

#BeyondCOVID



**Mental Health & COVID19: What can your Mosque do?**

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# My Abuji's story



- The Mosque as a support system
- New arrivals to the UK and the role the Mosque played
- The mosque became an integral part of their community, not just to remain close to their faith, but also to ensure their ties to the community remained strong.
- Mosques in the west serve additional functions as places for social gatherings, community and political involvement, community resources, social services and educational

# Mental Health state of young Muslims



32% of respondents suffered through suicidal thoughts

¼ had identify struggles

40% of men said they spoke to nobody about their last issue

52% had suffered through depression

So what's happening on our helpline....

# MYH research



- Since January, we have signposted to Masjids and Imams a total of 199 times. The breakdown is as follows:
  - Cambridge Mosque: 121
  - ICCUK: 62
  - Shaikh Kalil Laher: 16
- Many individuals across different age groups and genders have contacted us for religious advice or knowledge which we signpost to Imams and Masjids. The ages range from 13-50. Within this client group, 39.6% have been male, and 60.4% were female.

## What are some of the common themes that come up and result in signposting to mosques

- Sometimes, people contact us because they are feeling very guilty and low after committing a sin
- In these cases, we help with our clients' immediate feelings of guilt and sadness, and signpost for further queries about faith
- Crossover of our clients' mental health concerns, and their faith
- Individuals with depression complain that they hear that their depression is due to a lack of faith

Emma contacted MYH as she's been struggling with her sins lately. In the past, she used to watch pornographic material, but has since repented, and feels sick thinking about it. She is worried now that some illnesses and issues she is facing are a punishment for her past sins.....

Ahmed has been experiencing pervasive and intrusive thoughts. In the past, Adam experimented with drugs and alcohol, which he received professional help for. However, these thoughts have led him to commit some other sins, which he can't stop blaming himself for. This has resulted in Ahmed experiencing heightened anger and some suicidal thoughts.....

Sana has lived through a decade of physical and mental abuse at the hands of her family. She has reached her breaking point, and has decided she must leave her family home soon for the sake of her wellbeing. She is worried doing so would make her feel isolated, as her extended family would surely reject her for 'humiliating' her family, or that her family might track her down and force her to return. Sana is also feeling guilty about her decision, as she believes as a Muslim, she should instead be patient and tolerate this abuse....

# Mosques and mental health support

- Imam's as frontline workers
- Mental health 'gatekeepers'
- An expectation from Imam's and Mosques to be more than faith leaders
- Engaging with young people everyday

# Supporting imams and Mosques



What can we do?

What are our young people asking for?

Why have mainstream services not supportive?