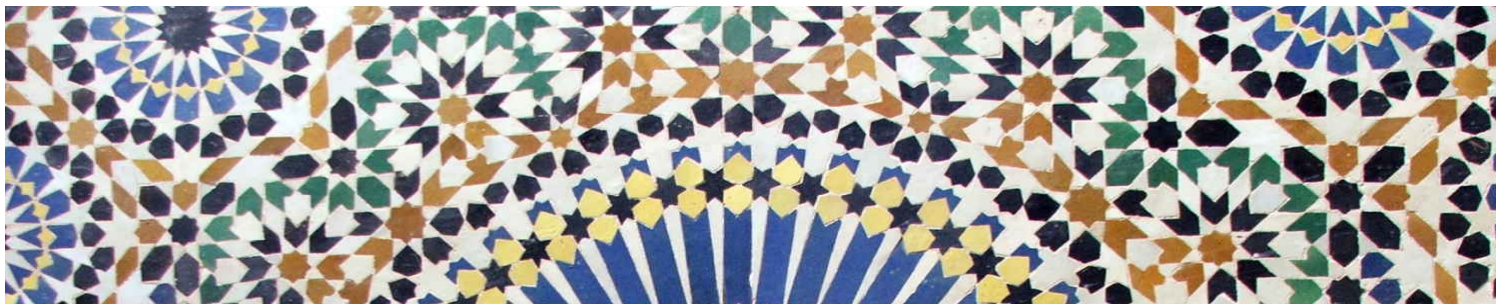


INSPIRITED MINDS PRESENTS
SUPPORTING A FRIEND
WITH MENTAL ILLNESS:
A VERY SMALL GUIDE





ABOUT US

Inspired Minds is a registered UK Charity delivering support to Muslims suffering from a variety of mental health issues. We provide critical support that helps both Muslim and non-Muslim clientele alike, recognising cultural, spiritual and Islamic needs. We aim to support people through their needs, to actively raise awareness of a variety of issues among communities, as well as to conduct research on the ground to further our understanding. In order to achieve this, our Outreach Team works to create a variety of events and workshops, collaborating with a variety of organisations and teams to meet these needs. Inspired Minds has previously partnered with organisations, such as Muslim Doctors Association and Mind.

EMPATHY & FRIENDSHIP

One of the problems faced by many suffering from mental health issues is isolation. This is a huge contributing factor to mental health issues, if not one of the leading factors. In fact, community support and having someone to talk to can help to alleviate many problems, not even with an aim to solve them, but to provide relief. The saying 'a problem shared is a problem halved' is fitting in this context, to show that one of the unique blessings of the Muslim community is that we as Muslims should have our Ummah, and unity in order to share our problems and support each other through this. The problem is that many of our communities may not have an understanding of mental health issues, may not be aware of how prevalent they are, or it could simply be a case of not knowing what to say, how to say it, or when to say it! We know the importance of Brotherhood/Sisterhood in Islam, which can be shown through numerous hadith outlining this clearly:

"None of you will believe until you love for your brother what you love for yourself"

&

"The believers in their mutual kindness, compassion and sympathy are just like one body. When one of the limbs suffers, the whole body responds to it with wakefulness and fever"

(Bukhari & Muslim)

These hadith have a far-reaching impact, and if we as a community were implementing it as fully as we should be, would help us to grow further in our support of each other. One of the ways we can improve this is through equipping ourselves to deal with not only hardships we can see, but also those we cannot (such as mental health issues, stress, isolation, etc.)

We, at Inspired Minds, hope and pray this booklet provides benefit to you inshaAllah. To find out more about the work we do, please visit: inspiredminds.org.uk.



HOW CAN I HELP SOMEONE?

Supportive friends can play an important role in the mental health recovery process. All too often, people respond negatively or dismissively when someone discloses that he/she has a mental health disorder. It is important to remember that mental health disorders are just as real as physical illnesses and that a person cannot just “snap out of it.” If you are unsure how to react when a friend tells you that he/she is struggling with a mental health disorder, it can be helpful to think about how you would react if that same friend told you that he/she had been diagnosed with a physical disorder like diabetes.

Below are some tips about how you may want to respond if a friend tells you that he/she has a mental health disorder:

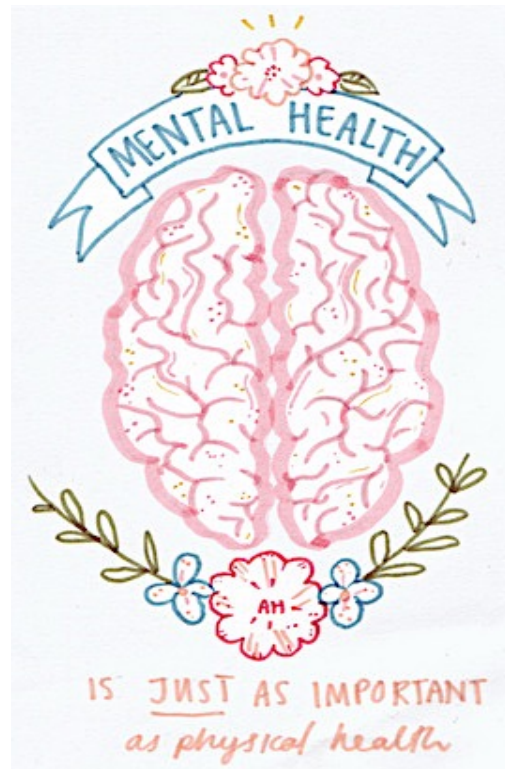
Show your support. Express your concern and sympathy, talk openly and make sure that your friend knows that he/she is not alone. The most important thing you can do is just offer to be available.

Be sure to do **daily adhkar** (daily supplications) in the morning and evening – to protect yourself. Encourage your friend to do this too. These can be found easily online, in YouTube videos and mobile apps with helpful reminders.

Listen. If your friend talks about their mental health diagnosis, don't change the subject. Resist the temptation to give advice or dismiss their concerns. If your friend discloses personal information, keep his/her trust by not sharing the information with others.

Ask what you can do to help. You can leave this open-ended (“I want to know how I can help you.”) or suggest specific tasks that might be helpful (“Can I drive you to your appointment?”).

If you know that your friend is struggling at University, it can be helpful just to offer to study with him/her.



Ask if your friend is getting the treatment that she/he wants and needs. If not, offer to find out about available resources and help your friend find effective care.

Seek advice from someone of knowledge. Never be afraid to admit when you don't know something, or it isn't in your remit – it is better to simply say 'I don't know' than to lead someone in a direction that can cause unintended harm

Reassure your friend that you still care about him/her. Many people with mental health disorders tend to withdraw from family and friends. Continue to invite your friend to go to dinner, study, talk, or just hang out.

Educate yourself about your friend's disorder. This can help you to know what to expect.

Support your friend's healthy behaviours. Certain strategies, such as getting enough sleep, eating healthy and exercising can be helpful when managing one's mental health.

Take care of yourself. It can be stressful and sometimes overwhelming to take on the care of a friend. Make sure not to get so involved that you forget to take care of yourself. Take time out for yourself. Make time to do something you find relaxing.



you're
gonna

be
okay

to: Self

date: 10/23/15

note:

you owe yourself the
love that you give
to other people.

HOW DO I APPROACH SOMEONE?

- Give the person opportunities to talk. It can be helpful to let the person choose when to open up. If they don't initiate a conversation about how they're feeling, you should say something to them. Speak honestly about your concerns.
- Choose a suitable time to talk in a space you both feel comfortable where there will be no interruptions.
- Use 'I' statements such as 'I have noticed....and feel concerned' rather than 'you' statements.
- Let the person know you're concerned about them and are willing to help.
- Respect how the person interprets their





WHAT HELPS?

- Treat the person with respect and dignity
- Don't blame the person for their illness
- Offer consistent emotional support and understanding
- Encourage the person to talk to you
- Be a good listener
- Give the person hope for recovery

If the person would like information, make sure the resources you provide are accurate and appropriate to their situation.

WHAT DOESN'T HELP?

- Telling them to 'snap out of it' or 'get over it'
- Being hostile or sarcastic
- Being over-involved or over-protective
- Nagging
- Trivialising a person's experience by pressuring them to 'put a smile on their face,' to 'get their act together' etc.,
- Belittling or dismissing the person's feelings by saying things like 'you don't seem that bad to me.'
- Speaking in a patronizing tone of voice





OFFERING EMOTIONAL SUPPORT

If someone lets you know that they are experiencing difficult thoughts and feelings, it's common to feel like you don't know what to do or say – but you don't need any special training to show someone you care about them, and often it can be the most valuable help you can offer.

- **Make dua for your friend.** The importance of dua cannot be underestimated – it is a weapon for believers that we tend to overlook. Encourage your friend to make specific dua too.
- **Offer reassurance.** Seeking help can feel lonely. You can reassure someone by letting them know that they are not alone, and that you'll be there to help.
- **Stay calm.** Even though it might be upsetting to hear that someone you care about is distressed, try to stay calm. This will help your friend or family member feel calmer too, and show them that they can talk to you openly without upsetting you.
- **Be patient.** You might want to know more details about their thoughts and feelings, or want them to get help immediately. But it's important to let them set the pace for seeking support themselves.
- Encourage your friend to **strengthen their connection with Allah** and the Qur'an *with* you. Sometimes we give advice that is meant well, but using faith as a reason for issues can often push people away. Encouraging them to engage in acts of worship *with* you will make it easier both for them and for you.
- **Have Tawwakul.** Put your trust in Allah (swt) - whilst you may not be able to solve your friend's problems – He can. He is All-Knowing and has a plan for your friend in a way that we can't see.

Keep social contact. Part of the emotional support you offer could be to keep things as normal as possible. This could include involving your friend or family member in social events, or chatting about other parts of your lives.

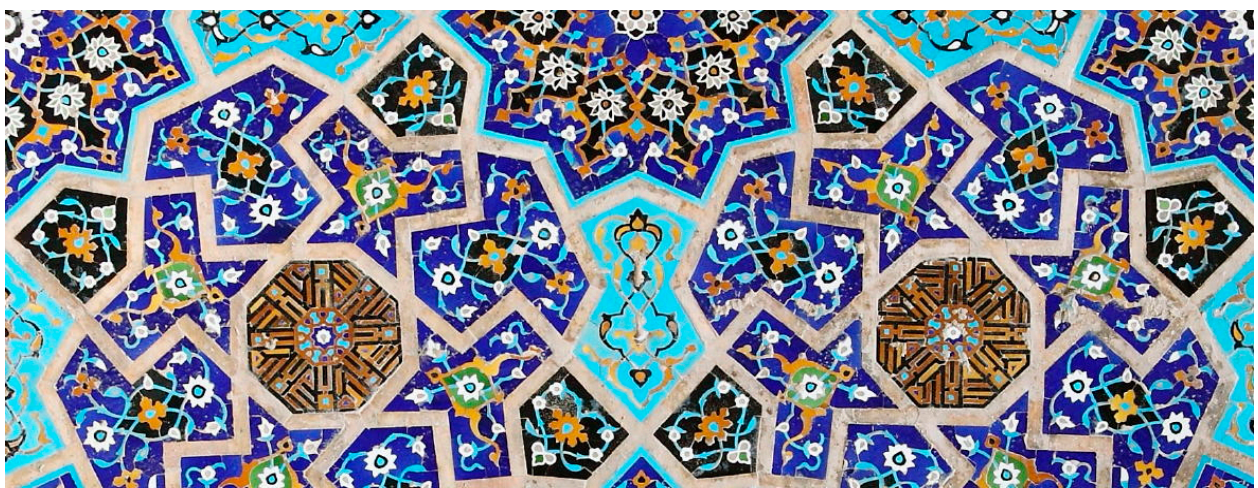




OFFERING PRACTICAL SUPPORT

There are lots of practical things you can do to support someone who is ready to seek help.

- **Look for information that might be helpful.** When someone is seeking help they may feel worried about making the right choice, or feel that they have no control over their situation.
- **Help to write down lists of questions** that the person you're supporting wants to ask their doctor, or help to put points into an order that makes sense (for example, most important point first).
- **Help to organise paperwork**, for example making sure that your friend or family member has somewhere safe to keep their notes, prescriptions and records of appointments.
- **Go to appointments with them**, if they want you to – even just being there in the waiting room can help someone feel reassured.
- **Ask them if there are any specific practical tasks you could help with**, and work on those. For example, this could include: offering a lift to their appointment, helping them study.
- **Learn more about the problem they experience**, to help you think about other ways you could support them.





BRIEF DUAS

Narrated by the Prophet (*sal Allahu alayhi wa sallam*) in *Saheeh Bukhari*.

اللَّهُمَّ إِنِّي أَعُوذُ بِكَ مِنَ الْهَمِّ وَالْحُزْنِ، وَالْعَجْزِ وَالْكَسَلِ وَالْبُخْلِ وَالْجُبْنِ،
وَضَلْعِ الدَّيْنِ وَغَلْبَةِ الرِّجَالِ

Allahumma inni a'udhu bika minal-hammi wal-ḥuzni wal-'ajazi wal-kasli wal-bukhli wal-jubni wa ḍalaEid-dayni wa ghalabatir-rijal.

O Allah, I take refuge in You from anxiety and sorrow, weakness and laziness, miserliness and cowardice, the burden of debts and from being overpowered by men.

Narrated by the Prophet (*sal Allahu alayhi wa sallam*) as one of the “*Da'waat al Makroob*”, the supplications of the distressed.

اللَّهُمَّ رَحْمَتَكَ أَرْجُو فَلَا تَكِلْنِي إِلَى نَفْسِي طَرْفَةَ عَيْنٍ وَأَصْلِحْ لِي شَأْنِي
كُلَّهُ لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا أَنْتَ

Allahumma rahmataka arju fala takilni ila nafsi tarafata 'aynin wa aslih li sha'ni kullahu la ilaha ila anta.

O Allah, it is Your mercy that I hope for, so do not leave me in charge of my affairs even for a blink of an eye, and rectify for me all of my affairs. None has the right to be worshiped except You.



SEEKING PROFESSIONAL HELP

- Ask the person if they need help to manage how they are feeling.
- It is important to become familiarised with services available locally and online.
- If they feel they do need help, discuss the options they have for seeking help and encourage them to use those options.
- Encourage them to see their GP is a good place to start.



WHAT IF THE PERSON DOESN'T WANT HELP?

You should find out if there are any specific reasons why they do not want to seek help. They may be based on mistaken beliefs. You may be able help the person overcome their worry about seeking help.

If the person still doesn't want help after you've explored their reasons, let them know that if they change their mind in the future they can contact you.

You must respect the person's right not to seek help unless you believe they are at risk of harming themselves or others.

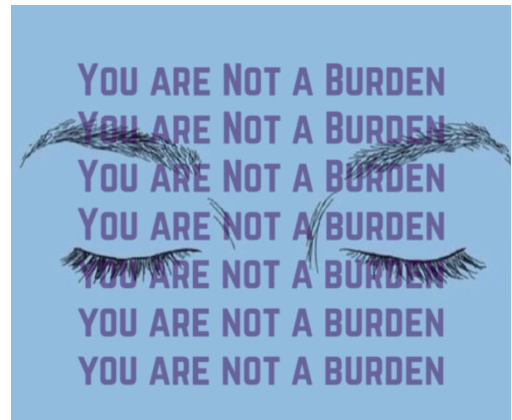
You can also:

- **Be patient.** You won't always know the full story, and there may be reasons why they are finding it difficult to ask for help.
- **Offer emotional support and reassurance.** Let them know you care about them and you'll be there if they change their mind.
- Inform them how to seek help when they're ready.
- **Look after yourself.** Make sure you don't become unwell.

YOU'RE NOT ALWAYS FINE



AND THAT'S OK.



**TAKE YOUR TIME
IN RECOVERY**



WHAT IF THE PERSON IS SUICIDAL?

Suicide can be prevented. Most suicidal people do not want to die. They simply do not want to live with the pain. It is important to take suicidal thoughts and behaviours seriously.

- Openly talking about suicidal thoughts and feelings can save a life.
- It is important that you know the warning signs and risk factors for suicide, and the reasons why a person might have thoughts of suicide.

There are three key actions to helping a person who is suicidal:

- 1 If you think someone may be suicidal, ask them directly.
- 2 If they say yes, do not leave them alone.
- 3 Link them with professional help.

WHAT CAN I DO IF IT'S AN EMERGENCY?

There may be times when your friend needs to seek help more urgently, such as if they:

- are experiencing suicidal feelings, and feel they may act on them
- are behaving in a way that's putting themselves or someone else at immediate, serious risk of harm

To get help, do one of the following:

- Make an emergency appointment with your doctor, or call your doctor's surgery out-hours service if the emergency is at night or the weekend.
- Call your mental health worker if you have one.
- Go to the accident and emergency department at your local hospital.
- If there is immediate danger, call 999.



USEFUL CONTACTS

Inspired Minds

Email: info@inspiritedminds.org.uk

Website: inspiritedminds.org.uk



Muslim Youth Helpline

Telephone: 0808 808 2008

Samaritans

Telephone: 116 123

Website: samaritans.org

Mind Infoline

Telephone: 0300 123 3393

Email: info@mind.org.uk

Website: mind.org.uk/information-support

Rethink Mental Illness Advice Line

Telephone: 0300 5000 927

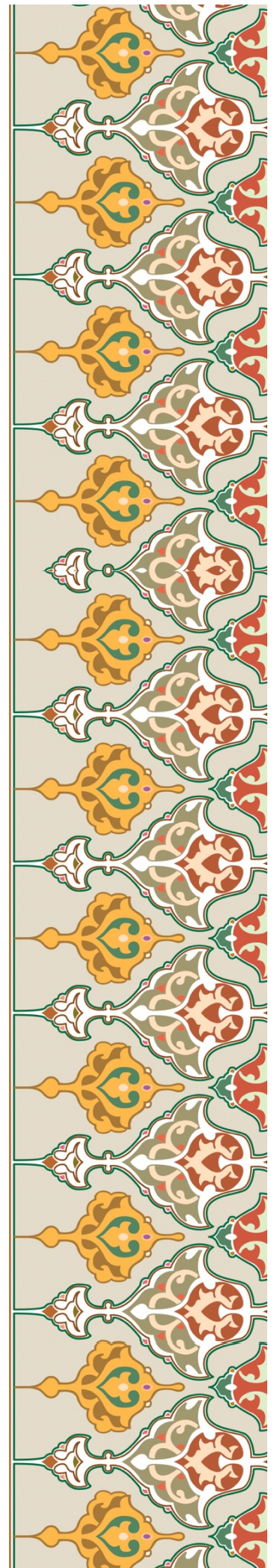
Email: info@rethink.org

Website: rethink.org/about-us/our-mental-health-advice

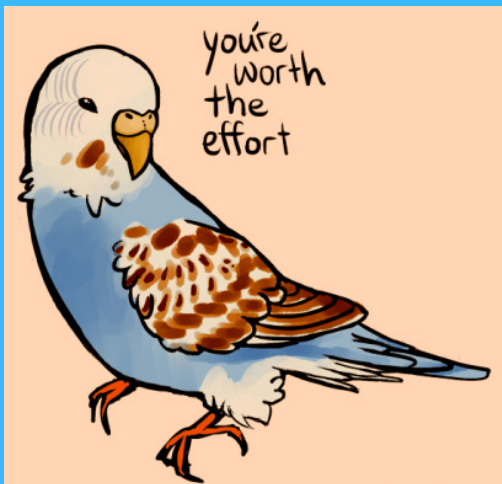
Lifeline

Telephone: 0808 808 8000

Website: nidirect.gov.uk/contacts/contacts-az/lifeline



Inspired Minds



**MAKE
PEOPLE
FEEL GOOD
ABOUT
THEMSELVES.**



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