



## Working with Muslims bulletin

February 2025

Dear Colleagues,

Welcome to the February 2025 issue of the Working with Muslims bulletin, compiled for child mental health professionals by The Reflection Project. A bit more about us:

*Our vision is for every Muslim child in the UK to feel heard and healed through timely access to faith-sensitive therapy*

*We help Muslim children and young people access faith and culturally sensitive therapy by collaborating with community partners to deliver mental health support; and by training therapists in the importance of an appropriately tailored approach.*

For further details of our projects and team, please see: [thereflectionproject.org](https://thereflectionproject.org)

## EVENTS

### Value Every Mind: Mental Wellbeing in Schools - Islamophobia and Bullying in Schools

20th March, 7pm (online)

An interactive CPD session exploring the definition, causes, and prevalence of Islamophobia in the UK. This session sheds light on the alarming statistics, manifestations, and narratives of Islamophobia while providing practical strategies to address faith-based bullying in schools.

Key learning outcomes:

- Define Islamophobia and understand it as a form of racism
- Recognise how Islamophobia manifests and its impact on students and staff
- Explore the causes of Islamophobia in the UK
- Learn strategies to challenge Islamophobic narratives
- Identify ways schools can reduce and tackle faith-based bullying

Delivered by [Educate Against Islamophobia](https://www.educateagainstislamophobia.org/) in Collaboration with [Kidscape](https://www.kidscape.org/) and Muslim Mind Collaborative.

Register: <https://us06web.zoom.us/meeting/register/tZwvce-ppzsoHdLPyglTLqyBlh33STkkhftq#/registration>

## **Conference: Nurturing Minds - Child development & mental health in the Muslim community**

Saturday 3rd May, 10am - 6pm, Newnham College, University of Cambridge

Organised by the Muslim Researchers Network and The Reflection Project, with the MRN Psychology, Mental Health & Islam Research Group.

A one-day academic conference for researchers and practitioners interested in improving mental health support for Muslim children and young people. Expect insightful talks, an interactive workshop, and a panel discussion focusing on how we can better support Muslim youth through research, practice and community initiatives. More details coming soon – stay tuned for updates on speakers, registration, and abstract submissions.

Tickets: <http://buytickets.at/muslimresearchersnetwork/1613109>

Further details: [muslimresearchersnetwork@gmail.com](mailto:muslimresearchersnetwork@gmail.com)

## **RESOURCES**

### **New service: The Reflection Project Barnet**

This initiative aims to respond to the mental health needs of Muslim children and young people in Barnet, north London. Building on The Reflection Project's existing work in Barnet, this service will provide specialist mental health support for one of Barnet's most marginalised groups. Over a 12 month period, the project will provide:

- Free, in-person faith and culturally sensitive child psychotherapy (for ages 2-24)
- Professional network liaison to ensure safe, consistent support around the child
- Parent work if required to support the therapy

Funded by Young Barnet Foundation and North Central East London CAMHS Provider Collaborative.

Referrals and further information: [contact@thereflectionproject.org](mailto:contact@thereflectionproject.org)

### **Expanded service: RBKC Community Public Health Programme**

The objective of the CPHP is to tackle inequalities in the Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea's most deprived wards. This will be done by supporting the VSCE sector to develop community-based interventions to prevent ill-health for adults most impacted by health inequalities. The Reflection Project is contributing to the Programme by providing free psychotherapy for young Muslims (aged 18-25) in RBKC.

Referrals and further information: [contact@thereflectionproject.org](mailto:contact@thereflectionproject.org)

## **MLXN: The Muslim Lived Experience Network**

Non-judgemental, faith-sensitive peer support for Muslims. Whilst working as part of a peer support team in the NHS, the co-founders of the network found it challenging to find appropriate community services to signpost our Muslim clients to. Most local organisations provided either secular spaces that overlooked our clients' spiritual needs, or places of worship with reduced capacity to offer mental health support. Informal, inclusive spaces that met the holistic needs--social, mental, spiritual and physical health--of Muslims were scarce and often overstretched and underfunded. So, we set out to build a responsive, stigma-free and sustainable community for Muslims based on the principles of peer support and lived experience practice - such as shared experience, mutual support, hope and healing - without compromising our values as Muslims.

MLXN services include: peer support groups and a community forum; Islamically informed mental health workshops; a community-led blog; faith kits tailored for use in mental health wards.

Website: [MLXN](#)

## **Nafsiyat: Free Group Empowerment Sessions**

Nafsiyat is launching a psychosocial group programme aimed at providing accessible and culturally sensitive mental health support to marginalised and racialised communities in North London. This programme focuses on fostering mental wellbeing through regular, professionally-led group sessions that create safe spaces for participants to explore their mental health challenges, connect with others, and build resilience. Spaces are currently available in the Mixed-Gender, Arabic and Turkish speaking groups.

Open to people aged 18+ residing in Islington, Camden, Haringey, Enfield or Barnet.

Further information [here](#).

## **Ramadan in the Workplace: a Guide for Employers**

Want to know more about what you can do for your Muslim employees during the month of Ramadan? [Muslimic Makers](#) have put together a free PDF guide for you to learn more about just that. Available when you sign up [here](#).

## **In development: Positive Practice Guide for the Muslim Community**

Designed to address the unique mental health needs of the Muslim community, the PPG equips mental health professionals with tools to deliver culturally sensitive and

faith-aware care, overcoming barriers that Muslims often face in accessing and benefitting from mental health services. By offering practical strategies, the guide adapts Low-Intensity Cognitive Behavioural Therapy (LICBT) to be inclusive, engaging and effective for Muslim clients.

Further information: [Yahya Delair](#)

## **Muslim Women Talk Ramadan - Series 2**

Available on [Spotify](#). The series includes: how to incorporate kindness and compassion to ourselves and the wider community; the impact of Ramadan and how we can establish good deeds in our daily routines; how to build self-respect and the repercussions of not having it; an interview with Dr Kiran focusing on medico-legal support for children in war zones including Gaza.

## **Podcast: A Muslim Perspective - The Assisted Dying Bill**

Following his appearance on a briefing with the Religion Media Centre regarding the Assisted Dying Bill, Dr. Mansur Ali, Senior Lecturer with the Islam-UK Centre, Cardiff University, talks about the bill.

Podcast: [A Muslim Perspective on the Assisted Dying bill](#)

## **Islam - Therapy, Spirituality and Politics**

This online conference organised by Stephen Maynard & Associates and the [Lateef Project](#) took place in January, and provided a space for both Muslim therapists and their peers to think about the nuances of therapeutic work in the diverse Muslim community - a community that has been subject to racial trauma, misunderstanding, suspicion and surveillance. It delved into how Islamic Psychology can inform the development of culturally aligned and meaningful therapeutic experiences for Muslims. It investigated the intersections between spirituality, therapy and politics, and how to build meaningful relationships with Muslim clients.

The conference programme and background is available [here](#).

## **RESEARCH & ARTICLES (published)**

### **Briefing: Poverty among children affected by UK government asylum and immigration policy**

Dr Ilona Pinter and Lucy Leon, 10 January 2025

This briefing draws primarily on research and analysis concerning children in the asylum and immigration context conducted by researchers based at the [Centre for](#)

[Analysis of Social Exclusion](#) (CASE), London School of Economics and Political Science and COMPAS, University of Oxford. The authors draw on their expertise and research on child poverty and inequality in the context of UK asylum and immigration policy from projects they led or were involved in, such as the [Understanding Migrant Destitution](#) project, the [Lifeline for All](#) report, the [Social Cost Benefit Analysis of Lifting NRPF conditions](#) report, [research on children and parents' experiences of Asylum Support](#), and other studies. The briefing also includes some new analysis of the Home Office Migrant Journey and other administrative data.

PDF available [here](#).

### **“I thought in order to get to God I had to win their approval”: a qualitative analysis of the experiences of Muslim victims abused by religious authority figures**

Rahmanara Chowdhury, Belinda Winder, Nicholas Blagden & Farooq Mulla

*Journal of Sexual Aggression* 2022 Vol 28:2

<https://doi.org/10.1080/13552600.2021.1943023>

The abuse of individuals by religious authority figures has generated considerable political, civic and media attention. To date, much of this focus has been on Catholic and Anglican priests, although instances in the Buddhist community have also emerged. This paper presents an analysis of the experiences of individuals (n = 6) who were victims of abuse by Imams (Muslim leaders) and/or Muslim faith teachers. Participants were interviewed and their accounts analysed using Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (IPA). This paper presents two superordinate themes that emerged from the rich data set: (i) Toxicity of silence and (ii) Barriers to the acknowledgement of abuse. Findings and implications of the research are discussed in relation to facilitating the reporting of abuse perpetrated by religious authority figures in the Muslim community. The authors argue that the difficulties for victims in reporting abuse have exacerbated the impact of the abuse, affecting their wellbeing and their relationships with their families and their faith.

### **The association between experiences of racism and mental health on children and young people in the UK: rapid scoping review**

Ghezae FT, Zungu Z, John A, et al. *BJPsych Open*. 2025;11(1):e26. doi:10.1192/bjo.2024.836

Racism is increasingly recognised as a key contributor to poor mental health. However, the existing literature primarily focuses on its effects on adults. The aim of this review was to identify literature on the association between experiences of racism and mental health in children and young people in the UK.

Inclusion criteria were: (a) peer-reviewed publications containing original data; (b) UK-based research; (c) included examination of associations between mental health and experiences of direct or indirect racism (quantitative or qualitative); (d) inclusion of an assessment of mental health outcomes; (e) participant ages up to and including 18 years of age or (if the range went beyond 18) with a mean age of 17

years or less. Six databases were searched between 2000 and 2022; an initial 11 522 studies were identified with only eight meeting the inclusion criteria. Five of the identified studies provided quantitative data and three provided qualitative data. The majority of studies (7/8) focused on children and young people aged 10 years and over; only one focused on children under the age of 10 years. Measurements of racism varied among the studies providing quantitative data. Only four studies directly focused on the effects of racism on the mental health of children and young people. Although the included studies highlighted potential negative impacts of experiences of racism on children and young people in the UK, this review shows the lack of available literature to inform policy and practice. No studies examined the impact of internalised racism, systemic and institutional racism, or intersectionality.

Full study [here](#).

## **Therapeutically Trained Muslim Faith Leaders' Experiences of Islamically Informed Therapeutic Support in the Muslim community**

Farhana Maleque (2024) - research for ClinPsych doctorate

This study explores the experiences of Therapeutically Trained Muslim Faith Leaders (TTMFL) in delivering Islamically informed therapeutic support within the Muslim community and mental health services. Thematic analysis of interviews with ten TTMFL highlights the complexities of addressing Muslim clients' faith needs at multiple levels (micro-, exo-, and macro-).

Findings reveal that the secular psychology framework and discriminatory policies hinder TTMFLs' ability to provide effective therapy, emphasizing the need for greater collaboration with Mental Health Practitioners (MHPs). TTMFLs' deep connection to the Muslim community allows them to bridge cultural gaps and support MHPs in integrating Islamic perspectives into therapy. This research significantly contributes to the limited literature on faith-informed therapy, particularly within Islam, and underscores the importance of addressing racial and religious inequalities in healthcare, especially amid rising Islamophobia. The findings are relevant for psychologists, Muslim communities, faith-based organizations and policymakers.

Full thesis [here](#).

## **Heartfulness: Islamic Spiritual Practices for Health and Well-being**

By Carrie York (2025)

Mindfulness, meditation, yoga, prayer and other psycho-spiritual practices for health and wellbeing are pervasive in our world today. Until now though the religious traditions taking up the bulk of real estate in the 'health and spirituality' movement have been Buddhism (mindfulness and meditation), Hinduism (yoga) and Christianity (prayer). A glaring absence is the second largest religious tradition in the world - Islam - yet it is full of such practices waiting to be explored.

The purpose of this edited volume is to examine Islamic spiritual practices and healing modalities within the context of health and well-being. It is a resource for

students, scholars, clinicians and pastoral caregivers. Contributors include: Dr. Ghena Ismail; Dr. Fyeqa I. Sheikh, Psy.D.; Dr. Mahrukh Mustansar Ph.D (Postdoc); Sarah Mohr; Dr Razia Bhatti Ali; Wadud Hassan; Dr. Maneeza Dawood.

## RESEARCH (in progress)

### British Muslim Interactions with the Care System

Equi is seeking participants for their research:

We know many Muslim children in the UK care system often struggle to find Muslim foster or adoptive families. At the same time, potential Muslim carers often face barriers that prevent them from offering the support these children need. Our research explores how the Muslim community interacts with the care system and how Islamic principles can improve care for children. We will present policy recommendations to the government, leveraging the strengths of the Muslim community to better meet the needs of the vulnerable and yateem in the UK.

We want the voices and experiences of British Muslims to be at the forefront of our report. Are you a British Muslim who:

- Fostered or adopted a child in the UK, or considered doing so?
- Applied to foster or adopt (successfully or not)? Experienced the care system as a looked-after child? Worked as a social worker?
- Is part of a Muslim care providing agency or organisation?
- 

Your insights are invaluable and can help make a difference. Please see our [flyer](#) for more information.

Link to Registration Form: <https://forms.office.com/e/fK3fYCs2Xe>

Equi is a think tank committed to producing ethically-driven research and policy recommendations on issues affecting the UK, drawing on Muslim insight: <https://equi.org.uk/>

### De-coding Prevent: British Muslim Psychologists' Perspectives on the Prevent Policy

Seeking participants for this study aiming to explore perspectives of British Muslim psychologists regarding the NHS Prevent policy, and investigating the impact on mental health practices and patient care. Further information [here](#).

Please contact Caasha Abdirahman, Lead Researcher, University of East London [u2388738@uel.ac.uk](mailto:u2388738@uel.ac.uk)



## HELP CREATE THE NEXT WWM BULLETIN

Please send information about relevant activities in your area, resources or research to [contact@thereflectionproject.org](mailto:contact@thereflectionproject.org) so that we can share it in the next WWM bulletin.

With best wishes,

Fatima Zeeshan  
Assistant Psychologist  
The Reflection Project

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W: [thereflectionproject.org](http://thereflectionproject.org)

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