

# Institute for Muslim Mental Health-Canada Institut pour la Sante Mentale Muslmane Canada

## Wellness, Resiliency and Healing

### Islamophobia: Trauma, Grief, Alienation, Discrimination, Distrust

**January 29, 2019:** Six Muslim men were massacred, and many injured, while they were praying at a mosque in Quebec City. One worshiper was left paraplegic. The accused was charged with murder and sentenced.

**September 10, 2020:** Mohammed-Aslim Zafis, caretaker of a Mosque in Toronto, sat outside said Mosque whereupon a man walked up to him and killed him by slashing his throat.

**June 2021:** A Muslim family in London, Ontario, is killed by a 20-year-old, who rammed his truck into them while they were out for a Sunday walk, murdering 3 generations of the family: the only survivor, a 9-year-old boy. It was according to police, a premeditated hate crime against the family because they were Muslim.

**2001-2022:** Numerous incidents of harassment, physical assault and verbal abuse against Muslim women wearing hijab, vandalism of Mosques, Muslim businesses, schools were recorded across Canada .

**21%** • Felt forced assimilation or apostasy in themselves or their peers

**65%** • Suffered from mental health challenges

**25%** • Were dealing with drug use and addictions

**65%** • of Muslim women who approached Imams for marital counsel experienced physical abuse (*Journal of Integrated Sciences*)

**53%** • of victims of hate crimes are women (*Canadian Mental Health Association*)

**56%** • of Canadians believe that Islam suppresses women's rights (*Angus Reid Institute*)

**47%** • of Canadians support banning headscarves in public (*Angus Reid Institute*)

72 Qualitative interviews of Muslim Youth in 5 cities  
(Institute of Religious and Socio-Political Studies reported)

**42%** • Of Canadian think discrimination against Muslims is "Mainly their Fault" (*Angus Reid Institute*)

**13.9%** • of unemployed people were Muslim (*Canadian Dawn Foundation*)

**26%** • of Muslims Polled felt that their beliefs were not welcomed in Canadian society (*Geoff Robbins/The Canadian Press*)

**46%** • Of Canadian have unfavorable view of Islam - more than for any other religious tradition (*Angus Reid Institute*)

The Future of The Global Muslim Population estimates that, by 2030, there will be about 2.7 million Muslims living in Canada. (*Immigration.ca*)

## WHY

- It is known from experience and research that hatred of people based on their race, gender, religious beliefs, and cultural heritage leads to intergenerational trauma, grief, repressed anger. Internalization of negative stereotypes can have devastating and long-lasting negative impact on the Individual, their families and community's wellbeing.
- Muslim social workers and mental health professionals, practitioners, religious leaders have identified the most vulnerable populations to be: women, youth, newcomers, refugees from war torn areas and people struggling with gender identity, sexual orientation and underlying mental health conditions.
- For decades Canadian Muslims, who are providing Social and Mental Health Services, have been raising red flags over the lack of a cohesive, professionally researched, collaborative national strategy; to address holistically the various challenges Canadian Muslims are struggling with.
- The past three years of social isolation has exasperated the challenges of post traumatic stress, domestic violence, anxiety, distrust and depression.

## WHAT

**Mandate of the Institute for Muslim Mental Health- Canada is to establish:**

- **Centre of Excellence:**
- Develop and Enhance programming, and services that address, and promote mental health supports and treatments, that are culturally and spiritually compatible to the needs of Muslim clients.
- Develop and Promote social and family services and resources, for Wrap Around trauma informed care that will enhance resiliency and recovery
- Promote and enhance counselling services that are professional and compatible to client's, cultural and spiritual needs

## **Knowledge Hub:**

- To act as a clearing house for research in areas of concern, that will inform practice and program development.
- Initiate learnings from Indigenous Elders- adapting the model of restorative justice, healing circles in partnership with Ma Mawi Wi Chi Itata Centre, Winnipeg
- To offer support services and therapeutic counselling to victims of hate-based violence, domestic and gendered violence, discrimination and racism.
- Enhance capacity building of Community Resiliency drawing from spiritual and cultural strengths.
- Train volunteers in Mental Health First Aid and grief support from across Canada.
- Develop peer support group

## **Anti-Islamophobia/Anti-Racism Education:**

- To conduct and support research on the impact of Islamophobia on the psychological, economic, social and the mental health of Muslims.
- Organize sector specific training on building resistance to Islamophobia.
- Develop spiritual and psychological counselling models for specific population to address internalized Islamophobia, self-isolation and vicarious trauma.

## **How**

### **Inaugural Conference - November 12th and 13th, 2022, Winnipeg: Outcomes**

- Finalize the Terms of Reference, Organisational Structure and Administration of the Institute
- To enhance collaboration amongst stakeholders for a cohesive services
- To develop a resource directory
- To establish digital platform where professionals, practitioners and leaders will network
- Determine the start up date

## **WHO**

- Islamic Social Services Association Inc. (ISSA) is a not-for-profit registered charitable organization, established in 1999 in North America. In 2003, it split in two sister organizations: ISSA USA and ISSA Canada.
- ISSA has also established Canadian Muslim Women Institute in 2006 and Canadian Muslim Leadership Institute in 2010.
- ISSA is an organization that is recognized for its lead in culturally and spiritually compatible family supports, services, counselling, and building capacity within the community and larger society.
- ISSA has published 24 sector specific toolkits about Islam and Muslims. ISSA also offers anti racism and anti-islamophobia trainings (Visit our website at [issacanada.com](http://issacanada.com))
- ISSA led year long consultations across North America with professionals, community leaders, practitioners and Muslim social services focusing on the Mental Health, and family challenges facing Canadian Muslims and the subsequent impact of Islamophobia and other social issues on the community. Consensus was reached that ISSA should take the lead on this project.