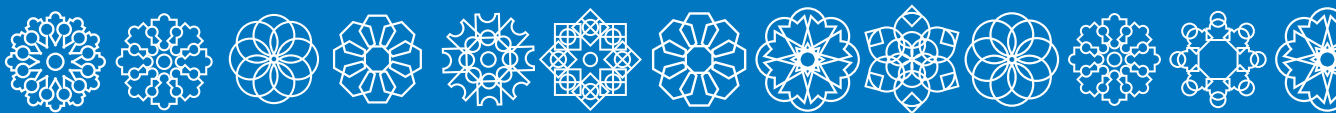


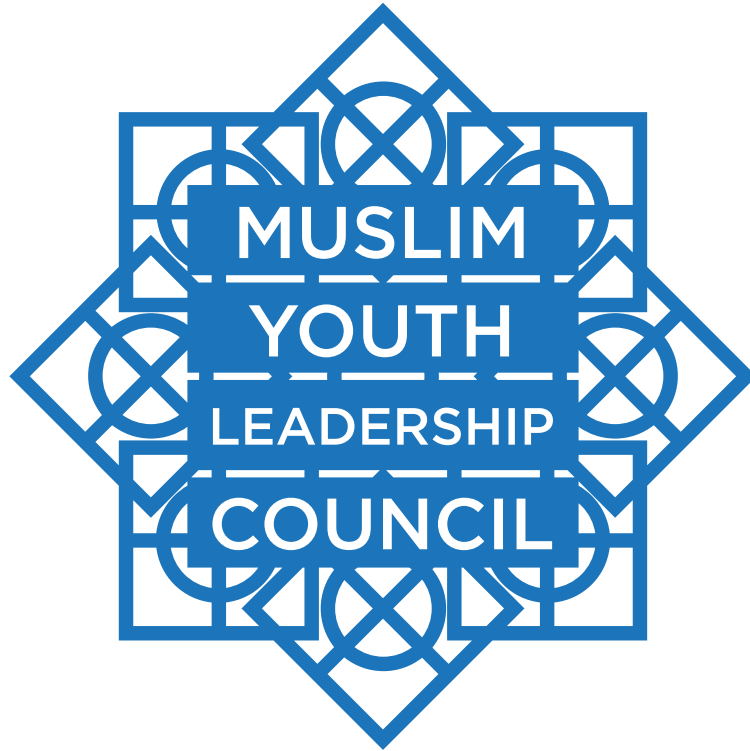


#MuslimAnd T.O.O.L.K.I.T



a project of
Advocates for Youth





a project of
Advocates for Youth

The Muslim Youth Leadership Council (MyLC) is a group of 20 young Muslims from across the country who are working at the intersections of Islamophobia, sexual health, LGBTQ rights, and racial justice.

MyLC works to promote LGBTQ health and rights, immigrant rights, and the sexual and reproductive health and rights of Muslim-identifying people. MyLC seeks to dismantle homophobia, transphobia, white supremacy, anti-black racism, Islamophobia, and anti-Muslim hate. MyLC is also conscious of disability justice and indigenous rights, and works to incorporate these and other liberatory practices into the work as a Council.

WHY

#MuslimAnd



#MuslimAnd is a campaign of the Muslim Youth Leadership Council that works to expand common perceptions of Muslims, both within and outside of our communities. The current political environment constantly dehumanizes Muslims. Further, it perpetuates the idea that there is one kind of Muslim.

We are not monolithic. Instead of saying “I am Muslim, but...” we are claiming an intersectional space and saying that we are #MuslimAnd. Now more than ever, we must call attention to the diversity, expansiveness, and intersectionality of our community. We are #MuslimAnd Queer, #MuslimAnd Feminist, #MuslimAnd Afro-Latinx, #MuslimAnd Angry, #MuslimAnd 5th Generation American, #MuslimAnd Gender Non-Conforming, and more. We are tired of the existing tropes that fail to see our complex identities and feed into the culture of fear and hatred against Muslims. We empower ourselves and others by sharing our stories and being our true selves.

The #MuslimAnd Week of Action runs from October 22nd - November 2nd, 2018. Each day of the week focuses on different issue areas that we care about, which are each one of MyLC’s 4 bucket areas of work:

- Resisting Islamophobia
- Promoting LGBTQ Rights and Supporting Queer Muslims
 - Countering Anti-Blackness in our Communities
- Strengthening Sexual Health and Reproductive Rights for Young Muslims

We also have a different ask for you each day. This toolkit includes background information on these different issues and ways that both Muslims and allies can take action. We hope that you engage with #MuslimAnd, and work to bring vital change into your community during our Week of Action and beyond.

#MuslimAnd

MONDAY - OCTOBER 29th

Resisting Islamophobia

According to Berkeley's Islamophobia Research & Documentation Project, "Islamophobia is a contrived fear or prejudice generated by the existing Eurocentric and Orientalist global power structure. It is directed at a perceived or real Muslim threat through the maintenance and extension of existing disparities in economic, political, social and cultural relations, while rationalizing the necessity to deploy violence as a tool to achieve "civilizational rehab" of the target communities (Muslim or otherwise). Islamophobia reintroduces and reaffirms a global racial structure through which resource distribution disparities are maintained and extended."

Islamophobia is perpetrated by the government as well as expressed as discrimination, harassment and violence by people living all around us. In the last two years, the situation has been exacerbated by the Trump administration. The Southern Poverty Law Center documented a 67% increase in hate crimes against the Muslim community in 2015. According to South Asian Americans Leading Together (SAALT), following the 2016 presidential election, hate violence and xenophobic political rhetoric increased over forty five percent from their previous analysis in just one year. An astounding eighty-two percent of incidents were motivated by anti-Muslim sentiment.

What is gendered Islamophobia?

Trump administration's right wing rhetoric has replicated the Western European context to use women's rights and LGBTQ rights as a proxy to advance Islamophobia. The case of the "Burqini Ban" as "terrorist garb" in France is a good example of how gendered Islamophobia operates upon the divisive notion that Islam and LGBTQ rights and women's rights are incompatible. An American version of gendered islamophobia is how the first Muslim Ban executive order claimed to protect Americans, including from "those who would oppress Americans of any race, gender, or sexual orientation." This hypocritical call for support of freedom for LGBTQ people directly contradicts a long list of actions by the administration to promote discrimination against LGBTQ people in schools and communities.

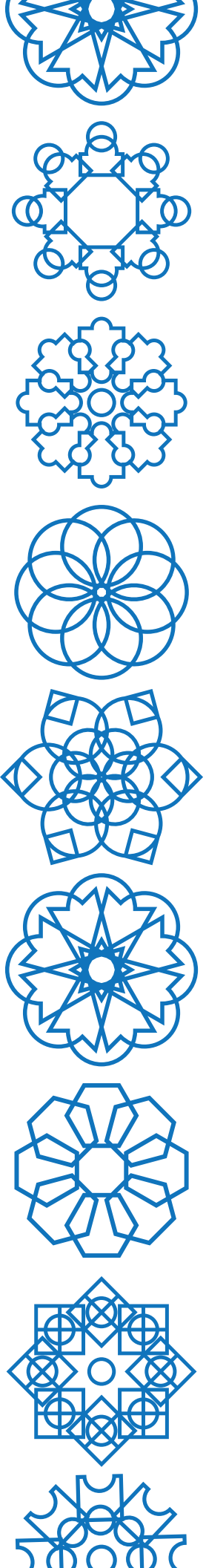
ACTIONS

On **Monday, October 29th**: Post your #MuslimAnd story or your #MuslimAnd Ally message of support on social media!

- You can choose to just write out your #MuslimAnd story, or you can print copies of our #MuslimAnd posters (located on the following page)
- Take a photo holding your #MuslimAnd sign with your story or message of support written down and post with the hashtag on your social media platforms
- If you are holding campus events, take lots of photos and (with consent) post using #MuslimAnd
- Tag @advocatesforyouth on Instagram and Facebook, and @advocatestweets on Twitter - we will uplift your posts!
- If you do not want to post on your personal account, please email your photos to Khadija@advocatesforyouth.org
- Add our #MuslimAnd frames to your Facebook profile picture
 - Go to “Change Profile Picture”
 - Click on “Add Frame” on the right-hand side
 - Search for “#MuslimAnd” or “#MuslimAnd - Solidarity Frame”
 - Choose when to “switch back to previous profile picture” in the bottom right corner
 - Add - and share with all your friends!

Example #MuslimAnd Ally messages:

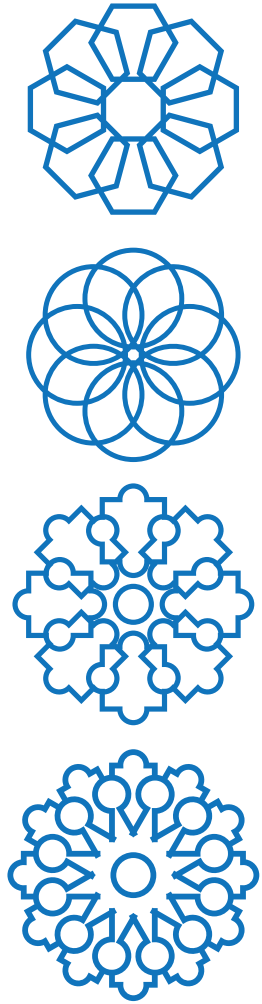
- “#MuslimAnd Ally. I am in solidarity with LGBTQ Muslims.”
- “End Anti-Muslim Hate and White Supremacy”
- “I will educate myself and my community on being an ally for #MuslimAnd”
- “As queer and trans, I support #MuslimAnd” // “As an immigrant, I support #MuslimAnd”// “As Latinx, I support #MuslimAnd”, etc
- “Expand Intersectionality. Expand Liberation. Solidarity with #MuslimAnd”



#MuslimAnd...



a project of
Advocates for Youth



#NoMuslimBanEver



Facts about Islam

Islam is the world's second largest religion. Muslims make up 23% of the world's population, and Islam has 1.6 billion followers. Muslims currently comprise 1% of the U.S. population, and that percentage is expected to double by 2050.

Muslims do not worship a separate God than Christians and Jews; 'Allah' simply means God and the roots of the Islamic, Jewish and Christian faiths are the same.

While Islam is often associated with Arabs, Arabs make up only 15% of the world's Muslim population. The country with the largest population of Muslims is Indonesia.

The most common victims of attacks by Muslim extremists are other Muslims.

Islam has been part of U.S. history since the first people were forcibly brought for enslavement. An estimated 20–30 percent of the enslaved people forcibly taken from Africa arrived in the U.S. as Muslims. From the 1880s to 1914—several thousand Muslims emigrated to the U.S. from the Middle East.

Oppressive mistreatment of women in the Muslim world, as depicted by western media, is a product of pre-Islamic local cultures and traditions coupled with largescale misrepresentation of the Muslim community. Women's rights in Islam are similar to that of both the Christian and Jewish faiths. Practices such as forced marriage, spousal abuse, and restricted movement directly contradict Islamic teachings.

In recent history, women have been heads of state in many Islamic countries, including Indonesia, Pakistan, Turkey, Bangladesh, Senegal, Kosovo, Kyrgyzstan, Mauritius, and more.

*adapted from Standing Up for Racial Justice's "Defining Islamophobia

What is Islamophobia?

- A hostile attitude towards Muslims or those perceived to be Muslims.
- This type of hostility leads to discrimination against Muslims and the exclusion of Muslims from mainstream political and social issues.
- Islamophobia considers Muslims to be inherently different from everyone else and identifies acts by Muslims to be only unique to them.

Solidarity against Islamophobia & Anti-Muslim Hate

Speak Up Against Islamophobia:

- Words have significance – call out anti-Muslim hate and bigotry and name "Islamophobia" when you encounter it.
- Issue a statement in your campus newspaper or write a letter to the editor/op-ed in the wake of Islamophobic attacks.
- If you see the media inaccurately depicting Islam or Muslims, contact them. If you hear friends or peers upholding inaccurate depictions say something.

Organize an Action:

- Spread the word about our #MuslimAnd campaign - encourage other allies to write a statement of support for Muslims and take a photo with their sign.
- Organize a public rally or demonstration to show solidarity against Islamophobia.
- Remember that American Islamophobia affects Muslims in other countries – speak up and take action against war, bombings, and violence against Muslims.

Do Intersectional Work:

- Forces exploiting Islamophobia also attack Black communities, women, LGBTQ folks, workers and immigrants –but they often try to divide us. Let's instead connect our struggles and build relationships that bring communities together.

Organize a Forum or Workshop:

- Organize a discussion, forum, or workshop on Islamophobia and its connection to racism and other forms of oppression.

Film or Book Discussion on Islamophobia:

- Conduct a study group to discuss articles, book or movies on the topic of Islamophobia. Check a list of articles, books and movies at www.merinc.org.

Support Muslim, Black, and People of Color Led Organizations:

- Support Muslim, Black and People of Color organizations fighting Islamophobia and racism levied against their community members.

#MuslimAnd

TUESDAY - OCTOBER 30th

LGBTQ Rights & Supporting Queer Muslims

Being Muslim and recognizing that you're not straight can be a bit confusing at first, given that there are so many mixed messages about this identity. There are religious views on "homosexuality" and how it fits in terms of "halal" or "haram", and more "liberal" views on "queerness", which can be daunting. Many feel pressured to come out and immediately proclaim that they're LGBTQIA+. Coming out can be a very hard, long, and emotional process, but it's also something that can look different for everyone. Know that coming out isn't necessary for certain situations, and needs to be assessed on a personal level for a number of different reasons. In this section, you'll find some issues to consider while being Muslim and navigating coming out (or not), stories from Queer Muslims, information on queer spiritual spaces, and a guide on how to hold your own Halaqa.

ACTIONS

On **Tuesday, October 30th**: From 12:00pm EST - 1:00pm EST, head to Advocates for Youth's Facebook Page and tune into our livestream conversation on being #MuslimAnd Queer! This will be a conversation with MyLC activists and you will have the opportunity to ask live questions.

Keep an eye out for Thursday's action - you will be able to download MyLC's new brochure, "I'm Muslim and I Might Not Be Straight"

Furthermore, we hope that you can use the resources below to support yourself and others in your community, bring conversations to your campus, and create your own supportive spiritual spaces.

Emotional Checklist:

- **Emotional safety:** When coming out, you need to consider your emotional and mental well-being. This can be an emotional process and not addressing depression or maladaptive coping mechanisms prior to coming out may exacerbate these symptoms. Make sure you've established healthy coping skills and outlets if coming out to family and friends gets too emotionally demanding.
- **Financial safety:** If coming out to family or guardians can impact your finances, i.e. financial and legal dependence on parents, college tuition, housing, and the like, then this should be taken into consideration to make an informed decision about when/if/how you should come out.
- **Social safety:** A good idea is to identify friends/family members that could potentially be LGBTQ+ affirming in any capacity. If there are none, you could start conversations with people around you about current events affecting the LGBTQ+ community under the guise of an ally. Their response to this will let you know where they stand on this topic and potentially mean they could be safe to come out to in the future. Over time, one can acquire a handful of supportive friends/family members that can help in branching out in the future.
- **Spiritual safety:** If you are religious, don't let your experiences impact your faith in Allah. For example, if attending a homophobic khutba discourages you from accepting yourself or coming out, establish a connection to the faith independent of what negativity is being said. You are allowed to cultivate a critical approach to and curate everything you take in from the outside world.
- **Educational Safety:** Take an anthropology class. Take a sociology class. Take a psychology class. Accept that you are evolving and your perceptions will continue to evolve as you grow older. This will also help in understanding social underpinnings of religious interpretations.

STORIES FROM QUEER MUSLIMS

Below are anecdotes from real Queer Muslims about their coming out experience. We hope that these stories humanize our experiences. For folks who are considering coming out as a Queer Muslim, we hope that you find these helpful. Everyone has a different path - and know that ultimately you too will find yours!

Homam, 22 years old, California

1. When did you come out, and to whom? What are these people's backgrounds?

- "I came out to my parents during my second year of college while I was away in a different city for school. For me, I had to tell my parents before I opened up to any of my Muslim friends because I felt it would be more respectful of me to be vulnerable with my parents first, rather than have them find out from an outside source. My parents were born and raised in Syria, are very conservative, and brought me up in a religious household. My father works in healthcare and my mother is a homemaker."

2. What was your approach?

- "I approached my family with the intention of letting them know what was troubling me for the past few years. I intended to bring to their attention what I was struggling with on my own and what had been bringing me depression. I had watched youtube videos of other LGBTQ+ folk come out and could not relate whatsoever, so I intended for my coming out as a means to lift the burdensome secret off of my chest and work with their response to that. I also did not anticipate total acceptance due to my parents' cultural upbringing."

3. How did the people you told react?

- "My mom was very emotional and still doesn't really understand the intersectionality between gayness and Islam--to her it's mutually exclusive. At the time, she took me to various counselors, psychiatrists, psychologists, and imams in order to "fix" me into a heterosexual. After a couple months of this, I told her that I needed a break and did not want to talk about it anymore. We haven't talked about it since. My father was upset and disheartened and suggested becoming more "religious" to become a heterosexual. He reacted better than my mother in that his response was calmer and less emotionally charged, but again, acceptance was not something I had anticipated to begin with."

4. What would you do differently if you could go back in time?

- "I'd like to have had a discussion with my parents about some religious texts that have been used to trap me in a spiral of self-hate. I also would have benefitted from formulating my own relationship to those aforementioned texts and reaching out to other LGBTQ+ Muslims to gather their thoughts on them as well before coming to my parents."

5. How has your life changed since coming out?

- “Well for one, my parents have stopped pressuring me to get married. I have also been able to be more transparent with my friends (Muslim or otherwise) and feel more connected to them for that reason. In terms of my faith, I believe it has made my Islam stronger; I’m more intentional with my spiritual practices and value my faith more intensely than I had when I was closeted. Just because I am more “out” and have accepted my sexuality, doesn’t mean that I must simultaneously let go of religious values and morals I have been raised with that resonate with me. I’ve come to realize that my Muslim narrative can still be “traditional” in regards to prayer, fasting, religiosity, monogamy and marriage, relationship to alcohol and pork, etc., just as another Muslim’s narrative can look different yet still hold validity in the eyes of Allah.”

Mirza, 18 years old, New York

1. When did you come out, and to whom? What are these people’s backgrounds?

- “I came out to different people at different times. I came out to my friends first because I knew that I would receive a loving and accepting response from them. I knew that I needed people to support me in discovering my identity as a queer man, which is why I chose to come out to my friends. Later on, I came out to my cousin and then brother, because I knew that they would be loving and supporting, and I needed someone from my family to be able to discuss being queer with because they knew me on a much deeper level than my friends did, and I wanted to move forward knowing I had them as my backups.”

2. What was your approach?

- “At first, I wanted to know that the people I came out to would be accepting. I would always ask the question “Do you love and support me regardless of anything?” and their response would prompt me to question whether or not I would come out to them. If their response was something like “I love and support you unless you go against something I’m very against” I wouldn’t come out to them, but if it was an unequivocal YES, I’d go and come out to them.”

3. How did the people you told react?

- “The people I told would be supportive, but that’s given the fact that I was able to analyze the situation beforehand. I still don’t know how my parents or other family members are going to react, and I don’t know if I will be coming out to them. This is a decision on my part, because of the uncertainty of how they’re going to take it.”

4. What would you do differently if you could go back in time?

- “I don’t think I would do anything differently. I was able to get advice from my other Queer Muslim friends to come to the conclusion that coming out isn’t something necessary. I was also able to learn that my identities aren’t simply one or the other and I never have to choose. I know that Allah made me wholly, and that they don’t make mistakes.”

5. How has your life changed since coming out?

- “Personally I’ve been at a much better place since I’ve come out to myself. I’ve come to realize that I don’t have to completely immerse myself in solely queer or Muslim culture, but I have a community that I’m able to cultivate and share with others who understand my intersecting identities.”

The Importance of Queer Spiritual Spaces

During this day in modern society, it can be quite challenging to have conscious contact with a Higher Power for numerous reasons; that is why for some of us, we crave Queer Spiritual Spaces. For those of us who are religious, bringing your authentic whole self - as you are, because Allah made you exactly who you are - is an important blessing to acknowledge and practice. Queer Spiritual spaces can connect you to others that understand what it means to be Muslim and queer, and for those who seek this, connect us further to Allah. For many of us, prayer and Dhikr can be immensely powerful and nourishing and aid in enriching day-to-day life. So, we honor ourselves and others by claiming our right to pray safely by either creating or joining Queer Spiritual Spaces. It is our duty to fight for ourselves and help uplift others.

We welcome everyone to participate in salat/namaz if they want to. Below is our list of affirming and liberatory prayer space(s) for those who are interested:

List of Spiritual Spaces and Contacts Across the US

LGBT Muslim Retreat: <http://www.lgbtmuslimretreat.com/>

- The Retreat for LGBT Muslims & Their Partners is sponsored by the Muslim Alliance for Sexual and Gender Diversity (MASGD). The retreat is organized by a committed group of volunteers on the Retreat Planning Team, including members of the Muslim Alliance.

Muslim Alliance for Sexual and Gender Diversity (MASGD): <http://muslimalliance.org/>

Desi LGBTQ Helpline for South Asians: <http://www.deqh.org/>

- DeQH is a national Desi LGBTQ Helpline in the United States. We offer free, confidential, culturally sensitive peer support, information and resources for LGBTQ South Asian individuals, families and friends around the globe. We want to offer a safe and supportive ear for callers to share their concerns, questions, struggles or hopes through conversations with our trained South Asian peer support volunteers.

Muslims for Progressive Values: a grassroots, human rights organization, with chapters throughout the US, advocates for social justice, for women's rights, and LGBTQI inclusion in Islam.

- **Washington, DC:** <https://www.meetup.com/DC-MPV-USA/>
- **Boston, MA:** <https://www.facebook.com/groups/597062780640722/about/>
- **San Francisco, CA:** <https://www.meetup.com/SF-Bay-Area-Muslims-for-Progressive-Values-Meetup/>
- **Los Angeles, CA:** <https://www.meetup.com/MPV-LA/>
- **Chicago, IL:** <https://www.facebook.com/mpvchicago>
- **Columbus, OH:** <https://www.facebook.com/ColumbusMPV>
- **New York, NY:** <https://www.facebook.com/groups/165779603597328/>
- **Atlanta, GA:** <https://www.meetup.com/mpvatl/>

Boston, MA -

Queer Muslims of Boston: <https://qmob.wordpress.com/>

Chicago, IL -

Masjid Al-Rabia: <https://masjidalrabia.org/>

Pennsylvania -

OUTMuslim: <https://www.facebook.com/OutMuslim/>

Haven - The Inclusive Muslim Union of Philadelphia: <https://www.facebook.com/havenimup/>

Seattle, WA -

Noor, Seattle's Queer Muslim Collective: <https://facebook.com/seattleqtm/>

Toronto, Canada -

El-Tawhid Juma Circle (Can join jumah via video): <http://www.jumacircle.com/>

Ypsilanti, Michigan -

Islamic Healing Space of A2 & Ypsi: <https://www.facebook.com/IslamicHealingSpace/>

Bay Area, California -

Queer Crescent Healing: <https://www.queercrescent.org/>

If you don't see an organization listed that's near you, consider creating your own! In addition, Muslim Youth Leadership Council members are located throughout the U.S. and we would be happy to help you! Please reach out to Khadija Khan to get in touch with us: khadija@advocatesforyouth.org

How-To Halaqa Guide

Below you will find a guide on how to hold your own Halaqa. We have found this helpful in cultivating our own queer Muslim spiritual spaces.

Halaga: From the Arabic word, “ring”, meaning a circle of people seeking knowledge. Halaqas are aimed to forge a spiritual community and boost each attendee’s iman in remembering Allah

Purpose: To have engaging conversations about current events, Quranic text, religious articles, spiritual practices, and Islamic theology in the context of how it impacts the faith on an individual and community level.

Venue: These meetings can be held at a mosque, community center, a home, or anywhere, really. Snacks and refreshments would also be awesome to have.

Length: Usually is an hour, but can last as long as the attendees want! There is usually a consistent time and place for the meetings to keep things streamlined.

Leadership: Anyone can lead a Halaqa, the purpose is to remember Allah and anyone can do that! One can bring or send resources to the group to read before the meeting, or read during the meeting. Topics can be suggested, and attendees can take turns each meeting time coming up with topics to lead the discussion with.

Procedure:

Opening Dua:

إِنَّ الْحَمْدَ لِلَّهِ نَحْمَدُهُ وَنَسْتَعِينُهُ وَنَسْتَغْفِرُهُ وَنَعُوذُ بِاللَّهِ مِنْ شُرُورِ أَنْفُسِنَا وَمِنْ سَيِّئَاتِ أَعْمَالِنَا. مَنْ يَهْدِهِ اللَّهُ فَلَا مُضِلَّ لَهُ وَمَنْ يَضِلَّ فَلَا هَادِيَ لَهُ.
وَ أَشْهَدُ أَنْ لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا اللَّهُ وَحْدَهُ لَا شَرِيكَ لَهُ وَ أَشْهَدُ أَنَّ مُحَمَّدًا عَبْدُهُ وَ رَسُولُهُ.

Innalhamda lillahee, nahmaduhu wa nasta'eenuhu wa nastaghfiruhu, wa na'oodhu billaahi min shuroori anfusinaa wa min sayyiaati a'maalinaa. Manyah dihillaahu falaa mudillilahu, wa manyudlil falaa haadiya lah.

Wa ashhadu anlaa ilaaha illallahu, wahdahu la shareeka lahu, wa ash hadu anna muhammadan 'abduhu wa rasooluh.

Alhumdulillah. Indeed, all praise is due to Allah. We praise Him and seek His Help and forgiveness. We seek refuge in Allah from our souls' evils and our wrongdoings. He whom Allah guides, none can misguide; and he whom He misguides, no one can guide.

I bear witness that there is no god except Allah—alone without any partners. And I bear witness that Muhammad is His servant and Messenger (Ibn Mas'ud and Ibn 'Abbas in Muslim, Abu Dawud, an-Nasai).

Content: Your topic or suggested materials


Closing Dua:



وَبِحَمْدِكَ أَشْهَدُ أَنْ لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا أَنْتَ أَسْتَغْفِرُكَ وَأَتُوبُ إِلَيْكَ سُبْحَانَكَ اللَّهُمَّ

Subhanakallahumma wa bihamdika, ash hadu anlaa ilaaha illa anta, astaghfiruka wa atoobu ilaik.



How perfect You are Oh Allah, and I praise You. I bear witness that none has the right to be worshipped except You. I seek Your forgiveness and turn to You in repentance (Abu Dawud, At-Tirmidhee, Ibn Majah).

Surah Al-Asr (surah 103):




Bismi Allāhi al-Rahmāni al-Rahīmi
In the Name of Allāh, the Most Gracious, the Most Merciful.

 وَالْعَصْرِ 

1. **Wa al-'asri**
By Al-'Asr (the time).

 إِنَّ الْإِنْسَانَ لَفِي خُسْرٍ 

2. **"Inna al-"insana lafi khusrin**
Verily, man is in loss,

 إِلَّا الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا وَعَمِلُوا الصَّالِحَاتِ وَتَوَّصَوْا بِالْحَقِّ وَتَوَّصَوْا بِالصَّبْرِ 

3. **"Illa al-ladhina "amanu wa-'amilu als salihati wa-tawa-saw bial haqqi wa-tawa-saw bials sabri**
Except those who believe (in Islamic Monotheism) and do righteous good deeds, and recommend one another to the truth (i.e. order one another to perform all kinds of good deeds (Al-Ma'ruf) which Allāh has ordained, and abstain from all kinds of sins and evil deeds (Al-Munkar) which Allāh has forbidden), and recommend one another to patience (for the sufferings, harms, and injuries which one may encounter in Allāh's Cause during preaching His religion of Islamic Monotheism or Jihād, etc.).

#MuslimAnd

WEDNESDAY - OCTOBER 31th

Countering Anti-Blackness in our Communities

Anti-Black racism is a global issue. We care about this issue because it affects young black Muslims on several levels, including health. Research clearly indicates that discrimination based on race contributes to sexual health disparities among marginalized communities. This section of the Toolkit highlights anti-Black racism within the Muslim community. Even though Black Muslims were Prophets (AS) and were some of the most prominent leaders during the time of the Prophet (PBUH), today in our communities, we see the de-legitimization of Black Islamic practices and figures, mosques segregated by race with Black Muslims being the most affected, non-Black families refusing to let their child marry a significant other who is Black, Black Muslims being underrepresented in media representations of Muslims, and more. This discrimination further stigmatizes a community that already finds itself under fire. As a collective, Muslim Youth Leadership Council would like to emphasize that it is not the responsibility of Black people to eradicate the anti-Blackness in our communities. The duty of that falls on white people and non-Black people of color.

White Supremacy within the Muslim Community

When thinking about ways to combat anti-Blackness within the Muslim community, individuals must explore the role that racism has within the community. Racism is the belief, “that a particular race is superior or inferior to another, that a person’s social and moral traits are predetermined by his or her inborn biological characteristics” (ADL, 2018). These colonialist and imperialist practices by non-Black communities have socialized people to think that ultimately Whites are superior to non-Whites (Lipsitz, 2006). Thus, colonialist practices result in institutional and social oppressions against racially Black Muslims (Greenfield, 2013). Understand that you can be racially White, but ethnically African, Indian, Pakistani, Malaysian, Mexican, etc. Racism and anti-Blackness occurs in many different communities and is not strictly practiced by “European whites” against “African Blacks.” For example, white/Arab attitudes of supremacy in Muslim communities are on full display when women use skin-lightening products, especially during weddings. Be mindful of how racism and oppressive practices occurs in our Muslim communities to help combat anti-Blackness! If we truly want to make the world safer for young Black Muslims, we must start by first combating it within ourselves through education and community conversation.

ACTIONS

On **Wednesday, October 31st**: Go to Advocates for Youth's Youtube Channel and watch our just-released video, "Countering Anti-Blackness in Muslim Communities". Share widely! Use this video to start a conversation in your community or on your campus.

Here are some further actions you can take as a non-Black Muslim or ally to help combat anti-blackness:

- *Pay Black Muslims*: If you have the ability to hire someone, hire Black Muslims. Pay Black Muslim performers (don't ask them to do it for the good of the ummah, same goes with Black Muslim speakers and activists, especially those who are queer and transgender)
- *Invite Black Muslim Speakers to MSA events/Muslim spaces*: Do this at all times of the year, not just during Black History Month. This helps center Black Muslims' experiences and perspectives.
- *Donate to campaigns that support Black Muslims*; even host a gathering to fundraise for their cause!
 - **The Muslim Ban** disproportionately impacts African countries. Donate to organizations such as the [Black Alliance for Just Immigration](#) that specifically center Black immigrants in their work.
 - **Mass incarceration** is entwined with the policing and surveillance of Muslims. The surveillance of Muslims started with the surveillance of Black Muslim communities, like the Nation of Islam. The militarization of local police departments post-9/11 in the name of the War on Terror disproportionately impacts Black people within and outside of Muslim communities. Donate to campaigns that bailout incarcerated individuals, such as the [Believers Bail Out](#).
 - **Health disparities** can be fueled by racism and Islamophobia. Black Muslims seeking health care may find the system inaccessible or culturally incompetent. Donate to organizations providing culturally competent health care and training a pipeline of emerging Black Muslim leaders in mental health and well-being. One such organization, the [Muslim Wellness Foundation](#) in Philadelphia recognizes the negative impact of stressors such as poverty, oppression, anti-Black racism, and anti-Muslim bigotry which lead to diminished well-being. The group runs programs like the Mental Health First Aid Training and the Black Muslim Psychology Conference.

- *Do your research:* Research on the art and media that Black people create and that you enjoy. What is the history behind it? Question your relationship to it and do more than just consume it. (i.e. “Who am I, as a non-Black person, without Black culture? Am I existing in a way that helps to center Black people without fetishizing aspects of Black culture?”)
- *CALL OUT/IN YOUR NONBLACK FRIENDS & FAMILY:* Particularly if you are a non-Black person, have discussions in your community using the following questions.
 - *Are we listening to the Black people in our communities and lives who express discomfort and concern?*
 - *Are we using African American Vernacular English (AAVE)? Are our non-Black friends? When and why? What is the impact of that on Black people, specifically Black Americans?*
 - *Am I actively supporting the well-being of Black people (both non-Muslim AND Muslim, not either/or) in my life and in communities in general?*
 - *How are my family and I benefiting from existing in an anti-Black society every day?*
- *Listen to Black people and believe them:* when a Black person tells you that you are being racist, listen! Lean into being accountable instead of defensive.
- *Recognize:* Black Muslims are not just cisgender straight men. In order to truly be rid of anti-Blackness, we must also work on other systems of oppression that affect Black Muslims, like classism, sexism, homophobia, transphobia, and ableism. So be sure to read about Black feminism and keep your discussions about anti-Blackness in the Muslim community intersectional and centering the most marginalized.

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THURSDAY - NOVEMBER 1st

Strengthening Sexual Health and Reproductive Rights for Young Muslims

“If young people are not informed about their bodies and healthy relationships, they are not equipped to identify sexual health problems or when they are being abused, and they don’t know where to get help.” - A Muslim Parent’s Guide to Having “The Talk” With Their Kids, Pg. 4

Islam is a religion of education. As Muslims we are always encouraged to learn more - about the world around us, our religion, and our selves. This rich history of knowledge and tutelage gives a great context for why it is so important that Muslims are the ones teaching our young people about sexual and reproductive health. Often young Muslims feel left out of mainstream conversations about these topics because they do not come from a religious standpoint, but there also tends to be a complete lack of comprehensive discussion within the Muslim community in the fear of not being modest.

On deconstructing shame/haya in regards to sexual activity: **Narrated Um Salama:** Um Sulaim came to Allah’s Messenger (ﷺ) and said, “O Allah’s Messenger (ﷺ)! Verily, Allah does not feel shy to tell the truth. If a woman gets a nocturnal sexual discharge (has a wet dream), is it essential for her to take a bath? He replied, “Yes if she notices a discharge.” (<https://sunnah.com/bukhari/78/148>)

If Um Salama had not asked this question, if she had allowed embarrassment over sexual activity to stop her, then we might never know the answer. Thus it is so important that we encourage young Muslims to always ask questions, even when they are uncomfortable to us. If young people do not feel like they can come to their parents, their religious leaders, or their religion at all then they will go seeking other sources. This is why it’s really critical that we give young people the resources they need in their homes and communities, and build up safe spaces.

ACTIONS

On **Thursday, November 1st**: Download Advocates for Youth's & MyLC's new brochure, "I'm Muslim and I Might Not Be Straight." Share widely and sign up to receive hard copies. Use these brochures in your campus health clinic, LGBTQ space, spiritual space, and more!

Furthermore, please find information below on how to have a conversation about sexual health in your Muslim community. We have also provided a sample lesson plan on how to have this conversation.

"Marriage and sex within it is seen as a natural part of life; the Prophet himself is said to have objected to religious celibacy by saying that there is no monkery in Islam [la rahbaniyya fi'l islam" -- Maghen, Virtues of the Flesh, pp 5]

We hope that with these tools we can begin to have these sometimes awkward, but incredibly important conversations within the Muslim community. The Qur'an says **"Then ask those who possess the Message (ahl adh-dhikr) if you do not know."** [Al-Qu'ran 21:7 and 16:43]. It is our intention that young people have the resources and safety to get our questions answered. It is critical that we receive this education in places we trust, to better support our sexual health and reproductive rights. We hope that you use these resources on your campus, in your community, in your spiritual spaces, and beyond!

How to Start this Conversation

1. Plug in to local and regional resources, including Planned Parenthood, HEART Women and Girls, and Advocates for Youth for curricula that best meets your audience's needs.
2. Understand that a comprehensive sexual and reproductive health education will discuss anatomy and mechanics of sexual activity, sexually transmitted infections, contraception and safe sex, gender identity and sexual orientation, healthy relationships, and consent.
3. Gather a group of people who are interested in both learning and educating the community on these topics in a culturally sensitive way.
4. Secure a space -- whether that be a mosque, community center, or the living room of a community member.
5. Create a safe space for both community educators and attendees by setting guidelines or norms at the beginning of a session and making room to ask questions, whether spoken or anonymously written down.
6. Elicit constructive feedback from attendees to identify where further education may be

needed and how to reach more people who need these resources.

7. Liaise with mosque and/or school board members to introduce such programming in outside institutions where many Muslim youth receive other forms of education. **this**

Sample Lesson Plan

Title: Safer Sex, Emotional Readiness and Contraception For Muslim Youth

Learning Objectives:

1. To convey information about safer sex, desires and respecting boundaries.
2. To work to remove stigma, guilt and shame surrounding sex and contraception.
3. To affirm personal choices, and emotional readiness.

Procedures

Step One:

- Start off by acknowledging that many Muslims hear a lot of contradictory and scary things about our sexual desires and bodies. It is very important to approach sex by thinking about your body and self with love and care.
 - Working through and unlearning shame can be a difficult process and communicating with your partner and affirming yourself is an important part of it.
 - Share this Quranic Ayah: *“He Who created the seven heavens one above another: no want of proportion wilt thou see in the Creation of the Most Gracious. So turn thy vision again: seest thou any flaw?”* (al-Mulk 67:3 - 4)
- Emphasize that Allah created our bodies in the form they say is best fit and to support us. Respecting our bodies is a part of our duty as Muslims. *“On the earth are Signs for those of assured Faith; as also in your own selves: will you not then see?”* (al-Dharyyat 51:20 - 21).
 - Remember that your body is here to support you and it’s important for you to learn how to support it. You should be aware of your body’s limitations, desires and needs before engaging in sex.
 - Be gentle with your body and soul, it’s a prophetic tradition. The prophet PBUH encouraged Muslims to engage in open conversations about sex and desire. Take time to process your emotions before and after engaging with partners, focusing on being in touch with your desires and boundaries.
- Ask students (or participants) to define consent.
 - After receiving some answers from the students define consent. Consent is about being honest with your partner about what you want and asking what they do or don’t want. Consent is all about clear communication and setting boundaries and respecting the boundaries of others. Consent is continuous and specific checking in because people change their minds. Outline that consent is at the basis of our conversation about healthy sex.
- Emphasize that sex is something that is healthy and natural when practiced safely and consensually.
 - Discuss that your sexual orientation and gender identity isn’t an indicator of whether or not you are going to engage in sex.
- Introduce the idea that not everyone is having sex regardless of sexuality. Emphasize

that not everyone wants to have sex and define and explain asexuality. An asexual person (“ace”, for short) is simply someone who does not experience sexual attraction. That’s all there is to it. Aces can be any sex or gender.

- Affirm the idea that not everyone wants to have sex! Many Muslims, including queer Muslims, wait until marriage to engage in sex and some Muslims are asexual and some Muslims don’t want to be in relationships!
- Highlight the fact that many Muslims regardless of their sexuality and gender orientation are engaging in sex, whether it is premarital or not, and it’s important for everyone to practice safer sex.

Step Two:

- Tackle the idea of shame by sharing the story of Um Salama to tackle stigma. Um Sulaim came to Allah’s Messenger (ﷺ) and said, “O Allah’s Messenger (ﷺ)! Verily, Allah does not feel shy to tell the truth. If a woman gets a nocturnal sexual discharge (has a wet dream), is it essential for her to take غسل bath? He replied, “Yes if she notices غسل discharge.”

<https://sunnah.com/bukhari/78/148>

- Ask the students to share if they are surprised that these are conversations that the prophet was having. Ask them what conversations around sexual health they are having with their peers, parents, religious community.
- Emphasize that students should be approaching sex by thinking about your body and self with love and care.
 - Give students active strategies that will help them work through and unlearn shame, such as active communication with one’s partner, educating themselves on safer sex and consent.

Step Three:

- Tell students that knowing how to practice safer sex is essential and important information for everyone. Ask students what forms of contraception they are familiar with.
 - As students begin to list the various forms of contraception, distribute copies of [Advocates for Youth’s STI/HIV Informational Brochure](#)
 - Define STI for the students, and tell them that despite negative stigma — and sometimes shame — around contracting STIs, it’s actually quite common.
- Emphasize with the students that talking about STIs can be scary, but it doesn’t have to be. STI’s would be less common if people were having more honest conversations and aware of their own sexual health.
 - Getting tested regularly and talking with your healthcare provider about STIs is an essential part of taking care of yourself and your partner.
 - Remind that testing is also important, because many people with an STI may not know they have one. There are a number of STIs that don’t come with significant or visible symptoms, which is why getting tested is the most effective way to stay STI-free.

Step Four:

- End the session by reminding everyone that their body is there to support them and it’s important for them to learn how to support it. Emphasize the importance of being aware of our body’s limitations, desires and needs before engaging in sex because that is what Allah asks of us.

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FRIDAY - NOVEMBER 2st **Action Day!**

MyLC has identified 4 issue areas we are working to readdress. Maybe as a young Muslim, you and your friends have another area to add. If you are an ally, perhaps you have ideas after reading this toolkit. Today is the day for raising your voice about this issue. Think about the issue. How does it impact young Muslims? What do you want people to know about it? How can they help you address this issue? Plan an action around this issue that responds to these questions. You can table on your campus or hold a small gathering with some folks and have a discussion about your topic. Some additional ideas follow. Thanks being part of our week of action!

Consider actions like:

- Tabling on your campus and having folks write their #MuslimAnd story and share on social media*
- Hosting an LGBTQ Muslim potluck dinner and reading through the "I'm Muslim & I Might Not Be Straight" brochure*
- Organizing a speakout against Islamophobia*
- Having a community conversation about safer sex*
- Hosting a group viewing of the "Countering Anti-Blackness in Muslim Communities" video and debrief conversation*

We encourage you to continue to utilize this toolkit throughout the rest of the year and beyond!



*THANK YOU for engaging with the
#MuslimAnd Week of Action!*



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