

Winner// SHOCKA

This category recognises an inspiring storyteller who – through sharing their experiences – has created positive change within their workplace, industry or community

Speaker, poet, author, rap artist and mental health advocate Shocka's remarkable journey is a testament to his resilience and unwavering determination. Shocka explores this story in ITV's hit documentary *Black Boys Can Cry* and his recently published memoir, *A Section Of My Life*. Using his music to raise awareness and reach those suffering with their own mental health, Shocka shows with grit, resilience and self-reflection you can pull yourself out of even the darkest of places.

After being diagnosed with schizophrenia and being sectioned three times, Shocka discovered the power of healing through self-love and his music. Now he shares his positive energy and message of hope with the next generation.

Shocka tackles the intersections of mental health, race and gender through his work, inspiring thousands of young people through workshops held in schools, and through his public speaking work. Shocka's relatability is what encouraged one sixth-former to seek help. He was suicidal but had never been identified as vulnerable. Thanks to Shocka, the young man is now receiving support.

In 2008 Shocka was part of a successful rap group called Marvell. After they were unceremoniously dropped from their record label, Shocka began to struggle with his mental health, quickly finding himself in hospital.

In 2019, Shocka found the strength to step back into the music industry, this time solo, with one theme on his mind: mental health. Since then he writes about his experiences; shedding light on the reality of being a Black man with schizophrenia, male mental health and, above all, his discovery of the impact of self-love on his mental health.

As a young Black male who grew up in an environment where mental health was not discussed, Shocka has become a huge inspiration to those who are in a similar position and are facing their own struggles. He has inspired and comforted thousands, moving from the fast-paced world of music into the education community.

Achievements

In 2019, Shocka delivered a powerful and captivating TED Talk at TEDxLondon. In 2021 he joined youth mental health charity Beyond as



Shocka takes to the stage to spread the message about mental health

an ambassador, regularly speaking publicly on its behalf. He works closely with its Youth Board to motivate, inspire and engage them in campaigning for better awareness and identifying routes to support.

2023 was a stellar year for Shocka. It was the year that he cemented his place in the education community,

becoming one of the most booked mental health speakers for young people in schools. Also in 2023, Shocka released his memoir, saw his documentary become an ITV hit and got signed to legendary music label Def Jam Records. ■

Judges' comments

- + Shocka speaks from the heart. Simple and important advice for so many people told in an inspiring way.
- + As one of the most booked mental health speakers for young people, it is clear he is one of a kind and an inspiration to many.

HIGHLY COMMENDED

- Sam Smith, Green Ribbon Policing

SHORTLISTED

- Nikki Adebisi, Bounce Black
- Jennifer Elworthy, Jennifer Elworthy Coaching and Consulting
- Yolande Knock, Arup
- Lisa Tarquini, The Menopause Space