



**COMMUNITY MEMBERS:
ARE YOU AFRAID TO SEEK HELP?**

In our community there is **fear and stigma** regarding illnesses such as cancer and HIV and AIDS; **denial** about problems like family violence and emotional instability; and a **lack of support** for community members and their families, who often suffer in **silence**,

Stigma is based on ignorance and lack of compassion and prevents timely response to:

- Stress and Emotional Wellness
- Self Help & Recovery
- Family Tension
- Serious Health Concerns

Stigma says:
“We just don’t talk about such things!”



Sadaqah says:
“SO HOW CAN WE HELP?”

Community members can help by being non-judgmental and listening compassionately. An empathetic, supportive approach can create trust, and reduce shame and isolation. Below are some issues that every day Muslims are grappling with. If you are struggling in silence, know that you are not alone. Insha Allah, you will find relief- in the form of treatment, and a compassionate, caring community.

STRESS AND TRAUMA

Are you having trouble sleeping?
Feeling anxious, hopeless and lonely?

Especially after 9/11, Muslims may face hardships like discrimination and false accusations. They may have lost family members and loved ones to terrorist incidents. Stress levels are high and people feel threatened, scrutinized and attacked.

Also, some community members who have experienced or witnessed life-threatening events such as military combat, violent personal accidents, or natural disasters may relive these frightening experiences and have nightmares and/or flashbacks. They may feel detached or estranged. Sometimes this is a sign of Post-Traumatic Stress or Secondary Trauma. It can cause problems at home, school, or work.

Let us be more open about our difficulties and share the burden.



“On no soul does God place a burden greater than it can bear.”

Qur'an: 2: 286.

HIV/AIDS

In 2005, there were nearly 40 million people living with HIV. Millions die of AIDS every year and number is growing.

Some Muslims may think that HIV/AIDS is not a problem for us. But the reality is that every single country, including Muslim countries, has been affected by HIV/AIDS. Muslims in North America are also vulnerable.

HIV positive Muslims are often afraid to tell their family, friends or imams. Afraid of social rejection, they become isolated and suffer in silence. Even if family members and friends know, they too worry about stigma and isolation.

Muslim brothers and sisters may become infected in many ways, maybe in a prison system that has a very high rate of infection, or through risky behavior. Wives may be infected by husbands. Others were infected before their reversion to Islam. Still others may be family members or non-Muslim neighbors. Surely this is a great test of our shared humanity.

If you are worried about HIV, get tested and counseling. The greater test is from Allah—but HIV is not a death sentence and does not have to be a road to lonely suffering. You deserve Love.



A SAFE HOME

Domestic violence is a serious problem with serious consequences, but is often kept hush, hush. Family tensions, marital discord and power struggles are considered "dirty laundry" and not to be aired in public.

Worse yet, even when community members find out about a couple's domestic abuse problems, they keep quiet and choose to "stay out of their private life." The silence helps to make domestic violence a socially accepted practice.

Given Prophet Muhammad's practice, peace be upon him, of never hitting anyone, much less his wives, the Muslim community must have zero tolerance for domestic violence. Marriages may fail, but they need not become a private hell of abuse.



"My parents are always fighting!"

"I feel like I am going bananas! How can they stop?" - One twelve year old.

Women experiencing abuse should not be blamed. They should be encouraged to find a safe space. There are trained Muslim professionals who can help. For immediate and serious danger, call 911.

"ILLNESS AND PROBLEMS LEAD TO STRESS & TRAUMA SHAME & FEAR LEAD TO STIGMA!"

**DO NOT LOSE PRECIOUS TIME!
SEEK HELP!**

**FREE & CONFIDENTIAL SERVICES
AVAILABLE!**

Trained Muslim Professionals:

For post 9/11 stress and recovery and HIV/AIDS assistance and referrals:

- Muslims ACT, ICNA Relief, (718) 523-5100
- ICNA Relief, (917) 602-4510
- Muslim Women's Institute for Research & Development, (718) 960-2262

For Arabic speaking clients:

- Arab American Association, (718)745-3523
- Arab American Family Support Center (718) 643-8000

For Domestic Violence crisis intervention, counseling and support:

- Turning Point for Women & Families, (718) 883 9400.
- ICNA Relief, (917) 602-4510
- House of Peace, (917) 602-4510

Additional Resources for Help:

- 1800-Lifenet
- Islamic Social Services Association info@issausa.org
- American Muslim Health Professionals contact@amhp.us
- Urdu materials available at www.ethnichealth.org.uk

©Muslim Consultative Network, NY. MCN is a coalition of organizations and individuals serving NY area Muslims. Visit us at www.mcny.org;

Email: mcnny@gmail.com

Address: P.O. Box 1719 Bronx, NY 10451

STIGMA, SHAME & DENIAL



A Muslim Response

On the Day of Judgment Allah will say to the soul: *O Son of Adam, I fell ill and you visited Me not.*

The Soul will say: *O Lord, and how should I visit you when you are Lord of the Worlds?*

He will say: *Did you not know that My servant had fallen ill and you visited him not? Did you not know that had you visited him you would have found Me with him?*

Hadith Qudsi, Authenticated by Imam Muslim