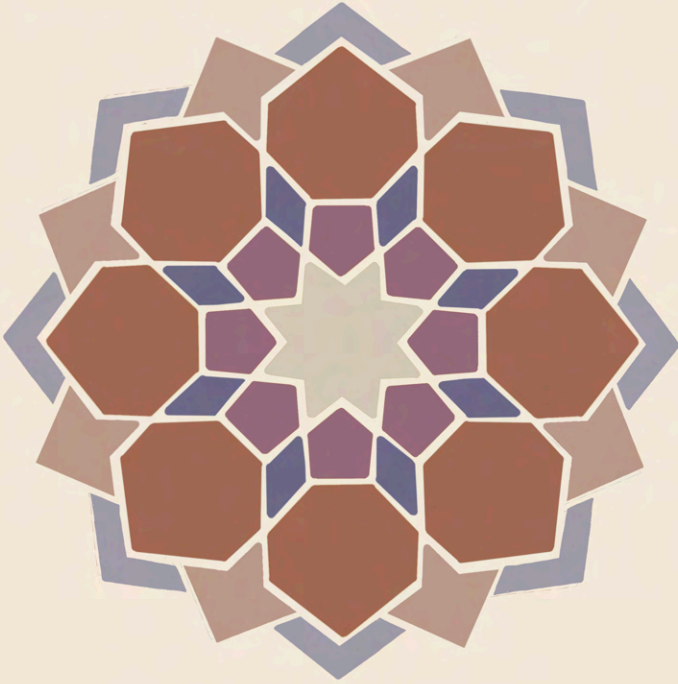


# GENDER IDENTITIES & MENTAL HEALTH



BOOKLET 8

رَبِّ زِدْنِي عِلْمًا

My Lord! Increase me in knowledge.

QUR'AN 20:114

SEPT. 2023



**ICNA**  
**Relief**

MUSLIM FAMILY SERVICES

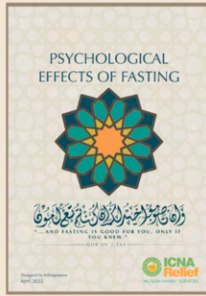
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<https://cambridgemuslimcollege.academia.edu/AmberHaque>

## MENTAL HEALTH SERIES



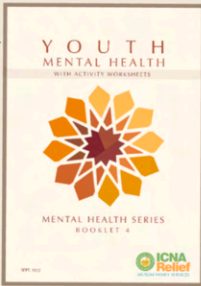
Booklet 1



Booklet 2



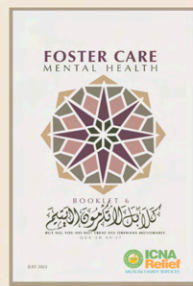
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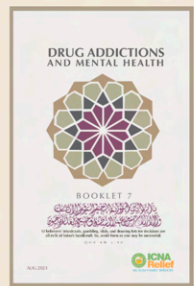
Booklet 4



Booklet 5



Booklet 6



Booklet 7

### *Why this booklet?*

The issue of gender identity is one of the major challenges facing religious communities in the West, and Muslims are no exception. The onslaught of the LGBTQ movement has left many families bewildered about the future of their generations. How does a Muslim youth fit into all this, and how do they navigate the related struggles ahead? This booklet addresses some basic questions and answers them in layperson's language.

### *Disclaimer*

The views expressed are the author's own and not necessarily the opinion of ICNA Relief.

# WHAT IS IDENTITY AND WHY IS IT IMPORTANT?

Identity is a person's sense of self, beliefs, and values and what distinguishes them from others. No two people have the same identity, yet we may belong to a group identity. A strong identity gives us a sense of belonging, feeling accepted, valued, and understood. While we belong to a group, identity also teaches us about acceptance of diversity. A unique identity is important for our self-esteem and good mental health.



## *What is Muslim identity?*

- Muslim identity is rooted in the Islamic identity derived from the Quran and the traditions of Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him).
- It is based on the belief that humans are God's best and noblest creation sent on earth to establish divine laws by promoting good and forbidding evil.
- Only by doing so we fulfill our purpose of existence. It is possible, however, that local cultures significantly impact Muslims, often overshadowing their Islamic identity.

## *Elements of Islamic Identity*

Islam means surrendering to the will of One God (Allah) through the Quran revealed to Prophet Muhammad (pbuh).

Muslims believe Muhammad is the last in a series of prophets from Adam to Jesus, who all brought the message of Islam or surrendered to one God and His scriptures if we want a fulfilling life in this world and the next. Prophet Muhammad gave the same messages as the previous prophets, except those unique to the time, place, and circumstances.

The Quran declares that humans were created in a perfect form (95:4) and endowed

with primordial nature (30:30), which recognizes God's oneness, so on Judgment Day, no soul can plead ignorance of this event (7: 172-73). The concept of Fitrah in Islam is linked to the idea of monotheism followed by the Prophet Abraham. Fitrah also means that true peace can be achieved only by following the guidance given to humans in the Qur'an.

Having a strong Iman (faith), doing regular Ibadah (worship), and practicing the best akhlaq (morality) as prescribed in the Quran and Hadith (traditions of Prophet Muhammad) are essential elements of Islamic identity.

# WHAT IS GENDER IDENTITY?

Gender identity is one's sense of gender realized between ages 3 and 5. While most people develop gender identities assigned to them at birth, some people believe differently. In Islam, gender identity is the biological features of a person as a man or a woman.



## *Why is gender identity controversial and a challenge for Muslims?*

Not only for Muslims, but for members of all Abrahamic faiths, diverging from sacred texts is problematic. Although interpreted differently, there are clear injunctions in the Hebrew Bible (Torah), New Testament, and the Quran against same-gender sexual relations. The concept becomes challenging when people of the book are forced to accept or practice policies contrary to their beliefs. The idea is more problematic when society attempts to normalize a phenomenon based on the practice of one minority group over all others.

In the name of progressive and modernistic views, members of religious communities, including Muslims, find themselves cornered.

Guided by sacred books and divine guidance, Abrahamic faiths view gender relations as male-female relationships and deplore sexual relations with the same gender. See for example,

- Hebrew Bible (Leviticus, 18:22, 20:13; Genesis 19:24)
- New Testament (Romans, 1:26-27, Corinthians, 6:9-11, Timothy, 1:10, etc.)
- Quran (al-Nisa: 16, al-Araf: 80-83, al-Naml:55-58, etc.)

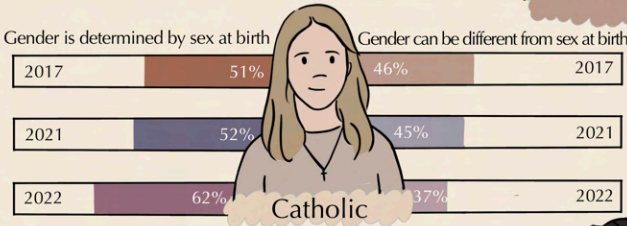
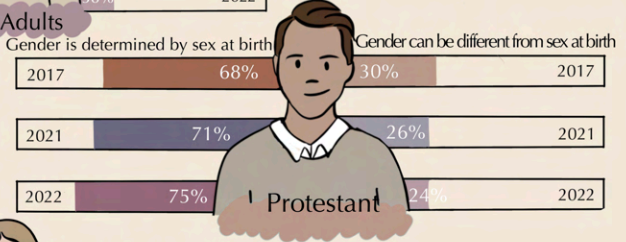
## *Secular versus Religious Views of Humans*



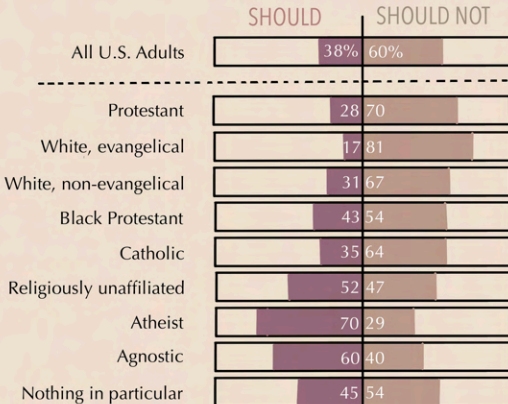
Abrahamic faiths are based on God-given guidance to humanity. As an offshoot of the Abrahamic faith, Islam asks its followers to live by divine injunctions. However, the secular view is opposed to the authority of religion. The Latin word "saeculum" means contemporary times and freeing humans from

thinking about the world beyond. While the West is not synonymous with secularism, the concern with God is private, leaving religion outside society's interest. Today almost all Western societies consider themselves secular and derive their laws from the "voice of the people." Devoid of spiritual guidance, many members of society have given themselves to materialism and individualism, where the person's interest comes first, devoid of any spiritual identity.

# How do religious groups feel about gender assignments?

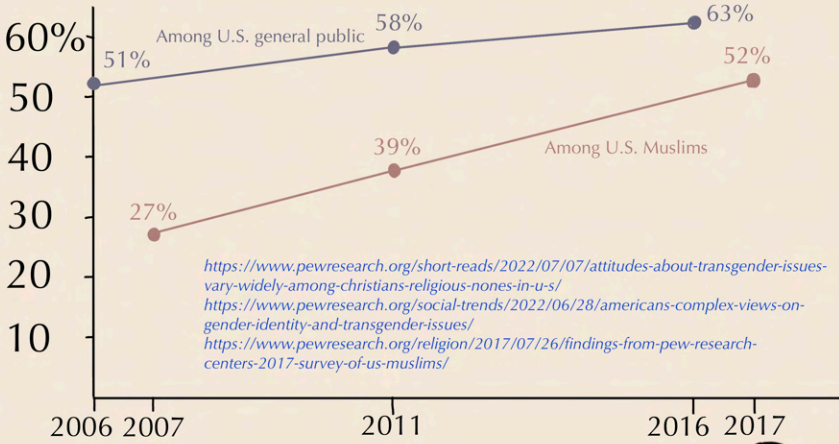


% of U.S. adults who say government documents should/ should not include options other than “male” and “female” for those who don’t identify as either



# Muslims Survey on Homosexuality

Growing share of Muslims say homosexuality should be accepted by society  
 % who say homosexuality should be accepted by society



## LGBTQ+ Population in the US

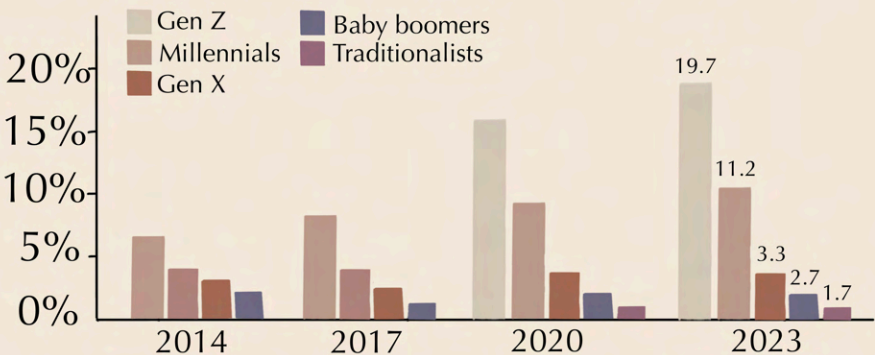
When a person's sense of gender does not match the gender assigned at birth, they fall into a category known as LGBTQ+. A variety of gender identities exist and is added to what was once called the gay community.

In a Gallup Survey 2022 on LGBT, without questions on sexual orientation, asexuality, or being queer, the new numbers reached a new high of 7.2% of the US population, with Generation Z at almost 20%. Scientists believe that the share of LGBT individuals has not changed over time, but younger people are more openly identifying themselves as LGBT.



## 7.2% of U.S. Adults Identify as LGBT

Share of Americans adults who identify as LGBT, by birth year



<https://www.statista.com/chart/18228/share-of-americans-identifying-as-lgbt/>



## LGBTQ+ Terminologies

Many Muslim families may not be familiar with the terminologies used in the LGBTQ+ communities, so some knowledge would help understand and address when Muslim children ask their parents about it. Only the most used languages are defined here.

- LGBTQ+ is an acronym for Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer/Questioning, and others. These are the persons whose sexual/gender identities differ from the mainstream heterosexual population.
- Queer is an umbrella term for the LGBTQ+ community. The term queer is generally not used because it is considered demeaning by some people due to its historical context. Questioning is those who are unsure about the gender identity or sexual orientation. This may change over time.
- Cisgender—gender matches sex assigned at birth.
- “Coming Out” is the act of declaring sexual/gender identity as different than the norm.
- Gay—attracted only to those of the same gender. Women sexually attracted to women are called lesbians.
- Binary—male and female are only two options, and they are opposites. This term invalidates LGBTQ+ concepts and experiences.
- Bisexual—attracted both to people of their own binary gender and to those of the other binary gender
- Non-Binary—people who do not identify themselves as a man or woman. They can be both in the middle or outside of the binary definition.
- Genderfluid—people whose gender changes overtime. They do not identify themselves as having a single unchanging gender.
- Transgender—people whose gender identity is different from the sex assigned at birth and there are many variations of trans experience. Trans man and Trans woman are those who live opposite of their gender assigned at birth
- Pansexual/pan—attracted to those of any gender
- Pronouns—words used instead of names, like “he,” “she,” “they,” and “them.”



<https://psychcentral.com/health/list-of-lgbtqia-terms>

## SCIENTIFIC BASIS FOR GENDER IDENTITIES

### ***Is there a genetic cause of same-gender sexual behavior?***

There is much research on biology and sexual orientation, and scientists theorize it to genetics, hormones, and environmental factors. There are also some initial insights into the phenomena, and more interdisciplinary research is underway. However, a recent massive study found no single genetic cause for same-gender sexual behavior.

<https://www.scientificamerican.com/article/massive-study-finds-no-single-genetic-cause-of-same-sex-sexual-behavior/>

<https://www.pbs.org/newshour/science/there-is-no-gay-gene-there-is-no-straight-gene-sexuality-is-just-complex-study-confirms>

## *Gender identities and Psychological Disorders*

### ***What does psychiatry say about gender identity?***

The Diagnostic and Statistical Manual, a publication of the American Psychiatric Association, has changed its stance on gender identities over the decades.

In its first edition (1952), homosexuality was called a mental disorder. Activists from the gay rights movement then challenged this classification. In 1974, the DSM was updated, and the term homosexuality was replaced with a category called individuals distressed by their homosexuality. The word distress over one's sexual orientation remained in the DSM until DSMV emerged in 2013. Today the term gender dysphoria is used to describe the psychological issues of gender identities.

<https://www.hli.org/resources/dsm-5-gender-dysphoria/>





## ***A Muslim doctor's query to AMJA on Gender Identity Disorder***

In a letter to the Academy of Muslim Jurists of America (AMJA), a Muslim doctor asked for a ruling on GID and sex assignment surgery. The doctor described GID as a medical condition in which the “gender or sex lines” in the brain are responsible for the feeling to which that gender belongs. The gender lines are different in these individuals from the biological gender they were assigned at birth. The doctor also described that the difference in GID patients stems from a hormonal imbalance to which the fetus was exposed, affecting its genes, and therefore the gender lines in the brain resulted in GID. The doctor discussed research on twins to support the emerging scientific findings on GID and admitted the challenge in dealing with such patients.

*AMJA response and ruling:* <https://www.amjaonline.org/fatwa/en/22813/gender-identity-disorder-and-sex-reassignment-surgery>

### ***Do Children “Grow Out” of Gender Dysphoria?***

Studies on whether gender dysphoria continues throughout childhood show that most children change their minds and gender dysphoria do not persist past puberty, and that gender-affirming hormonal treatment in children is poorly understood.



<https://www.transgendertrend.com/children-change-minds/>  
<https://publications.aap.org/pediatrics/article/148/1/e2020027722/179931/Progression-of-Gender-Dysphoria-in-Children-and?autologincheck=redirected>

To be correctly diagnosed with gender dysphoria, a person must have feelings of distress for at least six months. Further, at least two of the following must occur:

- A marked difference between your inner gender identity and/or primary and secondary sex characteristics or anticipated secondary sex characteristics in young adolescents
- A strong desire to be rid of primary and/or secondary sex characteristics because of a marked difference with your inner gender identity, or a desire to prevent the development of anticipated secondary sex characteristics in young adolescents
- A strong desire for the primary and/or secondary sex characteristics of the other gender

- A strong desire to be of the other gender or an alternate gender
- A strong desire to be treated as the other gender or an alternate gender
- A strong conviction that you have typical feelings and reactions of the other gender

<https://www.mayoclinic.org/diseases-conditions/gender-dysphoria/symptoms-causes/syc-20475255>

**Is LGBTQ a mental disorder?**

The mainstream medical and psychological organizations have declared LGBTQ expressions as not a mental disorder. This means that the individuals involved in same-gender sexual relationships are normal and commit such acts knowingly.

<https://www.apa.org/topics/lgbtq/orientation>

**Psychological reasons of same gender sexual relationships**

Psychologists have written a lot about gay relationships that cannot be covered here because of brevity. However, a small analysis in a recent article includes the following factors:



A female-dominated upbringing in the man's past, with an absence of a male role model

Deviance from gender role conformity

Family environment



Individual experiences



A person's sense of self

<https://www.healthplace.com/gender/gay/why-are-people-gay-gay-by-choice-or-is-being-gay-genetic>

## Generation Me!

Jean Twenge, the author of *Generation Me—Why Today's Young Americans Are More Confident, Assertive, Entitled and More Miserable Than Ever Before*, *Generation Me* (2014), writes that the rise in individualism in American society has resulted in the culture accepting multiple gender identities.

Individualism has given rise to the self, its uniqueness, and a lack of commitment to social values. In a society where the individual self is paramount, sexuality becomes free and open. One does not need to marry someone to

have sex, and one's partner does not have to be the opposite gender. The idea is "do what's right for you" could lead people to engage in same-sex sexuality, among others.

The dangers of individualism could also lead to narcissism and disconnection from others. Doing what's best for oneself could lead to self-centered morality without much care for the larger society. This attitude has led many to express sexuality and love with anyone they want as freedom, not selfishness, and is a clear example of individualism.



### *The concept of waswas or evil temptations*

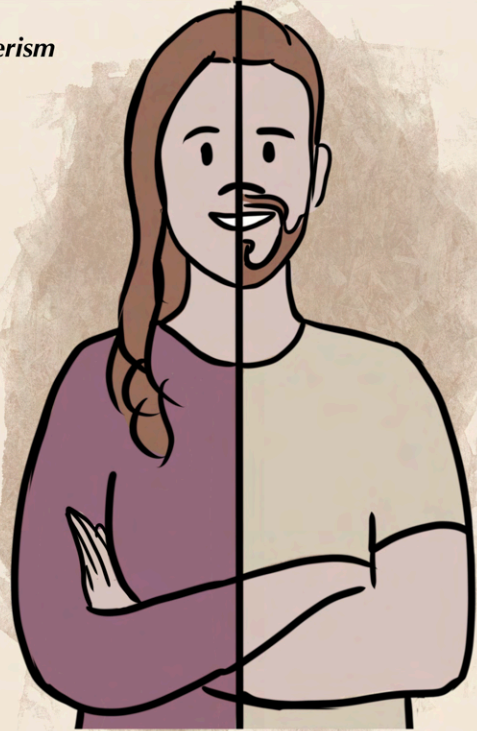
The Abrahamic faiths also speak of an evil spirit (Satan) who incites humans to sin by whispering in their hearts. A whisper or waswas is a temptation to break God-given laws. The Quran and Hadith mention numerous stories of Satan instigating humans to do morally wrong behaviors. "God created Satan to test humans, and Satan comes as a friend and commands one to do obscenities." (Q 2:168-69). Also, "We created humankind and know what their souls whispers to them, and We are closer to them than their jugular vein." (Q 50:16).

Waswas, which tempts a person to listen, look, or commit haram (unlawful) and makes such things appear attractive, comes from three sources: the nafs (or self), the devils among the jinn, and humans. The second source is when the jinn (Satan) whispered, "O Adam, shall I direct you to the tree of eternity and possession that will not deteriorate?" (Q 20:120). The third source is the devils among mankind: Say, "I seek refuge in the Lord of humankind, The Master of humankind, The God of humankind, from the evil of the retreating whisperer - who whispers [evil] into the hearts of humankind - from among the jinn and humankind." (Q 114:1-6).

Obsessive Compulsive Disorders (OCD) are repeated thoughts, movements, and behaviors that a person would ordinarily reject, but something pushes him to do it, and he fails to resist them. Whispers can also come in the way of a believer challenging religious thoughts and actions. Many early Islamic scholars, for example, Abu Zayd al-Balkhi (d. 934) wrote about this, and the techniques are used in clinical applications of Islamic Psychology. The Quran declares that the plot of Satan is weak (Q 4:76) and it has no authority over those who have believed and relied upon their Lord (Q 16:99-100).

### ***Regional Disparity in Transgenderism***

A scientific study has revealed that identifying with the opposite gender has become trendy in more progressive and trans-friendly environments. California, for example, has 1.93% of children between ages 13-17 identifying themselves as transgender, which is almost 38% higher than the national average. The term social contagion is used for occurrences in peer groups where all friends become gender dysphoric within the same timeframe.



Research contends that it is politics and not science that accounts for the rise in the number of children diagnosed as transgender. The proponents argue that some children may be unhappy about their assigned gender but telling them that their bodies should be changed causes major distress. One study found that 90% of transgender samples have significant psychopathology and an increased risk of suicidal behaviors.

<https://www.nationalreview.com/corner/its-a-social-contagion/>

<https://contronewsreview.wordpress.com/transgenderism-is-social-contagion-suggests-new-academic-study/>

### **Data on Mental Health**

Of the 4.5% of the US population identifying as gay or bisexual, 39% reported mental illness in the past year – Mental Health of America (MHA, 2013). The MHA website states that although LGBTQ+ is not a mental illness or disorder, LGBTQ+ people experience mental health struggles, and the community's younger members struggle the most with mental health concerns.

LGBT adults are twice or more likely than heterosexual persons,

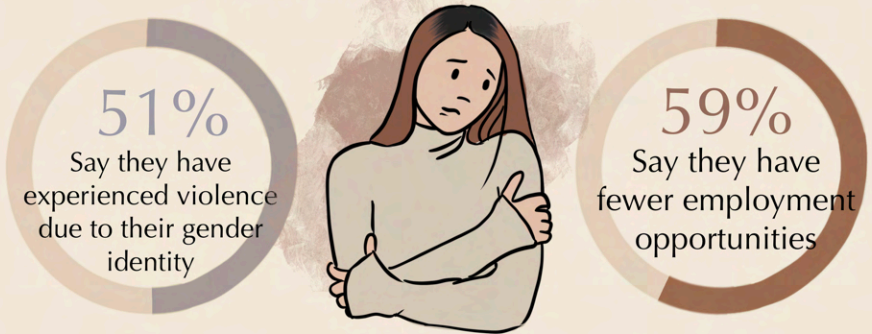
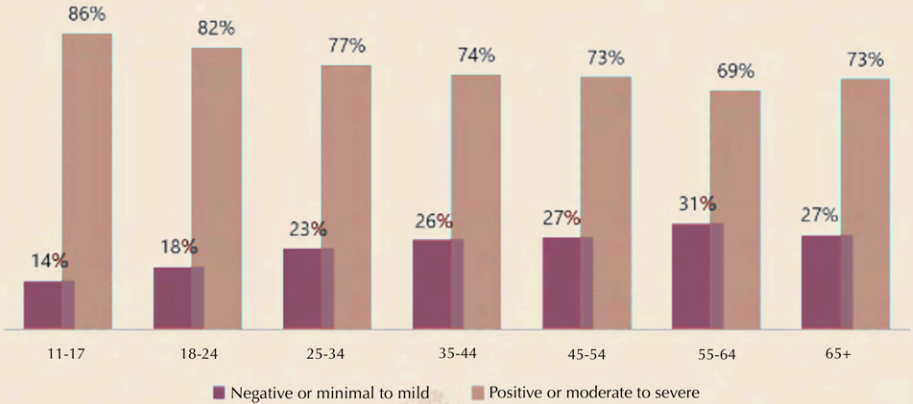
and transgender people are four times more likely to experience mental health conditions. The youth are at a greater risk for suicidality than their heterosexual peers. Many problems also result from family and societal rejection, trauma, substance abuse, and unaddressed mental conditions. More than 4 in 10 such youth seriously considered suicide in the past year.

LGBTQ+ Mental Health: Insights from MHA Screening done on nearly 300,000 persons between 2017-19.



Over half of LGBTQ screeners were youth ages 11-17. Eighty-six percent of LGBTQ youth screened positive or moderate to severe for a mental health condition, the highest rate of all age groups of LGBTQ individuals.

### Screen Result by Age



Source: *Mental Health Facts for LGBTQ | LGBTQIA+ Studies* (scribd.com)  
*How do mental health conditions affect the LGBTQIA+ community?* | University of Utah Health  
*LGBTQ+ Mental Health: Insights from MHA Screening* | Mental Health America (mhanational.org)  
*LGBTQ+ Communities and Mental Health* | Mental Health America (mhanational.org)  
*Psychiatry.org - LGBTQ Youth Face Mental Health Challenges*  
*LGBTQI | NAMI: National Alliance on Mental Illness*

### Attitudes, Diversity, and Religiosity of American Muslims

In a Pew Research Survey (2017), 9 in 10 Muslims said they are proud to be Americans and Muslims. A majority believed they were satisfied with the things going on in their lives and that religion was critical. As a group, American Muslims are more racially diverse and young than the general population, and the majority share the public’s concern about religious extremism.



Interestingly, Christians and Muslims both showed almost equal levels of religious commitment. In fact, 68% of Christians, as opposed to 65% of Muslims, indicated the importance of spiritual values. Also, the views of Muslims are the same as those of the larger public on good parenting as one of the most important things and living a very religious life as somewhat important. It is the religious category of Muslims that seem to be most concerned about the LGBTQ+ movement.

## WHAT SHOULD MUSLIM PARENTS TELL THEIR CHILDREN?

While children are a great blessing, they are also a trust from God, and in Muslim belief, the parents will be held accountable for this trust on judgment day. The parents are responsible for their children's basic moral, ethical, and religious upbringing.



Many parents are concerned that their children are exposed to issues of gender identities, sexual preferences, and normalization of LGBTQ behaviors before they even know what all this means. When society imposes age restrictions on the use of tobacco and alcohol, why are children encouraged to determine their gender?

As many parents remain confused and worried about what and how to explain their position on gender, the following points may be considered:

### *On LGBTQ behavior*

- Know about the LGBTQ+ movement and how it may affect your children through social media, friend circles, and classroom instructions.
- Discuss openly with children and youth about school activities, especially those related to LGBTQ+, and discuss their feelings around the topic.
- If reading on this topic is required in schools, teach children about Islamic values, and allow them to ask difficult questions. Give unconditional love to the children and answer their questions and concerns as best as possible.
- Build trust to bring children to the fold of faith and family.

Negligence or abandonment of children or important social and value-based topics is never a good idea.

- Children and youth who come to the masjid cannot be ignored or rejected. For children who do not come to the masjid, provide them safe and loving environment at the masjid.
- The Imam can have a plan on how to deal with, educate, and make referrals to Muslim professionals. Explain that sexual attraction with the same gender is not permissible in Islam. As Muslims, we must follow the Islamic injunctions and reflect on the risks of such behaviors that far outweigh any benefits.

- Within Islam, sexual relations are strictly prohibited outside legal marriage between a man and a woman to procreate and preserve a family following the injunctions of the Holy Quran and traditions of the Prophet.

- Teach how faith can help us live a more contented and happier life. Organize youth group discussions around this topic with a knowledgeable group facilitator.

- Teach about the short- and long-term medical, psychosocial, and spiritual harm that results from such behaviors. Muslim children need to understand the concept of progeny and the preservation of family that is possible only from a married life acceptable in Islam.

- While impermissible thoughts may arise, one should not act on them and learn to train one's desires towards permissible things in life.

- Instruct the children to be careful about misleading information on the internet and college campuses like the one on which Dr. Yasir Qazi commented on his Facebook page: *I'm Muslim and My Gender Doesn't Fit Me*, a publication of [advocatesforyouth.org](http://advocatesforyouth.org). Yasir Qadhi - Notes on the Trans Question | Facebook

- Teach children that just like there is no justification for alcoholism in Islam, there is no validation for same-gender sexual relations.

- Teach children their rights as law-abiding citizens to say 'no' to things that go against their faith. Everyone has the right to practice their faith in the least restrictive environment.

- Teach children to not tolerate bullying! If anyone harasses or bullies them in any way, teach them to inform parents and the authorities. Know who to contact if bullying occurs in schools or anywhere else.

### *On identity, diversity, company, and forgiveness*

- Unless parents are proud of their Muslim identity, they should not expect their children to be proud Muslims. Be certain and tell your children that the message of Islam is complete, and life's challenges can be met successfully by extracting the principles and values of living from the Quran and hadith. Islam has the cures for all social ills, and to belong to such faith is a matter of dignity.

- Respect diversity and respect all people. Every person is a creation of One God and related to one another as the progeny of Adam and Eve. Never mistreat others, including LGBTQ+ persons, because, in Islam, there is no compulsion in religion. One can invite but not force anyone to learn about Islam. The best invitation is through the best deeds.



- Keep the company of people who encourage good moral character derived from the Quran and Hadith and lead you to closeness with Allah.



• Learn to forgive because Allah loves to forgive! We all fall outside the boundaries set for us and make daily mistakes. This is true for the most pious people, but returning to Allah is the best option. In Islam, all sins are forgivable except denying the existence of One God.

### ***On seeking knowledge***

- Seeking knowledge is a sacred act in Islam. It is essential to know who we truly are and realize that we are both a body and a soul, and our soul represents our personality. A reflection of ourselves and nature brings us closer to our Creator.
- Know the purpose of creation. Why have we come into this world? Is this life without any meaning, or does it have a purpose? Are we created by ourselves, or is there a planner behind it? Who is that planner, and what does He want?
- Seek knowledge that is beneficial for both the body and soul. A basic understanding of one's faith is obligatory for every Muslim. Integrated knowledge leads to success in both worlds.
- The Quran says, "Allah created jinn and humankind to worship Him" (Q 51:56). What does worship mean? Is it a set of rituals, or is it conducting oneself daily based on some divine guidance? If life is a test, what are those tests? How can we know that life is a test, and what can we do to pass those tests? Make your children think!
- The way of Fitrah! The concept of fitrah means that humans are born with an innate nature to know and obey Allah. Realizing one's fitrah brings us closer to God and neglecting it leads to forgetting the Creator.
- In Prophet Muhammad's time, effeminate men (mukhannath) were asked to be removed from Muslim homes for mischievous behaviors, but those whose characteristics were innate, and they did not exploit their sexual orientation for personal gain, there was no guilt, blame, or shame.
- The Prophet condemned the acts of imitating the appearance of the opposite gender.
- For fatwas on LGBTQ+ issues see: About Website - Islam Question & Answer (islamqa.info)

### ***What more can parents do?***

- Attend school board meetings and practice your rights of not allowing your minor children to be indoctrinated with a lifestyle that goes against the ethical teachings of your faith. One must attend such meetings to be heard.
- Be knowledgeable of the curriculum taught to your children. The schools want parental participation, but most parents only care if some issue spirals beyond control.



- Ensure that children/youth utilize their time in permissible activities and monitor or participate as appropriate. Volunteering in Muslim organizations is a great way to spend free time. Encourage the youth also not to delay marriage (Q 24:32).



- Review the Sticky Situations Series that introduces LGBTQ questions and challenges faced by Muslims. The free series includes six streamed episodes, a parent guide, and a 40-page student workbook. Islamic schools can integrate these series into the educational curriculum.

### Resources on LGBTQ issues

While there are many resources on the topic, only a few are given below. Unless one knows the subject well and the Islamic perspectives, it is better to check the source of information. It is safe to rely on resources from mainstream scholars.

A comprehensive resource addressing worldviews, identity, sacred activism, navigating differences, etc.:

*Over 130 Muslim Religious Leaders Release Statement Clarifying LGBTQ Position In Islam - MuslimMatters.org*  
*How does Islam view LGBT issues? | Yaqeen Institute for Islamic Research*  
*Guarding Our Children's Faith: A Guide for Muslim Parents on LGBTQ+ Issues - The Thinking Muslim*  
*A Response To Wajahat Ali: American Muslims And The LGBTQ Political Project - MuslimMatters.org*  
*Navigating Differences –*

Parents of younger children can read this freely downloadable book with a parent guide, kids' workbook, and resource list. It deals with choosing the words, building an Islamic worldview, teaching the fundamentals of creation, and many relevant topics. The guide contains stories, videos, reflective exercises, and much more.

<https://www.dearmuslimkids.com/stickysituations>



### Islamic Counseling

Both parents and children can benefit from Islamic counseling, which includes understanding human fitrah and the concepts of soul, aql, nafs, and qalb, and how they interact to shape our behaviors. Islamic counseling includes teaching the person coping skills from an Islamic perspective.



An Islamic counselor would advise that based on our faith, we cannot maim/change the human body given to us unless it is for a medical reason or to save a life. We also cannot advocate for or encourage people to take drugs, which can do more harm than good.

Counseling can help people see goodness in the bodies given to them at birth and instill the love of Allah, their Creator. People struggling with their identities thus learn to cope with challenging thought processes. A counselor may also talk about practicing modesty and respecting the privacy of others, including practicing the rules of Muslim clothing as beneficial.

Counseling can overcome struggles with identity, feelings of isolation, and self-loathing. Masjid should provide a friendly environment and a sound support system for everyone, including those with LGBTQ tendencies. An essential aspect of Islamic counseling is maintaining haya (shyness) in one's eyes, mind, and heart, as it is a necessary part of Iman. See Booklet 2 for more on Islamic Counseling: [https://www.academia.edu/82485006/Islamic\\_Counseling](https://www.academia.edu/82485006/Islamic_Counseling)

### **Imams and LGBTQ+ issues**

To seek religious knowledge, and often due to social stigma and cultural barriers, Muslims approach local Imams to discuss personal struggles in mental health. The topic of LGBTQ+ is no exception, especially lately, when it has become a larger societal concern in Muslim communities. Imams deal with mental health issues by prescribing prayers and religious advice, but generally, LGBTQ+ is avoided. Imams must get training in mental health first aid as well as LGBTQ+ concerns and how it is impacting Muslims. They can only give the right guidance to affected individuals and their families through proper training and open dialogue.

Children and youth can find support in groups like MCNA, YM, and MSA: About Us – MCNA YMJ: <https://www.mcnaymj.com/about-us/about-us/>  
Young Muslims – (ICNA): <https://icna.org/ilf/young-muslims/>  
MSA National: <https://www.msanational.org/>



MY LORD, INCREASE ME IN KNOWLEDGE. Q 20:114

*A brief explanation of the verse on front cover*

This verse was revealed when the Prophet hastened to memorize Revelation, reassuring him that he would remember the verses and should instead ask for knowledge. Appearing several hundred times in the Quran, the word ilm refers to knowledge comprehensively, including learning, practicing, and educating. Ilm refers to both theology and science or integrated knowledge, which led early Muslim scholars to many scientific discoveries and the Islamic Golden Age. There are various hadith on the virtues of knowledge, which is obligatory for every Muslim.



