

UNPACKING AND ADDRESSING ISLAMOPHOBIA

What is Islam?

Islam is one of the world's oldest religions, with nearly two billion Muslims worldwide. A common myth is that all Muslims are Arab or West Asian. But in reality, Muslims come from diverse backgrounds worldwide, with over half of Canada's Muslim population having non-Arab and non-West Asian origins. The majority of the global Muslim population belongs to two main sects, Sunni and Shia, with Sunnis making up the majority in many countries, including Canada.

Islamophobia is a fear, prejudice, and hatred of Islam and Muslims, and people who are perceived to be Muslim in online and offline spaces. Islamophobia can be manifested through intolerance, harassment, violence, exclusion, and intimidation, but is often perpetrated through subtle acts of racism and discrimination. This fear can lead to actions that hurt Muslims and support the unfair treatment of Muslims in society. Islamophobia is often motivated by incorrect beliefs and stereotypes about Islam, which leads to discrimination on a systemic, community, and individual level. It is also interpreted as a form of racism, where Islamic values, traditions, and religious beliefs and practices are viewed as a cultural, political, and social “threat”.

Intersectionality in the context of Islamophobia highlights how individuals who are both Muslim and belong to other marginalized groups, such as women, racial and ethnic minorities, who wear hijab, or are immigrants, experience layered forms of discrimination and oppression.

Common Practices, Diet, and Attire

Salah (Prayer)

The five daily prayers in Islam involve purification through wudu or ablution (washing parts of the body), facing Mecca, and reciting Quranic verses, all of which help Muslims maintain a connection with God and a means to reflect on their lives. Prayer is an important pillar of worship for Muslims. It is prayed at prescribed times, and can be done anywhere.



Dietary Laws

Islamic dietary laws classify foods as Halal (allowed) or Haram (forbidden). Examples of Haram foods include alcohol and pork.

Women's Attire

Given the diverse community, Muslim women's clothing varies widely, but common items include the hijab (a headscarf), abaya (a cloak worn over clothes), niqab (a face veil), and burqa (a full-body covering). Each woman practices differently, emphasizing modesty.

Men's Attire

Generally, for men, the areas from the knee to the navel should be covered, but there's no single “correct” way for all Muslim men to dress, considering how diverse the community is.

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Uncovering Myths and Misconceptions

“Islamic Extremism and the Myth of the ‘Muslim Terrorist’”

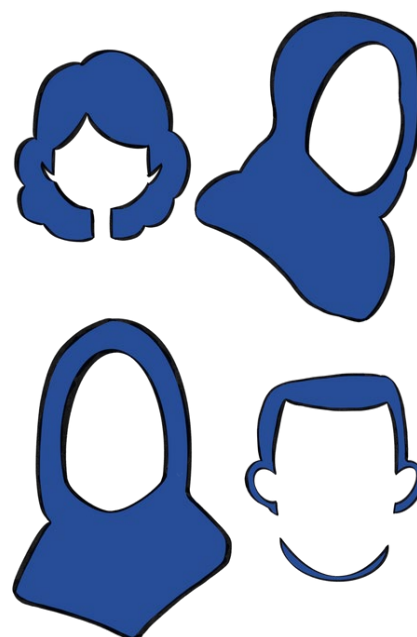
Islam teaches peace, and Muslim communities strongly oppose terrorism, especially in the name of Islam.

“Islam is an Intolerant Religion”

Islam teaches respect and kindness towards everyone, encourages peaceful religious dialogue, and strictly forbids forced conversions.

The Great Replacement Theory

Recently, more people have been spreading a conspiracy theory called the Great Replacement Theory, which falsely claims that non-Western immigrants are moving to Western countries to eliminate the White population.



**We Stand with
#OurLondonFamily**

How to Support our Local Muslim Community: LEAD Framework

L

Learn about Islam and Islamophobia

This is an ongoing process that involves listening to Muslim voices, using reliable resources, and taking responsibility to educate yourself instead of relying on others to teach you. It can also include supporting local vigils, such as the June 6th Our London Family commemorations.

E

Educate Friends and Family

Share what you learn with others, so that they can learn too.

A

Awareness of Implicit Islamophobic Biases

To fight Islamophobia, it's important to look inward, recognize our hidden biases about Muslim people, learn more about their culture, and actively challenge negative stereotypes we may have.

D

Denounce Islamophobic Statements, Microaggressions, or Jokes

You can help combat Islamophobia by reporting hateful posts on social media or speaking out when you see or hear biased or discriminatory behaviour.