



What is Domestic Violence?

☞ From an Islamic standpoint the following behaviors are considered abuse; aggression: verbal/physical abuse wrongdoing (acts that a person finds distasteful, harsh words or treatment (especially forced marriages), and inflicting harm or injuries. These criteria apply to children as well as adults.

☞ (Zainab Alwani & Salma Abugideri-2003)

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What is an Islamic Response to DV?

Verse 4:34 that has been misinterpreted to provide men the authority to beat their wives must be challenged.

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An Islamic Response to DV



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What is womanist theology?

Womanist theology is a response to sexism and racism in Black Theology and Feminist Theology. . . . Womanist theology examines the social construction of Black womanhood in relation to the African-American community and religious concepts. . . . Womanist theology is known for its analysis of religion and society in light of the triple oppressions of racism, sexism, and classism that characterizes the experiences of many Black women. Womanist religious scholars want to unearth the hidden voices in history, scripture, and the experience of contemporary marginalized African-American women to discover fragments that can create a narrative for the present and future.

Monica Coleman, *Making a Way Out of No Way*, pp. 6-7

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Alice Walker, "Womanist," *In Search of Our Mothers' Gardens: Womanist Prose* (San Diego: Harcourt Brace & Co., 1983), pp. xi-xii

Womanist 1. From womanish. (Opp. of "girlish," i.e., frivolous, irresponsible, not serious.) A black feminist or feminist of color. From the black folk expression of mothers to female children, "You acting womanish," i.e., like a woman. Usually referring to outrageous, audacious, courageous or willful behavior. Wanting to know more and in greater depth than is considered "good" for One. Interested in grown-up doings. Acting grown up. Being grown up. Interchangeable with another black folk expression: "You trying to be grown." Responsible. In charge. Serious.

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Womanist

2. Also: A woman who loves other women, sexually and/or nonsexually. Appreciates and prefers women's culture, women's emotional flexibility (values tears as natural counterbalance of laughter), and women's strength. Sometimes loves individual men, sexually and/or nonsexually. Committed to survival and wholeness of entire people, male and female. Not a separatist, except periodically, for health. Traditionally universalist, as in: "Mama, why are we brown, pink, and yellow, and our cousins are white, beige, and black?" Ans.: "Well, you know the colored race is just like a flower garden, with every color flower represented." Traditionally capable, as in: "Mama, I'm walking to Canada and I'm taking you and a bunch of other slaves with me." Reply: "It wouldn't be the first time."

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Womanist

3. Loves music. Loves dance. Loves the moon. Loves the Spirit. Loves love and food and roundness. Loves struggle. Loves the Folk. Loves herself. *Regardless.*

4. Womanist/Feminist Scholars have added a tremendous amount of education that has not only presented informative concepts that provided upliftment for women but inclusive teaching information for men after the "The Black Liberation" movement ignored many of the issues of concern for women and children directly.

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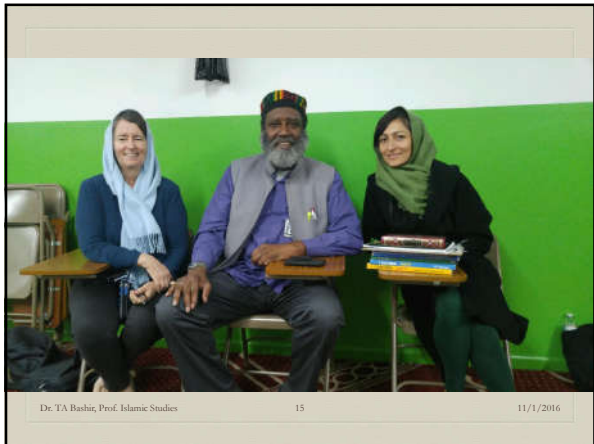


Islam and education to men.

No matter how educated, talented, rich, or cool you believe you are, how you treat people ultimately tells all.

Integrity is Everything.

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Islam & DV

- ☞ Significant contributors to educating the Muslim Community.
- ☞ 1. Dr. Amina Wadud, African-American Scholar whose two books: "Qur'an and Women" and 20 years later "The Gender Jihad" a monograph on how androcentric writings and ossified "traditional interpretations" is a disservice to women, men, and the community at large and how it goes against the teachings of Muhammad. Both of these are considered classics still.
- ☞ 2. Riffat Hassan, has written many articles and books that delineate many of the discrepancies as a residual issues post-colonial-continued. Her analysis of post-colonial restructuring of Muslim societies documents the on going struggle with identification and societal roles and the break from historical roles imposed prior to colonization.

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- ☞ from colonialism. She has extended her research to the: lack of education, to the high level of clinically diagnosed frigidity in Arab women due to a lack of agency in family-planning and attributed it to misogyny embedded in many Arab society.
- ☞ Aminah McCloud- African-American Scholar, whose research in the history of African-American Muslims in their second coming to America in bondage to the present. Has provided a dearth of information how Muslims survived in this country despite overt racism (Islamophobia), their invisibility in many so-called Muslim educational venues, despite the fact that they have been in this country since it's inception.
- ☞ Aisha Adawiya, Founder and Chair of Women in Islam, she is an author, and orchestrates many informative theatrical plays demonstrating early Muslims survival mechanisms. Curator at the Schomburg Library on Black Culture also a Board Member of the "Malcolm (X) and Betty Shabazz Museum" and has participated in many interfaith presentations in NYC, and abroad.

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- ☞ One of the younger up and coming scholars is Debra Mubashir (Majeed), a self-described Muslim womanist who wrote "Polygyny" and also Sara Aceves who continues the "Am't I a Woman?" call with her research entitled "Am't I a Muslim Woman?": African-American Muslim Women Practicing 'Multiple Critique'. Her thesis demonstrates the many trajectories that African-American woman have to confront when the intersection of Islamophobia intersects with race, gender, and class.

There is a paucity of Muslim men actively addressing this issue presently but I am confident that this will change as presentations to increase awareness, trainings, and to teach safe ways to resolve difficulties without resorting to violence: through role plays, exercises to increase listening skills, or to hear the emotional component of a speech without personalizing it, how not to respond to emotionally charged conversations immediately, de-escalation techniques and more.

- ☞ An important aspect to educating men has been added by a colleague of mine Quentin Wilcott, of ConneeNYC providing space for males to talk about issues in the company of men only and discharge some of the daily stress that men of color are subjected to in a racist and sexist society. I have found that this technique is also successful with Muslim Men. I have employed more directionality to our discussion because of the false religious imperative that implies that men have privileges sanctioned by the Qur'an and the Sunnah (traditions). Here there is a need for contextual analysis, reliability of the reporters of Traditions (Istisal) and their applicability to a community-at-large. Many of the earlier analysis was androcentric and not community inclusive.

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Islam and DV

- ☞ There are different levels of DV:
- ☞ 1. Verbal disagreements that can escalate to physical abuse.
- ☞ 2. Psychological: withholding of resources. Exposing a person's medical status to children, friends, or family without consent (power & domination). Other behaviors to embarrass or shame a person.
- ☞ 3. Physical Abuse: May take place with or without warning signs or antecedents conditions. This is a sampling of some of the issues in treating men that choose to batter women.

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- ☞ There is a list of examples of DV behavior as documented by the Duluth Model in the DV Wheel. How do we get Muslim men to engage in accountability for their behaviors?
- ☞ Men, in general, may engage in projecting the causes of the issue on his partner or her relatives etc.
- ☞ Men who are not the "breadwinner per se or their wife's income is more than theirs may be dealing with concepts of low self-esteem based upon traditional values.(men are the breadwinners).

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- ☞ Some men are motivated to engage in abusive behaviors due to poor education/training in de-escalating arguments. We use role-playing to increase sensitivity and to provide tools for reducing tensions and men will assume the women's role in this type of exercise. There are some men who are pathologically driven to attack women. FBI profilers have collected a huge amount of data of the habits of those who are subjects for LETHALITY ASSESSMENT (where clinicians assess the probability of the subject engaging in lethal behavior to self and others). The predominate antecedent for this class of offenders is stalking behaviors: showing up unexpectedly, surprising the victim with flowers and candy (peace offering gifts).

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Islam and DV

- ☞ Quentin (Q) Walcott, Sally MacNichols Co-Director of ConnectNYC.

They operate in Harlem in a multi-faith context and provides services to an underserved community that extends beyond teaching methods and models of DV prevention and training for clergy of all faiths. I am proud to connect with them as a consultant of Islamic Affairs specifically and on the issue of violence in general.

- ☞ Q facilitates a Men's Group that is open to all men in the community, of all ages. Due to the high level of violence that exists in the community, often from Police, there is a huge amount of tension as reflected in these meetings. The meetings are well attended by men expressing different sexual orientations, religions, and family situations. Unfortunately, the State are involved in these men's life while NY State does not have a BIP to redirect men to concrete and positive social skills, in other words anything passes as an intervention.

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Moving Forward: Suggestions from Women in Islam: Chair

Aisha Al Adawiya

- ☞ Final Mosque Booklet 11/29/05 2:51 PM Page 21. Copy may be obtained at
- ☞ www.womeninIslam.com.
- ☞ • Make sure that shared and separate spaces are clean, comfortable, and aesthetically pleasing. Encourage men, women, and children to participate in the upkeep of spaces.
- ☞ • Advocate for and be a leader in implementing women's rights to vote in matters that affect the *masjid* and the community as a whole. Stand up for and implement women's right to have official membership in the *masjid*. Your active support and commitment to this issue will set an example for other leaders, and help others take up the cause.
- ☞ *Program Planning and Participation*
- ☞ • Offer regular education programs for women of all ages on all aspects of Islam

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Moving Forward

- ☞ This a 22 Page document that provides positive and long needed inclusive initiatives to construct the Masjid as a family space.
- ☞ Some of the other initiatives includes the active participation of youth with media skills etc. to be constructively engage in the affairs of the Masjids.
- ☞ The Masjid must provide a spiritual space for the entire community and must hear all of the community.

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Moving Forward



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- ☞ Shortly, I will open the floor for a few questions. If you are unable to get your question in I will be around for a while so come up and introduce yourself and let's talk.
- ☞ In endeavors like these, due to time constraints, one is not able to full discuss a topic similarly as a 12 week course. Keep in mind many of us have some pre-conceived ideas, information, biases, etc. that we bring to any discussion. If one realizes that and we may keep some of our pre-discussion values in check, perhaps we can have an exchange. Sometimes emptying or attempting to achieve the state of "*tabula rasa*" is not that difficult but rarely do we practice it. However it enhances an exchange of epistemological offerings.

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Moving Forward

- ☞ Care for Immigrants from War Ravaged Areas.
- ☞ Some cultures/languages do not convey the notion of violence to women and children. This idea will be a novel concept to some of these people.
- ☞ Advocates/workers will have to proceed with caution and care when introducing these concepts of equality. This may appear to some men as reduction of their privileges based on how it is presented as oppose to a device for unity and family harmony. The aspect of it being "law" may not need to be taught if it is presented as a higher moral value otherwise it may appear as an imposition of Western ideas.

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Practical suggestions for harmony.

Masjid Governance and Management

- Final Mosque Booklet 11/29/05 2:51 PM Page 21. Make sure that shared and separate spaces are clean, comfortable, and aesthetically pleasing. Encourage men, women, and children to participate in the upkeep of spaces.
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Program Planning and Participation

- Offer regular education programs for women of all ages on all aspects of Islam

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Suggestions Moving Fwd.

- Develop governance structures that allow women and youth to have an input in decision-making, such as through the use of suggestion boxes, bulletin boards, or meetings that allow them to provide feedback to *masjid* leadership.
- Ensure that women are represented on governing boards, and if your *masjid* is already doing so, collectively strive for greater equality and quality of representation.
- It is also important to note that we do not advocate that women lead a mixed gender congregation in prayer at a *masjid*. To promote women's spiritual leadership and cohesion, we suggest that women pray in congregation with a woman leader when they gather as an all-female group. The Islamic concept of leadership entails service, management, stewardship, accountability, and responsibility, and these ideals ought to be exercised by women and men, in the private, public and community spheres and especially in our Muslim organizations.

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Moving Fwd.

- Of course, as we noted earlier, an agenda for change at each *masjid* must keep in mind the local community's resources, and leaders should encourage solutions to emerge organically in community discussions. Practical steps should be taken to implement the plan and monitor progress on this issue. *Masjid* leaders should expect and promote that women of the community collaborate in this inventory, planning, and implementation.
- Design and offer such programs for female and male youth that are sensitive to their needs across age groups.
- Invite appropriate women scholars and community activists to give seminars at the *masjid*.
- Invite women to organize community programs, introduce speakers, offer opening and closing *du'a* or prayer during educational programs, moderate panels, and direct question and answer sessions.
- If dress and *masjid* etiquette are of concern, the *masjid* should provide its community members with education sessions and informational material on these subjects, highlighting the need for modesty by *both* men and women, rather than focusing only on women's modesty. Since our communities are multicultural, dominance of one particular culture in this aspect should not be encouraged. What should be encouraged are Islamic guidelines and not a particular style or pattern of dress. We strongly recommend that this issue be resolved through education and patience rather than coercion and compulsion.
- When the *masjid* offers educational programs to the community, encourage everyone, including sisters to ask questions.
- Where resources permit, offer play areas or child-care facilities so that women with children are not prevented from

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Moving Fwd.

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More Suggestions

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