

Muslim  Wellness  
F O U N D A T I O N



C O P I N G I N T H E A M E R I C A N M U S L I M C O M M U N I T Y

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# TRAUMA & GRIEF

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[MUSLIMWELLNESS.COM/COMMUNITYTRAUMA](https://www.muslimwellness.com/communitytrauma)

## TRAUMA & GRIEF

# RESOURCES FOR COPING IN THE AMERICAN MUSLIM COMMUNITY

compiled by

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On Friday March 15, 2019 many of us woke up to the incredibly devastating news of the mass shootings at Masjid Al-Noor and Linwood Avenue mosques in ChristChurch New Zealand. This tragedy occurred during Jumuah prayer. We acknowledge the depth and severity of this painful moment as the community of Muslims around the world grieves over this shocking tragedy. In the wake of these calamitous events, many are feeling a range and mix of overwhelming emotions - from anger, confusion and numbness - to grief, sadness, and utter devastation. It is important that we create a space in which we can begin to process the emotional impact of what has occurred and how to cope effectively moving forward. Muslim Wellness Foundation is committed to offering information and resources for those who are seeking support at this most difficult time.

We pray that this toolkit of resources is of benefit to the community and helps facilitate further conversations on faith, wellness and collective healing.

We encourage everyone to make dua/prayer for the loved ones and community members directly affected. May Allah (swt) shower his mercy on the Believers and ease the suffering of hurting hearts and minds. May Allah give us the strength and patience to remain steadfast in the face of this violence. May Allah make it easy. Ameen.

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## WHAT IS GRIEF & LOSS?



According to [helpguide.org](http://helpguide.org):

"Grief is a natural response to loss [and is] the emotional suffering you feel when something or someone you love is taken away." The English word comes from the Old French *grève*, meaning a heavy burden, which makes sense, given that grief can weigh you down with sorrow and other emotions, with both psychological and physical consequences.

[Grieving](#) may also include:

- many painful and diverse emotions or reactions
- stages of grief (denial, anger, bargaining, depression, acceptance)
- a healthy and unique process of finding meaning within the loss
- no set time period in which the loss is processed
- different cultural rituals
- impact psychological, physical, social and spiritual areas
- complicated grieving

### Quick Facts:

- / grief is a natural response to loss
- / a loss can be anything that has value to a person including people, objects, or events
- / grief is different from clinical depression
- / complicated grief happens if a loss is not processed and feels constant and severe
- / symptoms can include:

- |                     |         |              |
|---------------------|---------|--------------|
| / shock & disbelief | / anger | / depression |
| / sadness           | / fear  | / denial     |
| / physical symptoms | / guilt | / isolation  |

### Impacts:



### / what can help?

- / support groups
- / grief counselling
- / talking to friends & family
- / religion or spirituality
- / rituals to process grief
- / journaling about the loss



## How you respond to a particular loss is influenced by a combination of factors:

<b>How the person died</b>	<b>Your response to an unanticipated death — a sudden heart attack, an accident, an act of violence — may be very different from the grief you feel when someone you love dies after a long illness. In the latter case, you may experience anticipatory grief, which occurs before the person’s death. You’re just as devastated when the death happens, but because you started grieving earlier, you may be able to recover sooner.</b>
<b>Your relationship with the person</b>	The closeness of the relationship — spouse, parent, sibling, child — plays a role, of course. In the case of a blood relative, another factor is whether the person was a daily or regular presence in your life. Then there’s the psychological nature of the relationship: was it smooth or rocky? If you had unfinished emotional business with the person you lost, if your last interaction was angry or otherwise fraught, that can intensify your experience of grief.
<b>Your personality and coping style</b>	If you’re a normally resilient person, you may feel just as much pain over a loss as someone whose normal state is depressive or emotionally vulnerable, but you may find it easier to recover your equilibrium and to enjoy life again. People who have trouble coping with the setbacks of daily life will have a more difficult time recovering from a serious personal loss.
<b>Your life experience</b>	What you’ve learned about loss from other people and from your own experience can inform how you handle the loss of someone you love.
<b>Support from others</b>	As you’ll see below, it’s essential that you have people in your life who will help sustain you emotionally as you grieve. It’s also important that your friends and family take your loss as seriously as you do. If you lose a cousin or friend who was more like a sibling, your grief shouldn’t be dismissed as less important than that of an immediate relative. Many people downplay miscarriage, even if, to the parents, it represents the death of a baby. Nor does it matter how old the person was who died, or how sick. You lost someone you love, it hurts, and you need the support of people who care about you.

# THE 5 STAGES OF GRIEF

AND WHAT THEY REALLY MEAN

1

## DENIAL

Denial is a normal reaction to rationalize overwhelming emotions. It is a defense mechanism that buffers the immediate shock of loss.

2

## ANGER

As the numbing effects of the denial stage of grief begins to wear off, the pain of loss starts to firmly take hold as we search for blame, feel intense guilt, and lash out.

3

## BARGAINING

Bargaining is the “What if...” stage of grief and it serves an important purpose. It provides temporary escape from pain, provides hope, and gives a person time to adjust to the reality of the situation.

4

## DEPRESSION

This type of depression is not a sign of mental illness, it is the appropriate response to a great loss. You might experience intense sadness, decreased sleep, reduced appetite, and loss of motivation are common.

5

## ACCEPTANCE

Acceptance refers to accepting the reality of a loss and the fact that nothing can change that reality. This does NOT mean that the person is “okay” with the loss.

## What might grieving look like?

- Crying
- Screaming
- Wanting to be held or listened too
- Decide to never let anyone in again
- Shutting down, etc.

## Things you may do to avoid addressing the grief you feel...

- Intellectualizing (Intellectualization is a “flight into reason” – using ‘facts and logic’ to avoid discussing difficult emotions
- Replacing it
- Obsessing without feelings
- Stuffing
- Blaming
- Isolating
- Complaining
- Distracting self with other compulsive behaviors
- Over controlling people, places, & things
- Sleeping
- Fantasizing

# 6 Tips for Coping

## WITH THE DENIAL STAGE OF GRIEF

1

Understand that denial is normal, it serves an important, protective function and is your mind's way of protecting you from more pain.

2

Understand that it is normal to not "fully get" that a loved one is gone. Your mind is not yet able to comprehend a life without that person.

3

Be open to seeing reminders about your loved one, even if the experience is painful, as it will help you move through the denial stage of grief.

4

Don't pretend that things are all right when they are not. Be honest with yourself and others. Cry freely and let others see your tears.

5

Understand that there is no specific time frame for denial to be dissolved.

6

Seek professional help if you are unable to move past the denial stage of grief.

## DE - NI - AL

*noun:* refusal to admit the truth or reality of something unpleasant or difficult



# 6 Tips for Coping

## WITH THE ANGER STAGE OF GRIEF

1

Honour your anger by allowing yourself to be angry. Scream if you need to. Find a solitary place and let it out.

2

Don't bottle your anger up inside. Instead, explore it in a way that is not harmful to you. Your anger is just another indication of the intensity of your love.

3

Share the reasons why you are angry with family & friends. Don't hide your true feelings for fear of being perceived as 'negative', 'over-emotional' or 'crazy'.

4

Try venting your frustration and anger with aerobic exercise like walking or swimming. You could also join a group sport like rugby or football.

5

Join a support group. Grief can feel very lonely, even when you are surrounded by family & friends. Sharing your sorrow with others who have experienced similar losses can help.

6

Talk to a trusted spiritual counsellor, a family physician, or a certified therapist about how angry you are.

# 3 Tips for Coping

## WITH THE BARGAINING STAGE OF GRIEF

1

Understand that bargaining is normal and serves an important purpose. It provides temporary escape from one's pain and provides hope. This gives a person time to adjust to the reality of the situation.

2

Talk to family and friends about your bargaining hopes, or join a support group. They may be able to provide you with some perspective, as well as support you if your hopes are disappointed.

3

Seek the help and support of a professional counsellor if you are struggling.

# 8 Tips for Coping

## WITH THE DEPRESSION STAGE OF GRIEF

1

Give yourself permission to “feel your feelings”. Don’t let anyone tell you how you should feel.

2

Don’t try and suppress your grief. Acknowledge your pain.

3

Express your feelings to others (i.e. to friends, family, church members, therapist, or grief support group).

4

Express your feelings in creative ways (i.e. journaling, painting, drawing, writing etc.).

5

Avoid negative behaviour that can harm your health. (i.e. drug or alcohol abuse).

6

Set a small exercise goal each day. Get the endorphins flowing & your frustrations out.

7

Plan ahead for grief “triggers” (Holidays, anniversaries or birthdays). Ask family & friends for support extra support.

8

See a medical doctor if the pain of your loss is so constant & severe that it keeps you from resuming your life, or if you have suicidal thoughts

# 5 Tips for Coping

## WITH THE ACCEPTANCE STAGE OF GRIEF

1

Understand acceptance is learning to live with your new norm where your loved one is no longer here. Understand you’ll never be okay with the fact that your loved one died.

2

Acceptance is a process, not a final stage with an end point.

3

Be patient with yourself & don’t expect to reach the acceptance stage of grief quickly.

It could take years & you could also ebb in and out of the acceptance stage.

4

Keep a gratitude journal & write in it daily. Make a note of anything that gave you even the briefest moment of relief from your pain (ex. As a memory of your loved one that made you smile).

Keeping a gratitude journal will help you look for the positives, no matter how small.

As you read back through your journal, you may find yourself growing in your “gratitude attitude”.

4

Remember, acceptance may simply be having more good days than bad

5

Find ways to commemorate the life, love and legacy of the person that you miss.

If a year has passed since the day your loved one died, but you still feel “stuck” in your grief—your mourning still feels intense—see a professional therapist.

# SPOON THEORY & GRIEF



EVERY DAY,  
WE ALL HAVE A SET NUMBER  
OF SPOONS TO USE.

Spoons = amount of energy.

Original Source: Christine Miserandino  
[www.butyoudontlooksick.com](http://www.butyoudontlooksick.com)



Imagine the avg. person has 15-20 spoons/day.



- WAKE UP
- GET DRESSED
- WATCH TV
- SURF INTERNET



- TAKE A SHOWER
- MAKE DINNER
- TALK ON THE PHONE
- DRIVE



- SOCIALIZE
- GO TO WORK
- EXERCISE
- GO SHOPPING

## GRIEF TAKES AWAY A LOT OF SPOONS!



POOR SLEEP? -1 SPOON  
SKIPPED A MEAL? -2 SPOONS  
GOT GRIEF TRIGGERED? -3 SPOONS  
ANNIVERSARY/BDAY? -4 SPOONS

Replenish your spoons by  
increasing self care.



[WWW.SOLACECLUB.COM](http://WWW.SOLACECLUB.COM)



## CIRCLE OF GRIEF or RING THEORY

From: <https://www.dailyshoring.com/circle-of-grief-ring-theory/>

**How do we balance our own emotions and reactions to a tragedy, while acknowledging the greater burden carried by those immediately involved?**

**The Circle of Grief, or Ring Theory, provides a template.**

Draw a small circle and put the name of the person closest to the tragedy in the middle of that circle. Then, draw a larger (concentric) circle and put the name of the person closest to the center person—for adults, this is usually a spouse or partner, but may be children, parents, a colleague, or closest friend. Keep drawing larger circles around the other circles and add the layers of people—close friends, more distant friends, members of the community, etc. Here are the rules:

**The person in the center circle can cope any way he/she wants. The job of those in the larger circles is to listen and support.**

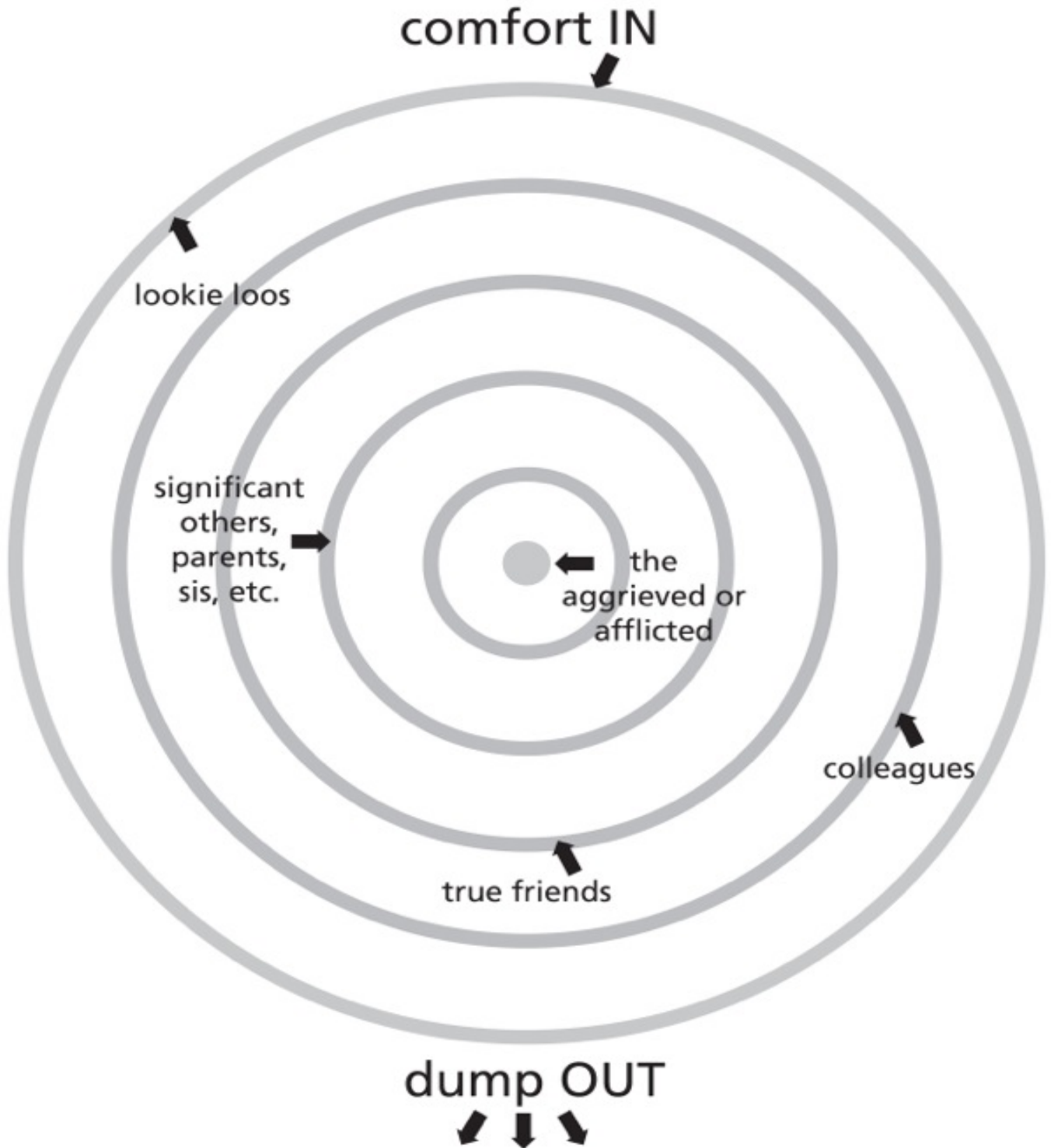
When talking to a person in a circle smaller than yours, remember that you are talking to someone closer to the tragedy. Your job is to help. You are not allowed to dump your anger, fear, or grief to people in circles smaller than yours. Express these emotions to those in your circle or larger circles.

***The concept is simple—“comfort in, dump out.”***

And remember, everyone copes in his or her own way. Some people cope best by sharing, others prefer to grieve privately. Both are valid coping mechanisms—private does not mean denial! It’s perfectly healthy to look for comfort in the normalcy of day-to-day life. So don’t be surprised if someone going through a crisis or tragedy chooses to brush the topic aside—and please don’t press!

If you want to help, *listen* and/or *offer practical help* (specific offers of help with kids, errands, food—not advice on how to handle the situation, though!). Don’t insert your own grief, anger, or preferred coping mechanisms into someone else’s crisis. Seek support for yourself from those in your same situation (same circle), or those further from the tragedy (larger circles).

## CIRCLE OF GRIEF



## WHAT IS TRAUMA?

### WHAT ARE THE EMOTIONAL AND PSYCHOLOGICAL SYMPTOMS OF TRAUMA?

Traumatic experiences often **involve a threat to life or safety**, but any situation that leaves you feeling overwhelmed and alone can be traumatic, even if it doesn't involve physical harm. It's not the objective facts that determine whether an event is traumatic, but your subjective emotional experience of the event. The more frightened and helpless you feel, the more likely you are to be traumatized.

An experience can be perceived as traumatic if it destroys your sense of safety, leaving you feeling overwhelmed and helpless. Witnessing the murder of innocent Black men, women and children can certainly be a traumatic event. According to one definition, an event will most likely lead to emotional or psychological trauma if:

- It happened unexpectedly.
- You were unprepared for it.
- You felt powerless to prevent it.
- It happened repeatedly.

Each extra judicial killing at the hands of a member of law enforcement often happens unexpectedly, we are woefully emotionally unprepared to deal with it, we feel powerless to prevent it and despite appeals for reform and accountability, it continues to happen.

### SYMPTOMS OF TRAUMA

<b>PHYSICAL</b>	<b>PSYCHOLOGICAL/EMOTIONAL</b>	<b>SPIRITUAL</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Fatigue or sleep disturbances: Insomnia (inability to sleep) or hypersomnia (sleeping more than usual)</li> <li>• Difficulty concentrating</li> <li>• Edginess and agitation</li> <li>• Insomnia or nightmares</li> <li>• Being startled easily</li> <li>• Racing heartbeat</li> <li>• Aches and pains</li> <li>• Eating disturbances: loss of appetite or overeating</li> <li>• Low energy</li> <li>• Sexual dysfunction</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Depression, spontaneous crying, despair and hopelessness</li> <li>• Shock, denial, or disbelief</li> <li>• Anger, irritability, mood swings</li> <li>• Guilt, shame, self-blame</li> <li>• Feeling sad or hopeless</li> <li>• Emotional numbness or feeling disconnected</li> <li>• Withdrawal from normal routine and relationships</li> <li>• Confusion, difficulty concentrating</li> <li>• Anxiety and fear</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lack of meaning or hope</li> <li>• Feeling a sense of despair or disconnected from God or purpose</li> <li>• Feeling empty or cynical</li> <li>• Difficulty envisioning a brighter future</li> <li>• Thinking “Is God punishing me?” or “Why is this happening?”</li> </ul>



## RACIAL BATTLE FATIGUE

[Racial Battle Fatigue](#) is a term coined by researcher Dr. William Smith to describe the ongoing and cumulative stress many Black people feel as a result of dealing with subtle and overt manifestations of racism and discrimination. Dr. Smith writes that this fatigue “is the result of constant physiological, psychological, cultural, and emotional coping with racial microaggressions in less-than-ideal and racially hostile or unsupportive environments. Microaggressions are subtle but offensive comments or slights directed at a Black person. An example of a microaggression is a statement like “I don’t see color” or “I don’t understand, don’t all lives matter?” The cumulative symptoms of racial battle fatigue are both physiological and psychological.

### SYMPTOMS OF RACIAL BATTLE FATIGUE

#### PHYSICAL

- Tension headaches and backaches
- Elevated heart beat
- Rapid breathing in anticipation of racial conflict
- An upset stomach or “butterflies,”
- Extreme fatigue
- Ulcers
- Loss of appetite
- Elevated blood pressure.

#### PSYCHOLOGICAL/EMOTIONAL

- Constant anxiety and worrying
- Increased swearing and complaining
- Inability to sleep
- Sleep broken by haunting, conflict-specific dreams
- Intrusive thoughts and images
- Loss of self-confidence
- Difficulty in thinking coherently or being able to articulate (confirming stereotype)
- Hypervigilance
- Frustration
- Denial
- John Henryism, or prolonged, high-effort coping with difficult psychological stressors
- Emotional and social withdrawal
- Anger, anger suppression, and verbal or nonverbal expressions of anger
- Keeping quiet
- Resentment

# COPING WITH TRAUMATIC EVENTS AND NEWS



As details about tragedies unfold, it is normal to have a wide range of thoughts, feelings and reactions. If you have experienced past traumas, including deaths, losses, violence or other assaults, you may be experiencing memories and feelings from those events and have increased symptoms now. For very public traumas, even those who have not been directly experienced the crisis may be affected.

## COMMON REACTIONS

*Please recognize that experiencing any of these can be normal reactions and that, with time, there is a natural healing process which occurs. Over the next few days or weeks you may experience periods of:*

- Shock, numbness
- Confusion
- Moodiness and irritability
- Anxiety, worrying, panic
- Jumpiness, hyper-vigilance
- Guilt
- Feelings of helplessness
- Sadness, depression
- Fatigue
- Disturbing images or memories
- Nausea, headaches
- Feeling vulnerable or unsafe
- Social withdraw
- Difficulty concentrating
- Difficulty sleeping
- Anger and blame of others.
- Numbness or feeling like you are not reacting

Shifts in priorities, worldview and appreciation of others can also occur — some people experience positive changes despite their initial pain and grief.

## REASONS FOR FEELING TROUBLED DURING AND AFTER AN EVENT

### The death of a loved one

Traumatic events often include injury and death. You may have known someone who died during a tragic event or this event may remind you of other deaths or losses. Even the death of a pet can be traumatic. Symptoms of grief and loss are similar to the post-trauma symptoms listed above, and many of the coping strategies listed below can help for grief as well.

### Traumatized children

Children who have experienced a trauma first or second-hand need special attention. Children's symptoms may include excessive fears, unwillingness to go to school, nightmares, and increases in regressive behaviors such as bedwetting and thumb sucking. Give your child an opportunity to ask questions, and respond in age-appropriate ways. Remember that your child may hear others talk about the trauma, and that without clear information, they can gain a distorted view of the crisis. Reassure your child by increasing

physical contact, keeping in touch, and making plans to do things together.

### Post-trauma at the workplace

After a traumatic event, your colleagues and co-workers may also experience some of the reactions listed above. Worksite group meetings to discuss individual experiences and plans for the future can be very helpful. Remember that each person can experience trauma differently. By extending patience and understanding you can support yourself and others in readjusting to life after a crisis.

### The effects of cumulative trauma

Psychologically, we connect traumas. If you experience a new trauma before you've had enough time to heal from previous trauma, you may experience the separate events as related. This can lead to intensified symptoms and prolonged recovery time. As a result of multiple traumatic incidents, you may experience a greater sense

of disconnectedness from yourself, others, and your work. Seek out support from a friend or counselor to help restore your sense of order and control.

### Fear of your own safety

Tragedies that occur on another college campus may create additional feelings of fear for your own safety on campus. This feeling is normal, yet it also gives us an opportunity to strengthen our community. There are some actions you can take to feel more in control of your safety and environment: pay attention to your own surroundings; talk with other students; seek counseling for yourself or group counseling for your living communities; speak up if you feel someone around you needs help - whether that means seeking counseling or calling the campus police; and review the Safety Counts campus police publication.

# COPING WITH THESE REACTIONS

People can take steps to help themselves, family members and each other cope with stress reactions.

## Experience your thoughts and feelings

You have the right to have thoughts and feelings even if you were not directly affected. Remind yourself that you are normal and having normal reactions.

## Talk about your thoughts and feelings

Even when the trauma is something that is being talked about publicly, it is important to talk to others about how you are affected. Talk to someone who feels safe to you.

## Take time

Be good to yourself—spend time with people you care about and do things that make you feel better. Take breaks, schedule pleasant activities, engage in positive distracting activities such as

sports, hobbies and reading.

## Remember

Remember each person experiences trauma differently and that you and others may have different needs at different times, try to be flexible. Remember that when under stress you may not react in a manner you would normally expect.

## Moderate your news

If the trauma is widely publicized, be mindful of how the media reports affect you. While having information is helpful for some crisis, some people may want to limit how much they read, listen to or watch the news.

## School and work

If you are having trouble concentrating in class or work talk to your professors

or boss about how to handle your workload and still give yourself time to recover.

## Take action

While you do not want to make big life changes in the immediate aftermath of a traumatic event, find ways to express your thoughts and feelings about the trauma. Suggestions include political action, community service and spiritual/religious practice to name a few.

## Seek support

Seek support from campus and community resources. Consult a mental health professional if you need assistance or want to gauge your reactions.

1/2017

From: University of California - Berkeley



There is hope beyond hurt.

Pain  
Fear  
Sadness  
Nightmares  
Poor sleep  
Headaches  
Anxiety  
Racing heart  
Anger  
Depression  
Flashbacks  
Substance use  
Intrusive thoughts  
Stress  
Diabetes  
Chest pains

Compassion  
Health  
Self-esteem  
Growth  
Fulfillment  
Wellness  
Hope  
Peace  
Recovery  
Resilience  
Empowerment  
Healing

Trauma and toxic stress involve feeling overwhelmed by difficult life experiences

that can lead to physical, emotional and substance use problems.

Family history  
Homelessness  
Rape  
Abuse  
Discrimination  
Racism  
Disasters  
Poverty  
Loss  
Terrorism  
Fleeing home country  
Violence  
War  
Neglect  
Serious accidents and illness

Support groups  
Primary care  
Healthy lifestyle  
Therapy  
Social connections  
Knowledge

We can help. Healing is possible.



# SELF-CARE 101

Simple self-care strategies can go a long way in helping us reduce anxiety and ease stress. While we may not be able to control the

news, current events or other situations, we CAN manage how we care for ourselves when we begin to feel overwhelmed. The following are suggestions that you can begin practicing right away! Try some deep breathing exercises, grounding techniques, go ahead and develop a personal self-care plan!



H. A. L. T. - a simple self-care strategy.

When you find yourself becoming frustrated or irritable, take a moment to ask yourself: Am I hungry? Am I angry? Am I lonely? Am I tired? If you answered yes to any of those questions, perhaps its time to take a break! Be kind to yourself and pay attention to what you need in order to reduce your stress or feel calm and better able to move forward with your day!

H

"Am I HUNGRY? Have I been eating junk food? When was the last time I had a healthy meal?"

\*Eat a piece of fruit or other nutritious snack

A

"Am I ANGRY? Am I feeling distressed or helpless about something? Is there something going on in my life that is causing me stress?"

\*Take a deep breath and count to 5

L

"Am I LONELY? Am I feel uncared for or unloved? Have I been disconnected from friends and family members?"

\*Call someone you trust. Don't be afraid to ask for help

T

"Am I TIRED? When was the last time I had a good night's rest? Am I having difficulty falling or staying asleep?"

\*Take some time to relax, drink a cup of tea, take a nap if you can!

# GET GROUNDED!

Grounding is a technique that helps keep you in the present, by helping to reorient you to the 'here-and-now'. Grounding skills can be helpful in managing overwhelming feelings or intense anxiety.

\*adapted from: [laurareaganlcswc.com](http://laurareaganlcswc.com)



## PLANT YOUR FEET

Place both feet flat on the floor. Sit up straight, feeling the chair supporting you. Feel your feet touching the floor



## BREATHE

Close your eyes or look down at a spot on the ground just a few feet in front of you. Inhale slowly while mentally counting to 5. Then exhale completely to a count of 5. Repeat 5 times.



## NOTICE

Notice what you see around you. Say out loud:  
5 things you SEE  
4 things you HEAR  
3 things you can FEEL  
2 things you can SMELL

# SIX WAYS TO PRACTICE GROUNDING

with anxiety + intense emotions



## body

lay on the ground, press your toes into the floor, squeeze playdough



## 5 senses

wear your favorite sweatshirt, use essential oils, make a cup of tea



## self-soothe

take a shower or bath, find a grounding object, light a candle



## observe

describe an object in detail: color, texture, shadow, light, shapes



## breathe

practice 4-7-8 breathing: inhale to 4, hold for 7, exhale to 8



## distract

find all the square or green objects in the room, count by 7s, say the date



THE GROWLERY



# DEEP BREATHING

A seven-step process you can use to develop the practice of deep breathing on a daily basis.

## TIME

Determine a time of day to practice deep breathing, preferably after a daily habit you perform consistently. Morning is always a good time to practice, as it sets the tone for your day.

### STEP 01



### STEP 02

#### SETTING

Select a setting for your breathing practice in a quiet space where you won't be distracted or interrupted. Turn off your phone, computer, and any other device that might disturb you.



### STEP 03



## 10 MINUTES

Set a timer for 10 minutes.

### STEP 04

#### POSITION

Sit on the floor with a pillow in a meditative position, like the lotus position, or in a chair with your spine straight and feet planted on the floor. Let your hands rest gently in your lap.



### STEP 05

## INHALE...

Inhale slowly through your nose until your lungs are filled to capacity, allowing your stomach to push out on the inhalation.



### STEP 06

#### PAUSE...

At the end of the inhalation, pause for a count of **two**.

## EXHALE...

Exhale slowly, smoothly, and completely, allowing your stomach to return to its natural position. Pause at the end of the exhalation as well.

### STEP 07

If you establish a 5 - to 10-minute breathing habit, you can easily use this habit as a trigger and starting point for your meditation practice.

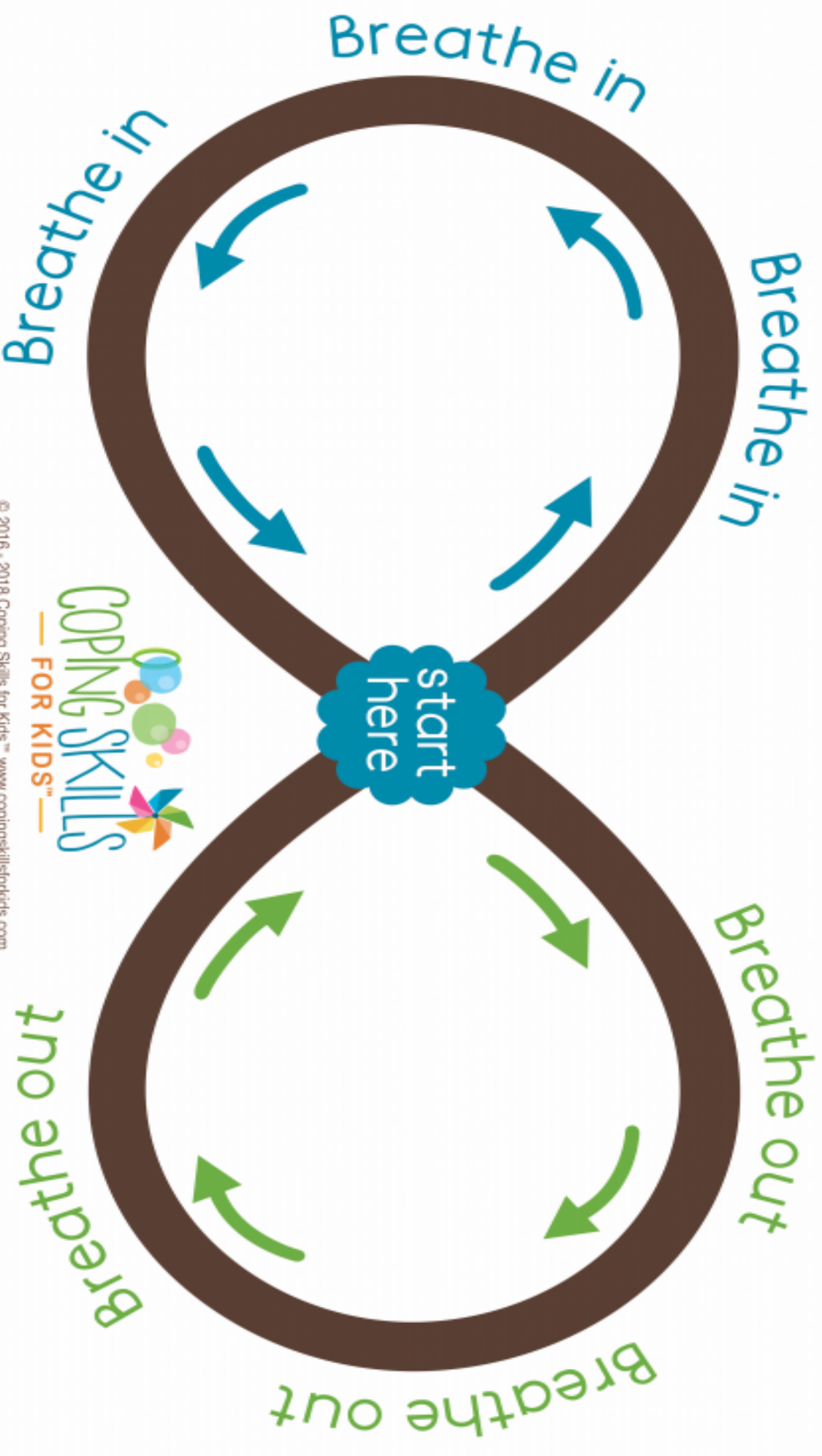
LEARN MORE AT  
[DEVELOPGOODHABITS.COM/DYM](http://DEVELOPGOODHABITS.COM/DYM)

## Qigong

Imam Nadim Ali recommends practicing QiGong breathing techniques as well. Watch the online webinar as Imam Nadim leads us in two deep breathing exercises. [muslimwellness.com/communitytrauma](http://muslimwellness.com/communitytrauma)

# LAZY 8 BREATHING

Start with an 8 on its side. Starting in the middle, go up to the left and trace the left part of the 8 with your finger while you breathe in. When you get to the middle of the 8 again, breathe out while you trace the right part of the 8 with your finger.



## TAKE A BREAK FROM SOCIAL MEDIA

Seriously. This is often difficult for many of us to do. We want to stay informed and plugged into all of the breaking news. Yet we consume an overwhelming amount of harmful images and negative stereotypes and this consumption can be extremely disheartening and toxic. If your work or advocacy requires that you follow trending topics, at the very least, set limits around how much time you devote to being online. For example, turn your phone off and do not check social media until one hour after waking in the morning and log off one hour before going to bed. Lastly, do NOT engage in online debates or feel the need to respond to every offensive comment, tweet or snap. The world will continue to spin on its axis if you decide NOT to reply to the racist comment posted by a friend of a friend of your high school acquaintance.





## STAY CONNECTED

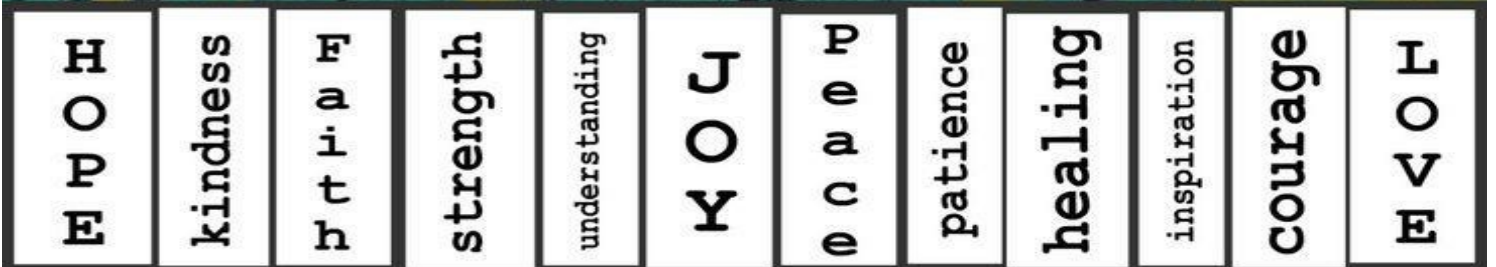
One of the symptoms of trauma and grief is the tendency to withdraw and isolate from others. Instead, reach out to those you trust and share your pain. Chances are, your loved ones are struggling in similar ways.

Be vulnerable.

Seek comfort from those that “get it”.

Ask for a hug.

Say “this hurts and I’m overwhelmed”.





## LAUGH!

It is easy to sink into despair and hopelessness in the face of grief and trauma. We are all trying to cope in this challenging times but we must also bear in mind that staying connected to all that brings us joy and happiness provides hope.

Suggestions:

Play a board game like scrabble

Jump rope

Buy a coloring book and crayons

Have a dance party

Sing out loud!

Blow bubbles



## PRAYER, SUPPLICATION & MEDITATION

The wisdom and value of salat (prayer) and dua (supplication) cannot be overstated. It is understandably hard to concentrate when the world feels as if it's heading a break neck speed towards some prophesized doom. Yet, this is EXACTLY the time when turning to Allah (swt) will provide comfort and ease. In fact, it is reported that Prophet Muhammad (saw) said: Beware the dua of the oppressed, for nothing stands between it and Allah.

- Develop a ritual around each prayer time – if you can, give yourself a few minutes to sit, contemplate and reflect before rushing back into the regular routine of the day. This 5-10 minutes can help bring back clarity and focus.
- Make a list of your favorite verses from the Qu'ran or hadith that resonate with you and offer reassurance. Here are a few examples:

The Prophet (saw) said: "No fatigue, nor disease, nor sorrow, nor sadness, nor hurt, nor distress befalls a Muslim, even if it were the prick he receives from a thorn, but that Allah expiates some of his sins for that." [Sahih Bukhari]

"And We will surely test you with something of fear and hunger and a loss of wealth and lives and fruits, but give good tidings to the patient. Who, when disaster strikes them, say, "Indeed we belong to Allah, and indeed to Him we will return." Those are the ones upon whom are blessings from their Lord and mercy. And it is those who are the [rightly] guided. Qu'ran (2: 155-157)

- The Prophet Muhammad (saw) would make this [dua](#) often: O Allah, I take refuge in You from anxiety and sorrow, weakness and laziness, miserliness and cowardice, the burden of debts and from being overpowered by men {*Allahumma inni a'udhu bika minal-hammi wal-Ḥuzni wal-'ajazi wal-kasli wal-bukhli wal-jubni wa ḍalaEid-dayni wa ghalabatir-rijal*}.

"And We send down of the Quran that which is a healing and a mercy to those who believe (Qu'ran 17:82).

- Download a Quran app. Listening to the soothing words of our Holy Book can be the perfect medicine in times of distress.
- Download a mindfulness or meditation app on your phone. Apps like Headspace, Buddhify and Stop, Breathe, Think offer an easy way of tracking your emotions and steps towards guided breathing, meditation and silent reflection. For some suggestions, take a look at the reviews found [here](#) and [here](#).



## GET ACTIVE!

It is an undeniable fact that physical activity reduces stress. According to the [Anxiety and Depression Association of America](#), exercise and other physical activity produce endorphins—chemicals in the brain that act as natural painkillers—and also improve the ability to sleep, which in turn reduces stress. Even FIVE MINUTES of activity can noticeably reduce anxiety levels. Psychologists studying how exercise relieves anxiety and depression suggest that a 10-minute walk may be just as good as a 45-minute workout. Some studies show that exercise can work quickly to elevate depressed mood in many people. Although the effects may be temporary, they demonstrate that a brisk walk or other simple activity can deliver several hours of relief, similar to taking an aspirin for a headache. Now I'm not suggesting that you begin training for a marathon! But moving your body in some way can improve your mood. Here are some tips:

- March in place (high-knees) for five (5) minutes
- Do 10-15 jumping jacks
- Go for a brisk 10 minute walk (raise your heart rate).
- More suggestions [here](#)
- Don't forget to pay attention to [diet](#): What we eat and drink largely impacts our emotional state. Foods most associated with exacerbating anxiety are ones containing [caffeine](#) and alcohol. Even consumed in small amounts, studies have found that the stimulating effects of caffeine can cause anxiety, trigger panic attacks, and increase feelings of nervousness and irritability



## FIND A THERAPIST



Let's make one thing clear: seeking help is NOT a sign of weakness or ingratitude for the blessings Allah has bestowed upon us. For those experiencing anxiety, depression or simply being overwhelmed by life stressors, **stigma** acts as a significant barrier to seeking the help that is needed. In the American Muslim community, mental health challenges are just as prevalent as in other communities, yet stigma stemming from cultural and religious beliefs many Muslims to feel that they must **suffer in silence**. American Muslims struggling with mental illness or addiction may attribute their experience to **weak faith**, a **punishment** from God or test of perseverance and fortitude. Other barriers also exist that make seeking help incredibly difficult, including discrimination, racism, **Islamophobia** and lack of mental health professionals with a basic knowledge of Islam and Muslims.

While it is true that finding a competent and qualified counselor/therapist/psychologist/psychiatrist may take some time, for our long-term health and well-being, we MUST begin to bravely

address our individual and collective “baggage”. The secrets, silence, shame surrounding our emotional and psychological health only deepen the pain and isolation. Take a moment to understand how therapy works (click [here](#) for a helpful link). Engaging in therapy is the ultimate act of self-care and self-love.



## CREATE YOUR OWN SELF-CARE PLAN

Use the following resources to develop your own person self-care plan. Click on each image below to download the worksheet.

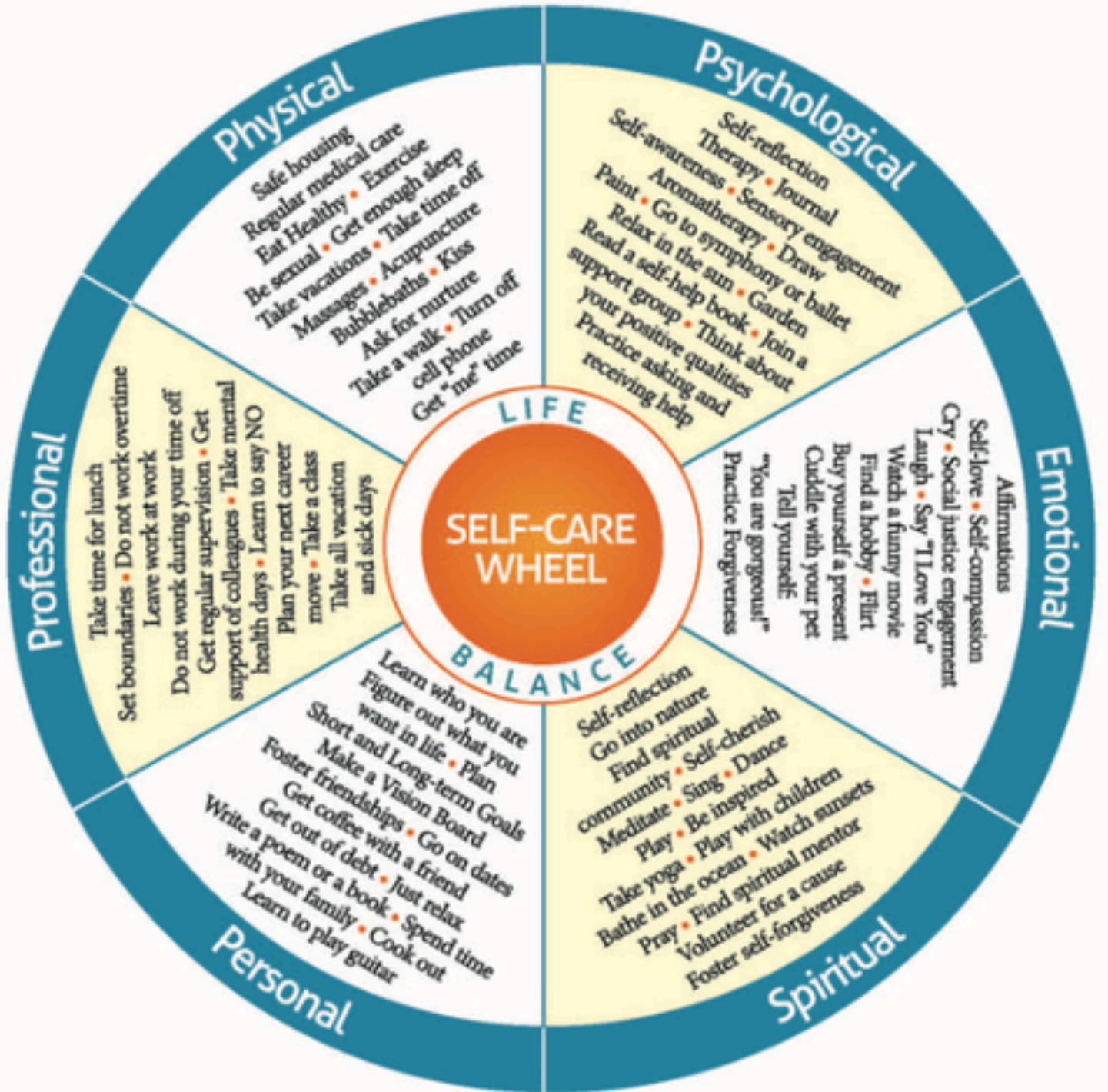
### 21 Day Self-Care Challenge

# 21 DAYS TO A MORE IMPACTFUL YOU MOVEMENT SELF-CARE CHALLENGE

<p><b>1</b></p> <p><b>Ditch Habits, Create Practices</b></p> <p><b>WATS</b> Remember what you did and how you felt during your habits.</p> <p><b>PRACTICE</b> Remember how you felt during your practices and how you felt during your habits.</p> 	<p><b>2</b></p> <p><b>Stay Hydrated Regularly... With H2O!</b></p> 	<p><b>3</b></p> <p><b>Practice 20-20-20 Vision</b></p> 	<p><b>4</b></p> <p><b>Breathe Low and Slooow</b></p> 	<p><b>5</b></p> <p><b>Spaciousness is Essential for Self-Care</b></p> 	<p><b>6</b></p> <p><b>Go Screen-Free</b></p> 	<p><b>7</b></p> <p><b>Connecting to Your Whole Self</b></p> 
<p><b>8</b></p> <p><b>Go Pee – Join the Self-Care Revolution</b></p> 	<p><b>9</b></p> <p><b>Give Yourself 10-15 Minutes of Spaciousness</b></p> <p><b>MY CALENDAR</b></p> 	<p><b>10</b></p> <p><b>Building Resilience</b></p> 	<p><b>11</b></p> <p><b>Connecting to Others</b></p> 	<p><b>12</b></p> <p><b>Get Outside and Take a Fresh Air Break</b></p> 	<p><b>13</b></p> <p><b>Invite Poetry into Your Life</b></p> 	<p><b>14</b></p> <p><b>Connection between Mind, Body, and Spirit</b></p> 
<p><b>15</b></p> <p><b>1 Minute of Breathing... With Your Hands!</b></p> 	<p><b>16</b></p> <p><b>Don't Eat Lunch at Your Desk</b></p> 	<p><b>17</b></p> <p><b>You are Not Your Performance</b></p> 	<p><b>18</b></p> <p><b>Make the Time and Space to THINK BIG</b></p> 	<p><b>19</b></p> <p><b>The Rule of Five</b></p> <p><b>RULE OF 5</b> 1 2 3 4 5</p> 	<p><b>20</b></p> <p><b>Put Your Oxygen Mask On First!</b></p> 	<p><b>21</b></p> <p><b>You Did It!</b></p> <p><b>21 DAYS TO AN IMPACTFUL YOU!</b></p> 

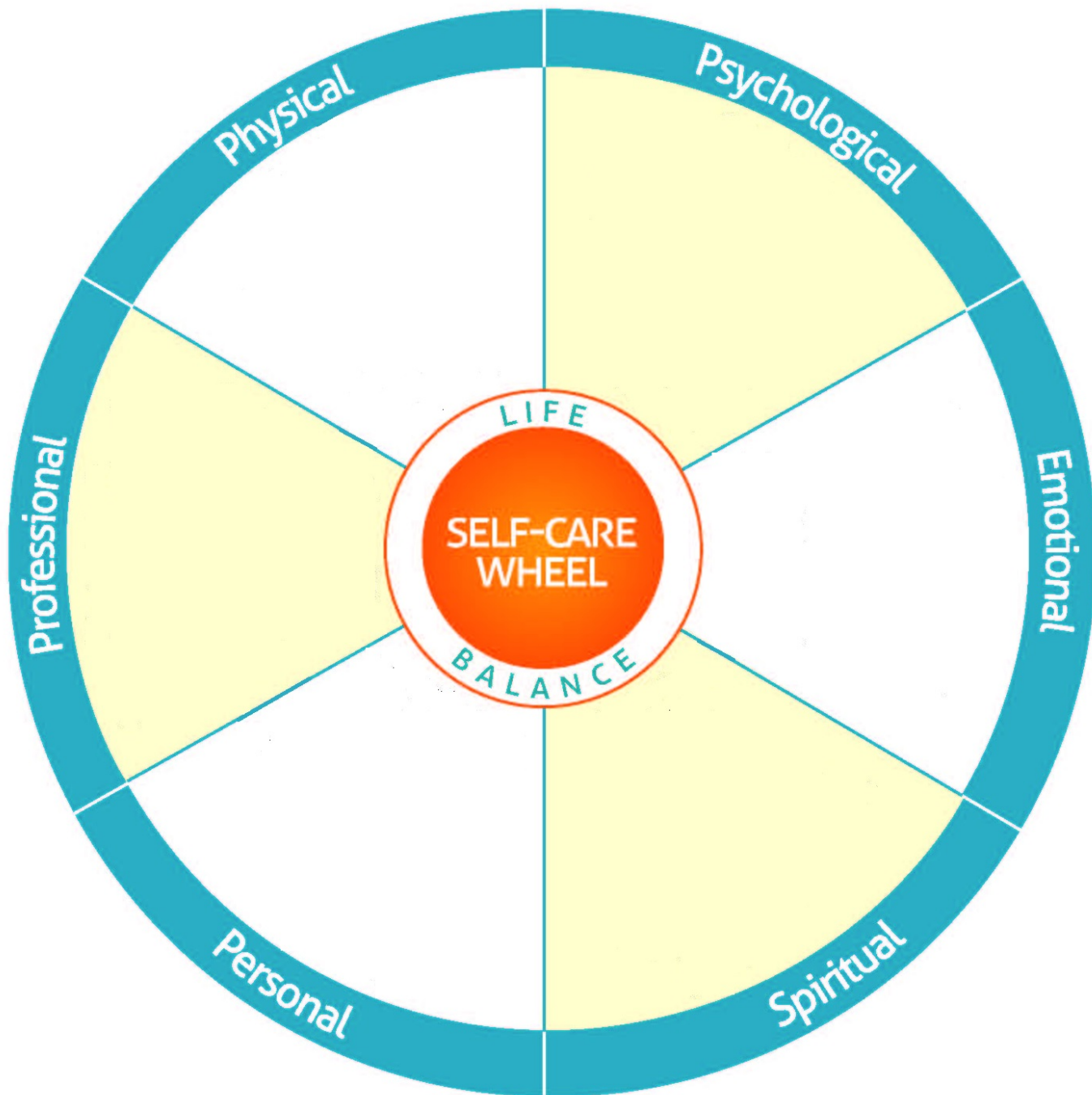
[Self-Care Wheel](#)

# SELF-CARE WHEEL



[Blank Self-Care Wheel](#)

# SELF-CARE WHEEL





# Self-Care

## Cheat Sheet

Self-care isn't rocket science.  
Here's all you need to know:

### 1 Get Some Rest

You probably need to sleep more. Who doesn't? 7-8 hours a night. Nap if you can. Make it a point to tell yourself "I'm resting now" at least once a day. Yeah. For real.

### 2 Fuel Your Body

If you're eating junk, living on caffeine & feeling like a zombie, stop it. Plants. Lean protein. Healthy fats. WATER. Whatever makes you feel vibrant.

### 3 Move It

Do what feels good to you. Dance in the kitchen. Jump on a trampoline. Swim, bike, walk, run. You don't \*have\* to sweat it out in a gym. Just MOVE.

### 4 Be Still

Take 10 minutes every day and just breathe. Learn to meditate. Get quiet. Center yourself. Count your blessings. Express gratitude. Forgive yourself & others. Watch your life change.

### 5 Speak Up

No one can read your mind. If you need something, ask for it. If something pisses you off, say so (respectfully). Stand up for yourself. Be the friend you deserve.

### 6 Enjoy Yourself

Life's too short! Do something every day that makes you laugh. Talk to friends. Play. See a movie. Join a club. Take a class. Live your life!



## MENTAL HEALTH RESOURCES

### [Healthy Minds: Online Mental Health Screening](#)

You keep tabs on your blood pressure, weight, and cholesterol. How about your emotional well-being? You can check it out right here, anytime. This tool is completely anonymous. In a few minutes, you will learn whether or not you might be experiencing behavioral health challenges.

### [The Holmes and Rahe Stress Scale](#)

Stress is a condition or feeling experienced when a person perceives that "demands exceed the personal and social resources the individual is able to mobilize." In less formal terms, we feel stressed when we feel that "things are out of control". The Holmes and Rahe Stress Scale is a tool helps us measure the stress load we carry, and think about what we should do about it.

### [National Suicide Prevention Lifeline](#)

If you feel you are in a crisis, whether or not you are thinking about killing yourself, please call the Lifeline. People have called us for help with substance abuse, economic worries, relationship and family problems, sexual orientation, illness, getting over abuse, depression, mental and physical illness, and even loneliness.

### [Khalil Center](#)

Khalil Center is a community psychological and spiritual wellness center. Khalil Center's approach emphasizes: psychological reconstruction, behavioral reformation and spiritual elevation. Khalil Center utilizes faith-based approaches rooted in Islamic theological concepts while integrating the science of psychology towards addressing social, psychological, communal and spiritual health.

### [Muslim Mental Health - Find A Therapist](#)

This directory is a very useful tool to help people find a counselor, therapist, psychologist, and/or psychiatrist throughout North America

### [Muslim Wellness Foundation](#)

Muslim Wellness Foundation (MWF) is an organization which seeks to reduce stigma associate with mental illness, addiction and trauma through dialogue, education and training.

### [Nasiha Counseling](#)

Counseling can be a meaningful way to address some of life's challenges you are facing or have been facing for a long time. As therapists, we provide support and feedback to help you cope with current life challenges and long-standing issues

### [The Family & Youth Institute](#)

The Family and Youth Institute (The FYI) strengthens and empowers individuals, families, and communities through research and education efforts that promote: [positive youth development](#), [healthy marriages](#), [effective parenting](#), and [mental health and well being](#).

thefyi.org

## ABOUT MUSLIM WELLNESS FOUNDATION (MWF)

Muslim Wellness Foundation (MWF) is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization dedicated to reducing stigma associated with mental illness, addiction and trauma in the American Muslim community and promoting healing and well-being through dialogue, education and training. We envision a future in which faith communities are at the forefront of mental health advocacy and committed to developing an inclusive culture of compassion, understanding and support.

For those experiencing a mental health challenge, stigma acts as a significant barrier to seeking the help that is needed. In the American Muslim community, mental health challenges are just as prevalent as in other communities, yet stigma stemming from cultural and religious beliefs lead many to feel that they must suffer in silence. American Muslims struggling with mental illness or addiction may attribute their experience to weak faith, a punishment from God or test of perseverance and fortitude. Our aim is to address the glaring mental health disparities present in the American Muslim community by engaging community members, health professionals, and religious leaders in conversation to improve mental health literacy, stigma reduction, help-seeking behavior and access to affordable and culturally competent services. In order to achieve this goal, we have adopted an interdisciplinary, spiritually grounded, community based public health approach to wellness. This approach emphasizes the importance of addressing sociocultural stressors (poverty, oppression, anti-Black racism) that lead to diminished well being. Racial oppression and religious discrimination are also forms of violence, which inevitably lead to trauma and stress. Therefore, we advocate that health is not simply the absence of illness, but draws upon a holistic understanding of an individual's environment and leverages community, faith and identity in the attainment of an optimal quality of life.

### Muslim Wellness Model

In order to achieve this goal, we have adopted an interdisciplinary approach which promotes emotional well-being using a holistic, spiritually relevant, community-based public health framework. We engage community members, health professionals and providers & religious leaders and Islamic organizations in much needed dialogue and conversation. Our projects and initiatives focus on 3 major areas:

- Community Engagement & Outreach
- Training & Consultation
- Professional Development & Networking



MWF is leading the way in Muslim mental health awareness by offering community based workshops and seminars. A few of our key initiatives include Mental Health First Aid training, Annual Black Muslim Psychology Conference (BMPC), Youth Anti-Muslim Bigotry Symposium, Healers Collective Forum (online resource for Muslim mental health professionals) and several community based workshops including a maternal mental health retreat for Muslim women, stepfamily workshop, online webinars on topics such as sexual abuse, domestic violence/spiritual abuse, coping with racism, developing a national network of Muslim mental health professionals.



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## IMAM NADIM ALI, LPC

*Licensed Professional Counselor | Imam, Community Masjid of Atlanta*



Originally from Chester, Pa. Imam Nadim Ali has resided in Atlanta, GA since 1979. He is married, and he and his wife have five adult children. Imam Nadim is active in the Atlanta Community in areas of violence prevention, re-entry of the formerly incarcerated, and offering transitional assistance to those in need. He is also a licensed professional counselor and master addiction counselor. Imam Nadim conducts pre-marital and marital therapy and is a consultant in Stress Management, Violence Prevention, and Tai Chi. He has been actively involved in educating individuals about the dangers of drugs, HIV and Hepatitis prevention, and has counseled both adolescents and adult patients. He has also used alternative methods such as Tai Chi, the ancient Chinese slow motion exercise, as an intervention for the treatment of addiction and stress, and anger management.

Mr. Ali has presented to conferences in the U.S. and in the Middle East on the topics of Substance Abuse, domestic violence, conflict resolution, healthy marriages, and spirituality. He is recipient of the Pioneer Award at the 2018 Black Muslim Psychology Conference. Imam Nadim earned a Bachelors degree in Communications from Shippensburg State University, and a Master's degree in Counseling Psychology from the Argosy University.

Nadimali.com

### Managing Emotions in Times of Trauma

By Imam Nadim Ali

- Keep the family of Imam Siraj Wahhaj in prayer. This is a trying time for them.
- Often media outlets will try to localize a major story. Avoid talking to the media. Their role is to get statements, and they are very competitive. Its best to say "No Comment."
- Avoid consuming news about the incident (specifically Fox News and Breitbart). It is designed to be sensationalized.
- Refer all inquiries to the Authorized spokesman. In this instance it is Imam Talib Abdur-Rashid of MIB.
- Avoid engaging in discourse on social media. Avoid reacting to Islamophobes. Trolls will try to bait you into a confrontation.
- Self care is important during times of trauma. Try to implement stress management techniques deep breathing meditation, exercise to help relieve stress.
- If asked about it in the community avoid expression a personal opinion due to the fact that not enough is known about the facts of the matter.



- We must all remember that Allah swt is the source of peace and tranquility, and during times of trauma we must rely on Our Sustainer more than ever.

***‘Allahumma antas salam wa minkas salam tabarakta (ya) dhal jalali wal ikram’***

Translation

O Allah, You are peace, peace comes from You. Blessed are You O Possessor of Glory and Honour  
*(Sahih Muslim, Hadith: 591)*

## KAMEELAH MU'MIN RASHAD, MS, MRP, M.ED

*Founder & President, Muslim Wellness Foundation*



Kameelah is the Founder and President of Muslim Wellness Foundation (MWF), a nonprofit organization dedicated to promoting healing and emotional well-being in the American Muslim community through dialogue, education and training. Muslim Wellness Foundation envisions a future in which faith communities are at the forefront of mental health advocacy and committed to developing an inclusive culture of compassion, understanding and holistic health.

Kameelah also serves as the Fellow for Spirituality, Wellness and Social Justice at the University of Pennsylvania (UPenn) and advisor for Penn Sapelo, the first Black Muslim Student organization on campus. In this capacity, Kameelah supports students in their exploration of faith-based activism, spirituality, emotional well-being and healing. Working in conjunction with the Chaplain's Office, she collaborates with other cultural centers on campus to facilitate intersectional conversations on race,

religion, identity, belonging and advocacy. Kameelah served three years as the Muslim Chaplain at UPenn and continues to facilitate discussions on religious identity development and challenges faced by American Muslim youth. She is also a resource to the wider Penn community and administration on Islam and Muslims. In addition to Kameelah's involvement in mental health advocacy and religious life, she is a proud social justice activist and founding member of Muslims Make It Plain, a coalition of concerned Muslims working to inspire, empower and support grass roots mobilization and direct action to address police brutality, racial & religious profiling, unlawful surveillance and the overpolicing of America's Black & Brown communities. In December 2014, Muslims Make It Plain organized the first Muslim led rally and march in the country in support of BlackLivesMatter. Kameelah serves as a board member of Muslim Advocates, a national legal advocacy and educational organization that works on the frontlines of civil rights to guarantee freedom and justice for Americans of all faiths. Further, Kameelah is an advisory board member of Stony Point Center, Social Health & Medical Services (SHAMS) Clinic and the Husayn Center for Social Justice, a Muslim-run social services and advocacy center that promotes health and wellness for the residents of Trenton, NJ.

Kameelah is a 2014 Ariane deRothschild Fellow and a recipient of the 2014 Student Multiculturalism and Salter Family Memorial Education Awards and the 2017 Matthew Smith Education Award from the Pennsylvania Psychological Association (PPA). Since 2015 Kameelah has served as the Diversity Focus Chair for PPA's Graduate Student Board. National Council for Behavioral Health selected Kameelah for the prestigious 2015 Mental Health First Aid (MHFA) Community Impact Award and honored her as a "passionate, committed, and outstanding behavioral health leader". President & CEO Linda Rosenberg offered the following praise: "Kameelah facilitates...with sensitivity to the religious, spiritual and sociocultural context in which Muslims experience and understand the underlying factors that contribute to...lack of emotional well being". Kameelah was also selected by El-Hibri Foundation for the 2017 Community Builder Award for her

innovative work to build capacity of American Muslim communities to improve mental health and wellness and promote more inclusive norms.

Kameelah's clinical and research areas of interest include: spirituality in psychotherapy, wellness and community resource building, story-telling as a way of facilitating connection, healing and closure in family of origin, mental health stigma in faith and minority communities, first generation college students and emerging adults of color; diversity, religious identity and multicultural issues in counseling, healing justice and faith based activism, racial trauma and healing, psychological impact of anti-Muslim bigotry and anti-Blackness, Black Muslim psychology and Black Muslim intersectional invisibility. Kameelah's insights and perspectives have been featured in The Huffington Post, The Atlantic, BuzzFeed, Patheos-Muslim, MuslimMatters, The Pennsylvania Gazette, and NPR's Radio Times with Marty Moss-Coane

Kameelah graduated from the University of Pennsylvania with a BA in Psychology and MEd in Psychological Services. She has pursued further graduate education, completing a second Masters in Restorative Practices & Youth Counseling (MRP) from the International Institute for Restorative Practices and obtaining a post-Masters certificate in Family Therapy from the Philadelphia Child & Family Therapy Training Center. Kameelah is a certified instructor in Adult, Higher Education & Youth Mental Health First Aid. She is pursuing her doctorate in Clinical Psychology at Chestnut Hill College in Philadelphia, PA.

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**NOTES:**



## NOTES:

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Self care  
is a  
divine  
responsibility