

Can You See Me?



Lanai Collis, aged 19, is a volunteer at Women against Sexual Exploitation and Violence Speak Up (WASSUP) and is about to start a child nursing degree. She read out a verse she wrote called Can you See Me, speaking about how young people and ethnic minority groups can be seen as invisible.

Spoken Verse

Can you see me when I lie under my sheets, the overwhelming fear surrounding me, but the next day I'm in school promising everything's OK?

Can you see me as a missing child when my groomer has taken me away, or is it easier for you to believe I am just another runaway?

Can you see me for me, when the media turns my passion into aggression?

The relentless ignorant comments, questions on our hair, our culture, just perpetuating our oppression?

Can you see me when I get stopped and searched 9.7 times more than my white counterpart?

Can you see me before I have to die at the hands of a knife, or will I be just another statistic in the chart?

Don't know my daily struggle yet we get stopped blaming the white

Please recognise racism can be much more subtle than the far right

Can you see me when I come here from another country, and my family had no choice but to move?

But I'm told I'm not welcome, the language barrier makes you uncomfortable and my non-British cultural values must be removed.

Can you see me as exploited when society makes out like I consented to sex?

Can you see me when self-harm is only form of control over my life? Please understand my healing will be complex.

Can you see me as a survivor and not tell me to just leave, or ask 'what about the men?'

Shouting down our voice again and again?

Men are victims too of all the issues we speak of, that's what our youth social action is for

These things shouldn't just happen to anyone but we can't forget the facts. It happens to black people and women much, much more

Yes it's sad but we don't want your sympathy

Don't feel guilty for your privilege, use it to give us mobility

I'm not sorry that we all keep talking about the injustices people shouldn't have to face

It will be a whole lot easier if we listen and learn from our communities to maintain a safe space

We appreciate your voluntary intelligent contributions

We need you also to be part of the solutions