

Dear colleagues,

Welcome to the fourth **Working with Muslims** bulletin. We had intended this to go out last month, but it has been a very busy autumn for Reflection Network:

- Assistant Therapists have joined our new clinics in Barnet (Reflection Space Barnet) and North Kensington (Al-Manaar Children and Young People's Therapy Service)
- We are piloting a series of Wellbeing Workshops for Parents/Carers with the Somali community in Colindale, with a focus on child mental health
- We continuing to deliver innovative projects such as the Reflective Space for Adoption Social Workers (My Family Group) and the Muslim Adoption Support Group (Coram)
- Plus other exciting projects in the pipeline

Please see Reflection Network's website reflectionnetwork.org for project details and previous bulletins.

RESOURCES

Muslim Youth Helpline: Student Wellbeing Guide

MYH's Student Wellbeing Guide includes tips on self-care and managing anxiety. They are ready to be sent to schools, colleges, universities, community groups and organisations across the UK. MYH aims to get these to as many young people as possible, so please feel free to download for free and share:

<https://myh.org.uk/resources/student-wellbeing-guide/>

Suffolk Mind: "The Qur'an and Emotional Health - an Introduction"

An emotional and mental health resource developed by mental health professionals and practicing Muslims.

Following precedents established in the Qur'an and the Hadith – teachings attributed to the Prophet Muhammad (SAW) – 'The Qur'an & Emotional Health: An Introduction' draws upon the rich heritage of Islamic psychology and modern knowledge of the human givens to meet the needs of Muslims and health care professionals who support them. Price: £5. Available online and hard copy, in English, Arabic and Urdu.

https://www.suffolkmind.org.uk/product/the-quran-emotional-health-an-introduction/?_adal_ca=cg%3DOrganic.1641388738942&_adal_cw=1641388704472.1641388738942&_ga=2.108916746.961799757.1603971012-1606758473.1603971012

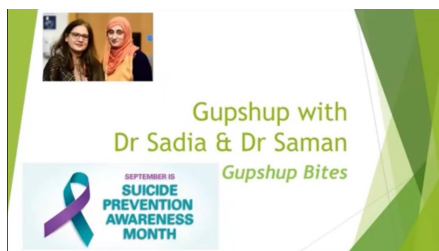
Muslim Girls Fence <http://www.muslimgirls fence.org/>

A project collaboration between Maslaha and British Fencing which aims to facilitate spaces at grassroots level for Muslim girls and women to challenge assumptions and narratives relating to their gender, racial, religious and other identities through both physical and creative methods. The girls are coached to learn the traditionally elite and white, male-dominated sport of fencing. Through this, they physically confront the stereotypes of fencers, but also the expectations our society has of them: that Muslim women and girls are weak, subordinated and lacking agency.

Alongside this, they engage in a range of discussions and creative exercises such as collaging, drawing, photography and poetry to reflect on their identities, the ways they are represented, and the limited narratives about their experiences that are usually given a mainstream platform in society.

MGF is currently running projects with community groups and will start up working with schools in the coming months.

Gupshup Bites (28) <https://youtu.be/GEVfp0eAzkw>



YouTube video in Urdu. Dr Sadia (Consultant Child & Adolescent Psychiatrist) and Dr Saman look at how suicide is portrayed in Pakistani dramas, and talk about suicide prevention.

Maristan <https://maristan.org>

USA-based not-for-profit Muslim mental health organisation Maristan aims to lead professional clinical care, education, and research in advancing holistic, mental and spiritual wellness. Co-founded by Dr Rania Awaad MD, Clinical Associate Professor of Psychiatry at the Stanford University School of Medicine where she is the Director of the Stanford Muslim Mental Health & Islamic Psychology Lab.

TRAINING

Culturally Competent Suicide Prevention training

This free online training, run by Sharing Voices Bradford <https://sharingvoices.net> is open to anyone interested. It consists of a half-day workshop exploring how practitioners can be more effective in providing culturally competent suicide prevention services to people from diverse backgrounds and meeting the needs of those affected by suicide in the BAME community from the West Yorkshire and Harrogate (WYH) area. There are places available in November and December. Also see SVB's recent report on the research relating to the course (pdf attached).

Please follow the Zoom links below to register in advance for courses in November and December:

When: Nov 15, 2022 09:30 AM London

Register in advance for this meeting:

<https://us06web.zoom.us/join/zoom-join?meeting=ZAKduquqzWjGNF8hngJ-qs30BSuOr4wviWk>

When: Nov 17, 2022 02:00 PM London

Register in advance for this meeting:

<https://us06web.zoom.us/join/zoom-join?meeting=tZYkfu2vrzktE9P-wLSpHRayC-15DPPT2152>

When: Dec 13, 2022 09:30 AM London

Register in advance for this meeting:

<https://us06web.zoom.us/join/zoom-join?meeting=tZEIfuqprjsuHtypU1-dCq309iuoqEhbEb3N>

When: Dec 15, 2022 02:00 PM London

Register in advance for this meeting:

<https://us06web.zoom.us/join/zoom-join?meeting=tZMucu6grDspEtIVCowE-f0mZ21117dTBZMe>

RESEARCH

We have a bumper research section for you this month!

**“The ‘hostile environment’ and the therapeutic journey of an adolescent girl”
Sean Junor-Sheppard (2019) Journal of Child Psychotherapy 45(3)**

<https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/abs/10.1080/0075417X.2019.1702077?journalCode=rjcp20>

Abstract: This paper is drawn from doctoral research investigating whether cross-cultural psychoanalytic psychotherapy and the transference relationship can be helpful in the development of the self of an adolescent BAME patient. I will refer to some of the findings from the doctoral research and from the material in the patient's three-and-a-half years intensive psychotherapy, to show how her ideas of self, 'other', gender and sexuality were affected, in a particular way, by her experience of inhabiting family, social and political environments she experienced as hostile. This paper will describe how child psychotherapy can be crucial in supporting adolescents negotiate their identity, when the environments they inhabit act to impede this. I will pay particular attention to how the transference and countertransference can be used to understand and tend to the patient's ideas of self and other that have been informed by the post-colonial beliefs embedded in the environments they inhabit.

**“A qualitative exploration of systemic training and practice for Muslim community leaders as part of an innovative project in an inner-city area.”
Nadir Khan, 2021, Journal of Family Therapy Vol 44 issue 1**

<https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/abs/10.1111/1467-6427.12378>

Abstract: Whilst there is increasing interest in spiritual and religious narratives in the field of family therapy, little has been written regarding how these constructs intersect in training and practice. This study explores the experiences of three Muslim community leaders who completed two years of systemic training as part of an innovative project in an inner-city area. Semi-structured interviews were analysed using interpretative phenomenological analysis (IPA), resulting in the emergence of three themes: (i) the self of the systemic practitioner, (ii) experience of systemic training and (iii) application in the community. Participants recognised that most systemic principles and interventions were complementary to religious constructs and could be applied in their community work. Being part of a Muslim cohort, the skilful management of cultural sensitivity by the instructors and opportunities for faith-based perspectives to be appreciated and engaged with as part of the meaning-making process all contributed to a positive learning experience.

Adoption and Muslims

For those interested in adoption and Muslims, the following papers have been suggested by Sara Cheruvallil-Contractor, Associate Professor in the Sociology of Islam, Centre for Trust Peace and Social Relations, Coventry University:

“The Salience of Islam to Muslim Heritage Children’s Experiences of Identity, Family, and Well-Being in Foster Care” Cheruvallil-Contractor, S., Halford, A., Phiri, M.B. 2021 (Open Access)

<https://www.mdpi.com/2077-1444/12/6/381>

Abstract: All children need permanent and secure homes in which they can explore their identities and evolve as human beings, citizens, and family members, and within which can they have a sense of security, continuity, stability, and belonging. There are approximately 4500 children of Muslim heritage in the care system in England and Wales, and this number is increasing. Using case studies that emerged from qualitative fieldwork, this article examines the role and impact of religion on children's journeys through the care system, particularly in foster care. This article concludes that irrespective of the level of engagement Muslim heritage children in the care system have with their religious heritage, Islam has an enduring impact on how they perceive their identities. As a result, there is a pressing need for social workers and foster carers who care for these children to gain greater insights into Islam and Muslim culture. Such insights and understandings will help children settle faster and form stronger bonds of attachment with their foster carers, and in the long term, this will enhance life outcomes for these children.

“Identity, Intersectionality and Children in Care: The Case of Muslim-Heritage ‘Looked-After’ Children in the UK” Cheruvallil-Contractor, S., Halford, A., Phiri, M.B. 2022 (Open Access)

https://link.springer.com/chapter/10.1007/978-3-030-95880-0_5

Abstract: Social work policy in the UK, and public discourse informed by this policy, insists that children need permanent and secure homes. In finding homes for children, preserving and nourishing their identities is prioritised. Faith can be a key aspect of children's identities, yet there is limited research on faith considerations in the decisions and processes of finding permanent homes for vulnerable children. Focusing on the experiences of Muslim children in the care system, this chapter will begin a discussion about filling this gap in academic literature. There are approximately 4500 children of Muslim heritage in the care system in England and Wales, and this number is increasing. Through interviews with 41 social workers, foster carers, adoptive parents, prospective adoptive parents, and care leavers, this study presents a research-informed narrative of the layered and intersectional ways in which Muslim-heritage children experience and articulate their faith identities. The research findings presented in this chapter indicate that to ensure children's well-being, social work practitioners and carers need to consider children's identities in their entirety, including the dynamics influencing decision-making about their lives.

“The Politics of Matching: Ethnicity, Religion and Muslim-heritage Children in Care in the UK” Cheruvallil-Contractor, S., Halford, A., Phiri, M.B. 2022

Please contact Sariya Cheruvallil-Contractor (ac0967@coventry.ac.uk) for access to the full paper.

Abstract: In 2014, in order to improve outcomes for children from ethnic minority backgrounds and to speed up the adoption process, the UK government changed

the Children and Families Act. The legal requirement on adoption agencies to consider ethnicity in the decision around 'matching' was removed, thus clearing the way for transracial placements. This article interrogates the impact of the change in law on social work practice around adoption, using the experiences of diverse Muslim-heritage children as a case study. Grounded in the sociology of religion, the findings presented here are based on semi-structured qualitative interviews (n = 28) with those involved in the care of Muslim-heritage children. In discussing qualitative findings, all adopters and prospective adopters interviewed in this research insisted on adopting children who 'look like them', and social workers continued to look for the 'best' possible matches. Children from minoritised backgrounds continue to wait for long periods before finding permanent homes. Our evidence raises questions about the efficacy of policy guidance. Based on this evidence we conclude that greater strategizing is needed around the recruitment of adopters from diverse backgrounds.

“More than Faith - Muslim Heritage Children in Care: Strategic Briefing for Social Work leaders” Cheruvallil-Contractor, S., Halford, A. 2022

<https://www.researchinpractice.org.uk/children/publications/2022/may/more-than-faith-muslim-heritage-children-in-care-strategic-briefing-2022/>

This briefing aims to support senior managers in meeting the needs of Muslim-heritage children and young people in care. Although it is aimed at senior leaders and managers, the content is of relevance to anyone working with Muslim-heritage children and young people. The briefing draws upon research and illustrative case examples, and comprises the following sections:

- Introduction and terminology
- Diversity of the Muslim faith
- The importance of cultural identity and lived religion
- Children and young people's intersectional identities
- Overcoming challenges to meet the needs of Muslim-heritage children and young people
- How can professionals support Muslim-heritage children and young people in care, and their carers?

Research project in progress: How is an Islamically integrated psychotherapy utilised when working with young children?

Kawthar Nurudeen Alli, Counselling Psychologist in Training at the University of Manchester, is recruiting participants for her professional doctoral research project. The aim of the research is to develop a theory of how Muslim therapists use an Islamic psychology approach to work with Muslim children. For further details please contact: kawthar.nurudeenalli@postgrad.manchester.ac.uk

QUESTIONS

We have received a request to provide resources and service information for **young Muslims questioning their sexual orientation**, and whether/how this can fit with their faith. We are in the process of gathering some relevant information, and hope to share it with you in the next WWM bulletin. Please send details of useful resources and services to rabedi@tavi-port.nhs.uk so that I can include them.

Best wishes,

Rachel

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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)

About the Working with Muslims CYPMHS group

The group is for CYPMHS practitioners who are interested in thinking further about their work with Muslim heritage children and families. It is being run in association with UK charity Reflection Network (reflectionnetwork.org). Reflection Network supports the mental and emotional health of Muslim children by:

- Making mainstream services more accessible
- Working with Muslim communities to improve child mental health outcomes

The aims of the group include:

- Having a conversation 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 your service 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

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 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 on rabedi@tavi-port.nhs.uk