Fund blog, August 2023
  - <https://www.kingsfund.org.uk/blog/2023/08/back-to-basics%E2%80%93understanding-lived-experience-and-intersectionality-health-and-care>

- “Intersectionality investigates how intersecting power relations influence social relations across diverse societies as well as individual experiences in everyday life. As an analytical tool, intersectionality views categories such as race, class, gender, sexuality, nation, ability ethnicity and age – among others - as interrelated and mutually shaping one another.”
- Hill Collins & Bilge (2020)

# Origins of the term in black women's political activism



# But what would it mean to adopt an intersectional lens in health research?

## Back to basics - understanding lived experience and intersectionality in health and care

 [Equality and diversity](#)



08 August 2023

4-minute read

[3 comments](#)

### Authors



[Loreen Chikwira](#)

There is a well-established case for involving communities and people with lived experience in health and care policy, service design and delivery. NHS England guidance on working in partnership with communities highlights the financial benefits and improvements to quality and health outcomes that working with local communities brings. At The King's Fund, we have [publications](#) and [blogs](#) reinforcing this message and challenging systems to think differently about working with local communities and people with lived experience of services when designing and delivering care. But could this involvement go further? There are people who argue for the use of intersectional approaches in understanding people's lived experience of care in tackling ethnic health inequalities. These intersectional approaches help health and care providers shift their focus from people's behaviours to also identifying and addressing ways of working that create and reinforce inequalities and poor experiences of care.

# But what would it mean to adopt an intersectional lens in health research?

- Centring lived experience (view from below)
  - Challenging single category approaches to health inequalities
  - Prioritising structural determinants of health – power relations and systems of oppression and minoritisation
  - Shifting emphasis from changing people's behaviours to changing systems and practices
  - Using an interdisciplinary approach
  - Politicising research??...
- (Or engaging with the politics of research and knowledge production?)



And what does that mean in practice?

