



Winner// ANTONIO FERREIRA

This award honours an individual who has shared their personal journey to raise awareness, create change, and inspire others to engage with mental wellbeing initiatives.

António Ferreira is a multi-award-winning mental health activist, public speaker, and disruptor whose voice has become one of the most important in contemporary mental health advocacy. Known for his fearless commitment to anti-racism and systemic change, António challenges how the UK understands and responds to mental ill-health - especially within racialised communities.

His journey began in his teenage years, when he was diagnosed with Undifferentiated Schizophrenia and Emotionally Unstable Personality Disorder and experienced distressing auditory hallucinations. Rather than being defined by those labels, António transformed his experience into purpose - using storytelling as a vehicle for empathy, education, and reform.

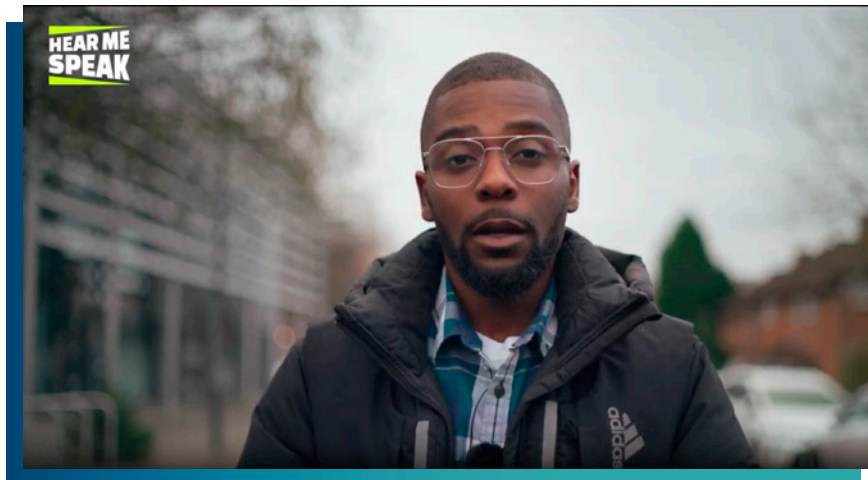


António's storytelling resonates because it is raw, real, and deeply human.

Turning Lived Experience into Collective Change

Currently studying Psychology with Cognitive Neuroscience at the University of Essex, António combines academic rigour with lived experience to influence how mental health policy and practice evolve. He has become a sought-after advisor to public bodies, charities, and private sector organisations, ensuring that the voices of those with lived experience are not only heard but meaningfully integrated into decision-making.

His authenticity and insight have reached national audiences. António appeared alongside the Prince and



António Ferreira, health activist and public speaker

Princess of Wales on BBC Radio 1's Newsbeat for World Mental Health Day, sharing his story and reflections on recovery and representation. He also advised EastEnders on portraying schizophrenia with accuracy and depth - helping to shape one of British television's most nuanced depictions of mental illness.

António continues to lead by example through activism, including a high-profile campaign calling out performative tokenism within the charity sector.

Inspiring Change Through Storytelling

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human. Whether working with the Metropolitan Police to improve training and understanding of community lived experiences, or advising national organisations on anti-racist mental health practices, he creates spaces for empathy and self-reflection.

Those who work with him describe him as professional, compassionate, and profoundly insightful - a speaker who moves audiences not through performance, but through truth. His courage in sharing his journey has helped dismantle stigma, empower others to seek help, and reframe lived experience as expertise. ■

Judges' comments

- + Such important and timely work.
- + Incredibly impactful story. Great to see awareness being built in a space where it's often needed most.

HIGHLY COMMENDED

- Esther Marshall, Sophie Says

SHORTLISTED

- Anita Guru, The Mind Coach
- Lizzie Pickering, Lizzie Pickering Grief Investigation
- Samantha Langford, Gaia Wellbeing