



Working with Muslims Bulletin

Bulletin 1 (August 2024)

Dear Colleagues,

Welcome to the first **Working with Muslims** bulletin from The Reflection Project. The Reflection Project is taking over all Reflection Network activities, including the Working With

Muslims Bulletin. The Reflection Project is a new charity (charity number 1208641) with a fresh vision: for every Muslim child and young person in the UK to have access to faith-sensitive therapy. Please check out our website thereflectionproject.org for details of our projects and team. More information will be added in the coming weeks.

EVENTS

16.9.24: Sacred Trust Silent Wounds report on abuse in Scottish Muslim communities

“Sacred Trust, Silent Wounds: An Exploration of the Experiences and Understanding of Abuse in Scottish Muslim Communities.” The report launch will be hosted online on 16th September, 10am - 1pm, by The Spirit Research Group (Nottingham Trent University). Sacred Trust uses community-based research that seeks to create collaboration and co-construction with Scottish Muslim communities.

Link to reserve a place **by 7th Sept** at: <http://tinyurl.com/SPIRIT24conf>

9.10.24: Perinatal Mental Health Masterclass: Creating Culturally Safe and Faith-Sensitive Care for Better Outcomes for Families and Communities

Join Dr Aaliyah Shaikh, a practitioner-researcher and educator. As someone born through a traumatic birth to a young migrant mother, Dr Aaliyah is a keen advocate for raising awareness of the long-term implications of birth trauma as a lived experience. She will be drawing on her knowledge including her PhD thesis empirical findings on perinatal experiences of British Muslims. This is a uniquely placed training that merges lived experience with academic insights and empirical research.

- Wednesday 9th Oct 2024
- 11am-1pm
- Online via Zoom

This training is crucial for professionals across various healthcare roles particularly those involved in the care of pregnant women as well as commissioners, service providers, therapists, chaplains and community members. By integrating the principles of cultural safety and faith sensitivity into professional practice, organisations can ensure that their services are more inclusive, respectful, and effective.

Tickets: <https://buytickets.at/lantern/1371628>

RESOURCES

Community Trauma Conference UK: list of mental health organisations

CTC UK statement: “As a conference organisation that focuses on trauma and healing within racialised communities, we stand together with Communities of Colour against the racist violence that has been taking place in the UK. We have compiled a list of mental health organisations and services for People of Colour, Migrants, Refugees, Asylum Seekers and Muslim Communities affected by the racist riots, rhetoric and violence in the UK: <https://www.communitytraumaconf.com/news/list-of-mental-health-organisations-and-services>

Thank you to the Community of mental health practitioners, organisations and services for their outpouring of support in making this list possible.”

Muslim Mind Collaborative statement

“The Muslim Mind Collaborative is a platform of organisations dedicated to building equitable services. Through MMC, we support our members in creating better outcomes and access to faith and culturally competent mental health support services. In these times, collective action and unwavering resolve are essential to protect the rights, dignity, and mental health of our communities. We must come together to confront Islamophobia and all forms of racism and discrimination, supporting individuals and families enduring the devastating impact of these targeted attacks and their ramifications on mental health and well-being.”

MMC’s full statement on the recent riots and attacks can be read [here](#).

Podcast: Family Dynamics and Women's Health

The Mindful Muslim has launched Episode 56: Family Dynamics and Women's Health, with Dr. Sheeba Rahman. The Mindful Muslim is an [Inspired Minds](#) podcast that hosts raw, open, and honest conversations on various topics within the sphere of mental health, psychology, Islam and spirituality. The latest episode features Dr. Sheeba Rahman, a board certified psychiatrist based in the United States. The discussion focuses on topics such as a day in the life of a psychiatrist, the importance of family dynamics and the factors that impact Muslim families.

Dr Rahman has formerly worked at world renowned Mayo Clinic and was the Former Vice president of Council of American Muslim Professionals in NYC. She specialises in the treatment of depression, anxiety, mood and personality disorders, with a special interest in family dynamics and women’s health. She has conducted mental health seminars for Domestic Harmony Foundation, lectures on major depression at Islamic Center of Long Island, and continues to spread mental health services in South Florida for the Muslim community.

Podcast link: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qhIVq7BQWB0&list=PLBmPFPXtRX6zkQvY_z7SfR_76lnXSISSC

Podcast: Being Muslim in Education

A new podcast is launching soon, entitled Being Muslim in Education, which aims to reclaim the narrative and centre Muslim voices in education.

For further details: <https://linktr.ee/beingmuslim>

Emotional wellbeing books for Muslim children

The Reflection Project is developing a series of children's books aimed at helping Muslim children cope with difficult emotions and experiences and to help parents support their children with these feelings. The aim is to help parents understand and respond when their children communicate distressing or overwhelming feelings.

You can help by sharing our [parent/carer survey](#) as widely as possible. The survey can also be accessed via our website: thereflectionproject.org

For further information: contact@thereflectionproject.org

RESEARCH

Bridging Gaps or Building Barriers? The Counselling experiences of British Muslim University Students (2024)

Though Muslims make up only 6.5% of the population in the UK, they are overrepresented in universities by making up around 12% of the student body. This large and growing Muslim student population requires university counselling services to address the unique values challenges faced by these students. Existing research has explored the importance of faith and spirituality in counselling and has provided some recommendations for practice, however this is a lack of research that specifically focuses on the counselling experiences of British Muslim university students. Four semi-structured interviews were conducted with participants who were British Muslim university students who had individual counselling in the past. Thematic Analysis of the interviews revealed four overarching themes: 'Specific and structural factors,' 'Seeking services,' 'Method and results,' and 'Counselling and Islam.' The implications from this study cover the need to encourage research that integrates diverse perspectives, equip Imams with mental health resources and raise awareness about mental health within Muslim communities. Further research suggests potential collaborations between Imams, counsellors, and mental health academics to address the mental health needs of British Muslim university students and Islamic scholars training in mental health and counselling as important future works. For more information, contact: Muhammad Raja, Leeds Beckett University (MA Integrative Counselling) via LinkedIn.

A Descriptive Phenomenological Study of Muslim Clients' Experiences of Religion during Psychotherapy with Muslim Therapists (2021)

By Muneer M. Nakhoda, University of Johannesburg. Dissertation for an MA in Counselling Psychology.

Abstract: The field of Islamic Psychology is rapidly growing. However, there appears to be a gap in the literature as far as how Muslim clients experience religion during psychotherapy with Muslim therapists. This study utilised a descriptive phenomenological framework to explore Muslim clients' experiences of religion during psychotherapy with Muslim therapists. Six themes were identified from the participants' descriptions and classified into two superordinate categories. The superordinate themes identified were (1) the development of religious identity over the course of the therapy process and (2) the experience of Islam in the relationship with the therapist. The six themes consisted of the following: (1) inherited religious identity and religious crisis prior to therapy, (2) reformulation of religious identity during therapy, (3) impact of the new religious identity on the participants' well-being, (4) shared religious context between the participants and their therapists, (5) the therapist as an authoritative figure, (6) the therapist as a role model. These findings validate the centrality of religion for the well-being of Muslim individuals. Furthermore, it emphasises the importance of the Muslim therapist within the therapy process. This study suggests that exploring the mechanics and theory of religious identity formation as part of mental health may provide important insight into the development and resolution of pathology for Muslim clients. Further exploration of the client-therapist dynamics that occur when working with Muslim clients may also be valuable in providing a comprehensive understanding of the therapy experience.

RESEARCH IN PROGRESS

Would you like to share how your culture, faith, or religion play a role during pregnancy and birth?

This study conducted by researchers in the Perinatal Mental Health team at City, University of London, seeks to carry out research that tries to improve women's experience of support for mental health during pregnancy and after their baby is born. The study aims to improve access to mental health support for who are pregnant or who have recently given birth by understanding their cultural and religious needs. For more information, contact: Matrix2city@city.ac.uk

Research into faith-based maternity care for Muslim women:

This research is about how Muslim women experience the maternity services they access and how/if Islamic practices are incorporated in their perinatal treatment. This Clinical Psychology trainee at University of East London is aiming to understand Muslim women's maternity health care experiences. For more information, contact Zuheda Miah: u2388776@uel.ac.uk

With best wishes,

Dr Rachel Abedi
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Director, [The Reflection Project](http://thereflectionproject.org)
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I also work in the NHS (Tavistock and Portman) as an Associate Lecturer, Psychological Therapies with Children, Young People and Families (M34), and Visiting Lecturer, Psychoanalytic Child and Adolescent Psychotherapy (M80)

The Working with Muslims bulletin began in 2022 as a group for practitioners interested in thinking about their work with Muslim heritage children and families. It is compiled by The Reflection Project, a UK charity working to improve access to faith-sensitive therapy for Muslim children and young people.

The aims of the bulletin include:

- Supporting conversations about how to improve the way we work with Muslim heritage children and families
- Signposting to resources which support thinking in this area
- Sharing news of local initiatives in CYPMHS clinics and ideas for best practice
- Sharing news of initiatives taking place outside CYPMHS so that you can get involved
- Responding to questions about Muslim practices and cultures, including their relation to mental and emotional health
- Sharing research
- Developing training and CPD events

GDPR Statement

- You have received this email because you have asked to join the Working with Muslims CYPMHS group. I am keeping a list of members' contact details for the purpose of WWM CYPMHS group communication and Bulletin distribution only. Contact details will not be shared or used for other purposes without explicit permission. If you would like to remove your name from the list, or change your contact details, please let me know contact@thereflectionproject.org