

Countering Racist Bullying

## Paper 7: Metaphorically he was stabbing me

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The majority of my friends are white. Growing up, my friends were of all colours. I've always made friends with whoever's a good laugh and whose company I enjoy. My secondary school was primarily Black and Asian while my primary school was mainly white but I always had equal amounts of friends of all colours.

I think of it in the same way I'd think of having a gay friend, like, 'This is my friend who happens to be gay.' I'm not mates with people because of their colour or whatever – I'm their mate. End of.

I did grow up in a time when some white people were standoffish though, you know, I'd go over to a mate's and his family would say, 'Better lock up the jewellery now he's here.' I didn't really understand it though at the time, but as I got older and got a better vocabulary I didn't like it.

When I was 16, I was at a mate's barbecue in his back garden. There were about 30 adults there and about ten kids. His dad shouts across to me, 'Were you on TV last night?' I was a bit confused and said, 'No?' His dad carried on and said, 'I was sure I saw you on *Crimewatch*.'

It was the first time my blood had boiled like that. I was physically angry. I had tears welling in my eyes. When he looked at me it was like seeing someone you love stabbed. Metaphorically he was stabbing me.

So I left and they shouted me to come back but I just walked away. I was a lost soul; I didn't truly understand what it meant apart from that I was an outsider.

I think it's the first time I realised there were some places I was not allowed to be – as if someone suddenly made me hypersensitive to brushes against unwelcomeness that I'd never had before.

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Source: The Forest Gate 1 by Wain David Williams (Vocalis MC), in *Tell It Like It Is: how our schools fail Black children*, edited by Brian Richardson, Bookmark Publications and Trentham Books, 2005