

People's **Stigma Free** Network: April 2026 Flash Report

21st April 2026 Session Highlights:

Sakoon Mind
share their
story:
challenging
stigma in
South Asian
communities

Mapping how
everyday
conversations
and actions
ripple out to
create
stigma-free
communities

Members
commit to
one action to
challenge
stigma in
their
communities



Featuring:
SAKOON MIND

January Network: Session Snapshot

Core Activities

- **Spotlight: Sakoon Mind**

- Founders Taj and Sandi shared their journey building safe spaces for mental health conversations within South Asian communities, including how informal "coffee therapy" meetups grew into a community charity.

- **Interactive Learning: Ripple Effect Activity**

- Groups explored how small everyday actions and conversations can ripple outward to create more stigma-free communities across workplaces, services, and community spaces.

- **Action Planning**

- Members used Mentimeter to commit to one personal action to challenge stigma, with responses focusing on language, open conversations, and creating supportive environments.



13 attendees

8 returning

Profile: lived experience & professionals
(NHS Health Improvement, third sector organisations, Stigma Free Lanarkshire volunteers, Lanarkshire Links members)

Spotlight Speaker: Sakoon Mind

Sakoon Mind: Challenging Stigma in South Asian Communities

The session featured a spotlight on Sakoon Mind, a charity working to improve mental wellbeing within South Asian communities. Founders Taj and Sandi shared their personal journey of challenging mental health stigma within their community, where conversations around mental health can often feel taboo. Members heard how Sakoon Mind grew from informal "coffee therapy" meetups into a wider movement, highlighting a community need for safe, judgement-free spaces to talk openly about mental health.

Throughout the discussion, Taj and Sandi emphasised the importance of normalising mental health conversations and how one person speaking openly can encourage others to seek support.

What members reflected on:

- The value of hearing lived experience from different cultural contexts
- How creating informal, safe spaces can open up conversations that might otherwise feel impossible
- The importance of culturally relevant approaches to mental health support
- How personal stories can inspire others to speak openly and seek help



Interactive Learning: The Ripple Effect

About the Activity

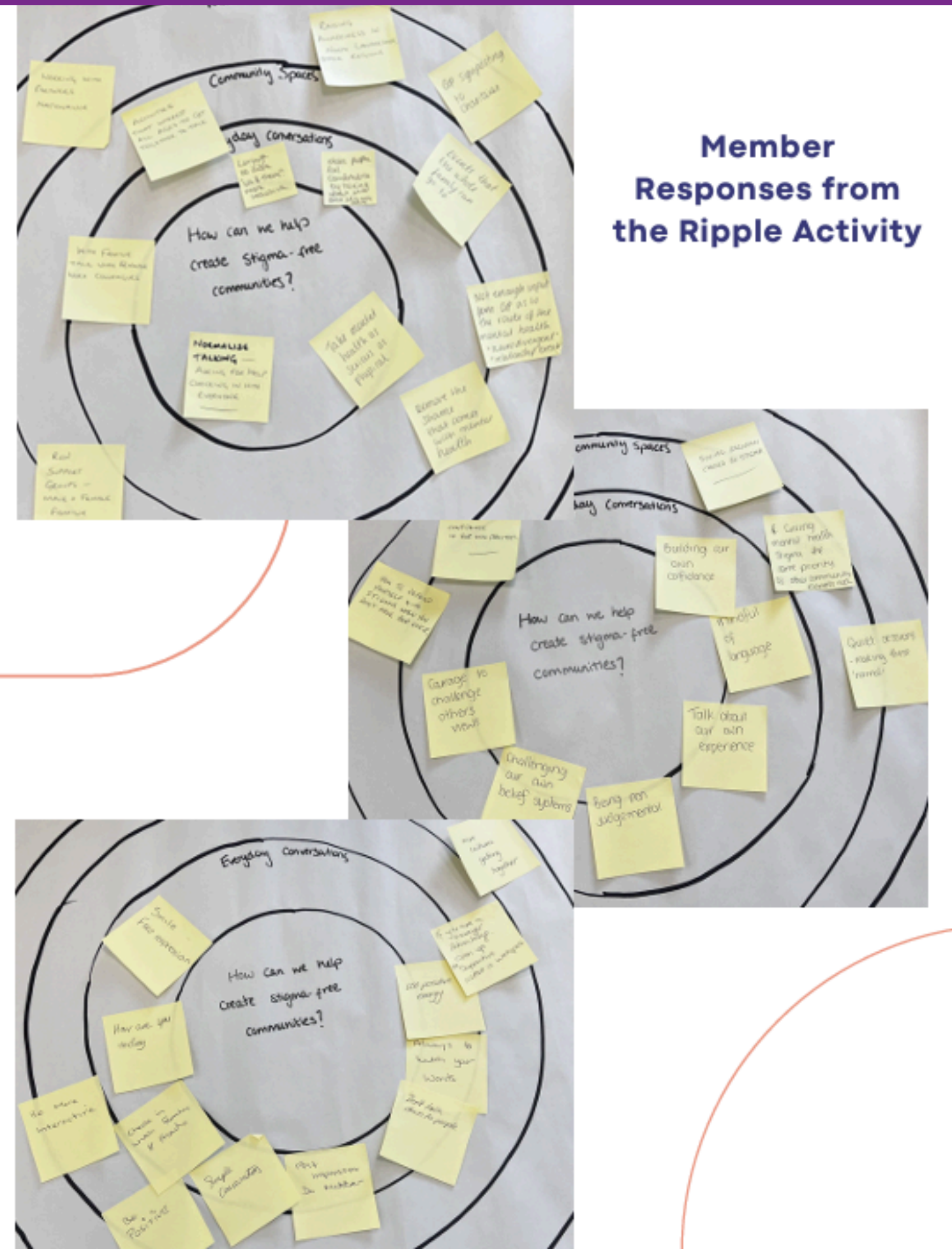
Groups mapped how small everyday actions can spread outward to create stigma-free communities, like ripples in water. Members used a ripple diagram to identify practical actions across three areas:

Everyday Conversations: Using mindful language, checking in with others and normalising mental health discussions with family and colleagues

Community Spaces: Running support groups, creating welcoming environments and raising local awareness

Wider Culture: Challenging stigmatising language and raising awareness across Lanarkshire

Key themes: Compassion, connection and cultural understanding. Small interactions can build trust, reduce isolation and create lasting change.



Member Responses from the Ripple Activity

Action Planning

About the Activity

Following the Ripple Effect activity, members were invited to share one action they could take to create stigma-free communities, using Mentimeter.

What members said:

- Challenge stigmatising language
- Encourage open conversations about mental health
- Be mindful of language and its connotations
- Normalise mental health, treating it as seriously as physical health
- Daily check ins with family, friends and colleagues
- Be open-minded and accept people as they are
- Decrease myths and stereotypes that create stigma
- Work to ensure information and resources are accessible
- Give support to those around people struggling with mental health

Key theme: Small everyday actions and interactions can collectively contribute to creating more stigma-free communities.

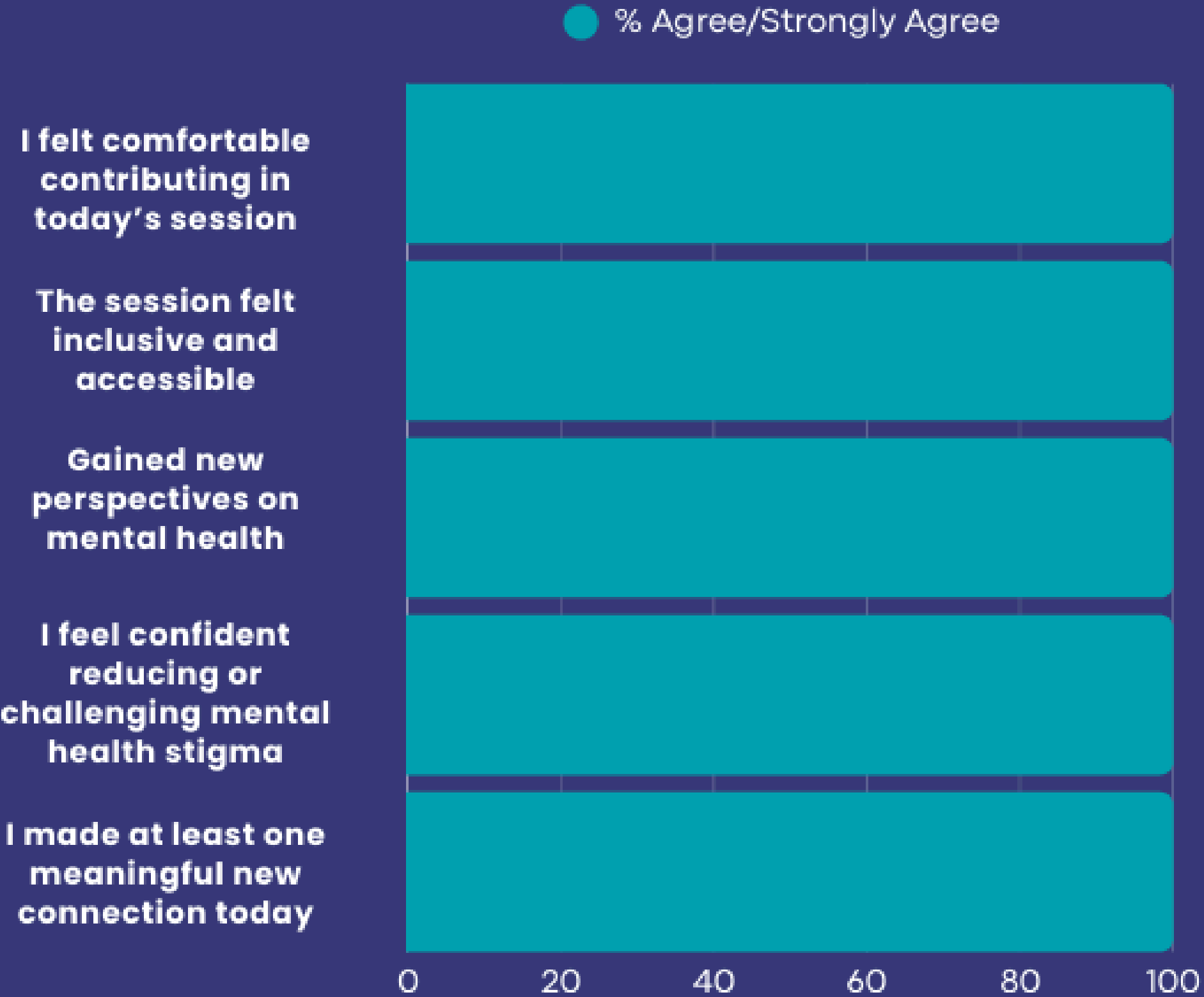


Measuring the Impact: Quantative Findings

Pre and post session responses from 10 members:

- 80% Strongly agreed they felt comfortable contributing (up from 50% pre-session)
 - 70% Strongly agreed they felt confident challenging mental health stigma in their community (up from 60% pre-session)
 - 80% Strongly agreed the session felt culturally inclusive and accessible
 - 80% Strongly agreed they gained new perspectives on mental health
 - 60% Strongly agreed they made at least one meaningful connection during the session
- 100% of members agreed or strongly agreed across all measures following the session.

Figure 1. Post-session experience ratings



Member Feedback: Qualitative Insight

Open Conversation & Emotional Impact: Members described the session as emotional, inspiring and hopeful, valuing the supportive environment for open discussion.

Learning from Lived Experience: Hearing real stories was highlighted as impactful, particularly around stigma across different communities and cultures.

Cultural Understanding: Members valued hearing perspectives from different cultural communities and reflected on the need for more safe, judgement-free spaces

Connection & Shared Understanding: Members appreciated different perspectives and felt conversations deepened their understanding of stigma across communities.

Action & Ongoing Learning: Members expressed a desire to continue stigma conversations in their own communities, workplaces and networks.



Future Directions

Members would like to see:

- More lived experience speakers and community stories
- Continued discussions around stigma in different cultural contexts
- More group discussion and interactive activities
- Practical ways to challenge stigma in workplaces and communities
- Greater awareness-raising within community spaces and services

PSFN will continue to:

- Create safe and inclusive spaces for discussion
- Centre lived experience and community voices
- Support practical, community-led conversations around stigma
- Encourage connection, shared learning and collaboration