

**Considerations in Working with
Muslims as Interprofessional Team
Members:
Cultural Awareness & Humility,
and Health Literacy**

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Objectives

- 1. Increase awareness, sensitivity, and appreciation of the Muslim Culture
- 2. Build cultural fluidity, cultural humility, and dispel stereotypes in working with Muslims
- 3. Increase knowledge of daily routines, habits, rituals, and roles of Muslim people
- 4. Understand the variations of values and ritual within the Muslim culture
- 5. Relate how daily occupations and occupational therapy would meet the cultural needs of a Muslim patient or interprofessional practitioner

What is Islam?

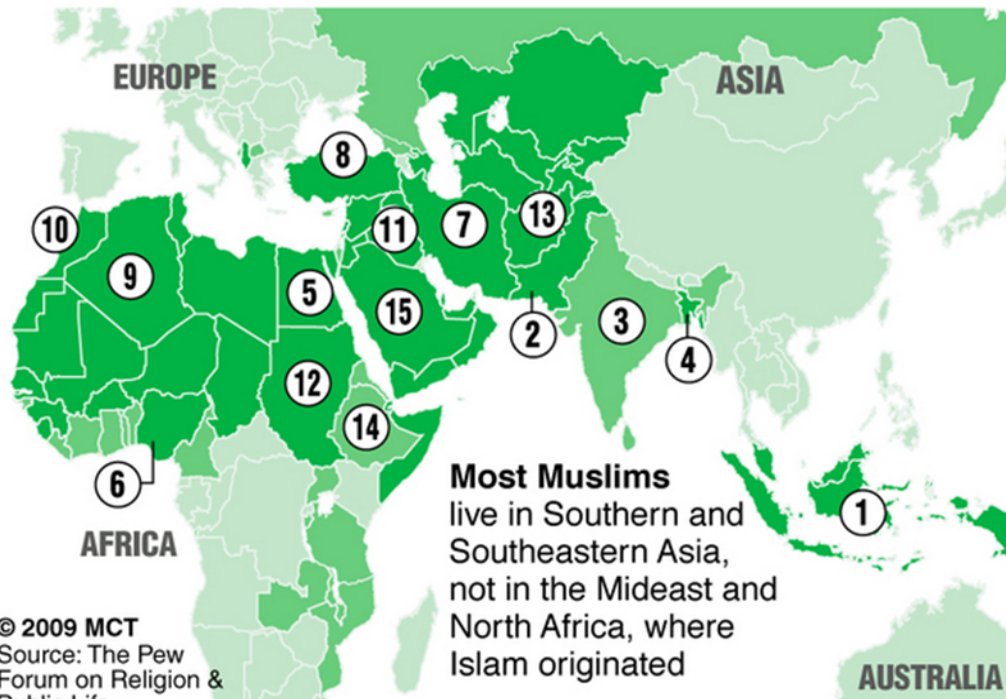
- Islam is a monotheistic faith
- It was revealed to Prophet Muhammad over 1400 years ago
- A person who follows Islam is called a Muslim
- The word for God in Arabic is “Allah”
- Islam’s holy book is the Koran (also spelled Qu’ran)
- Prophet Muhammad is considered the final prophet to humanity (in addition to those of the Abrahamic faiths)
- Muslims believe in all prophets before Muhammad and that they were sent by God to mankind to teach them how to live according to His law
- Two major Islamic holidays: Eid ul Fitr and Eid ul Adha

Where do Muslims Exist Now?

Where Muslims live

Nearly one in four people worldwide is Muslim, or about 1.6 billion people; percent of country's population that is Muslim:

0-9% 10-49% 50-100%



© 2009 MCT
Source: The Pew Forum on Religion & Public Life
Graphic: Eeli Polli

NOTE: In the U.S., there are 2.45 million Muslims, 0.8% of population

Largest Muslim populations

| Rank | Muslims, in millions | Percent Muslim | |
|------|----------------------|----------------|-----|
| 1 | Indonesia | 203 | 88% |
| 2 | Pakistan | 174 | 96% |
| 3 | India | 161 | 13% |
| 4 | Bangladesh | 145 | 90% |
| 5 | Egypt | 79 | 95% |
| 6 | Nigeria | 78 | 50% |
| 7 | Iran | 74 | 99% |
| 8 | Turkey | 74 | 98% |
| 9 | Algeria | 34 | 98% |
| 10 | Morocco | 32 | 99% |
| 11 | Iraq | 30 | 99% |
| 12 | Sudan | 30 | 71% |
| 13 | Afghanistan | 28 | 99% |
| 14 | Ethiopia | 28 | 34% |
| 15 | Saudi Arabia | 25 | 97% |

Pillars of Faith and Islam

Pillars of Islam

- Declaration of faith
- Praying five times a day
- Giving money to charity
- Fasting Ramadan
- Pilgrimage to Mecca (at least once if financially feasible)

Pillars of Faith

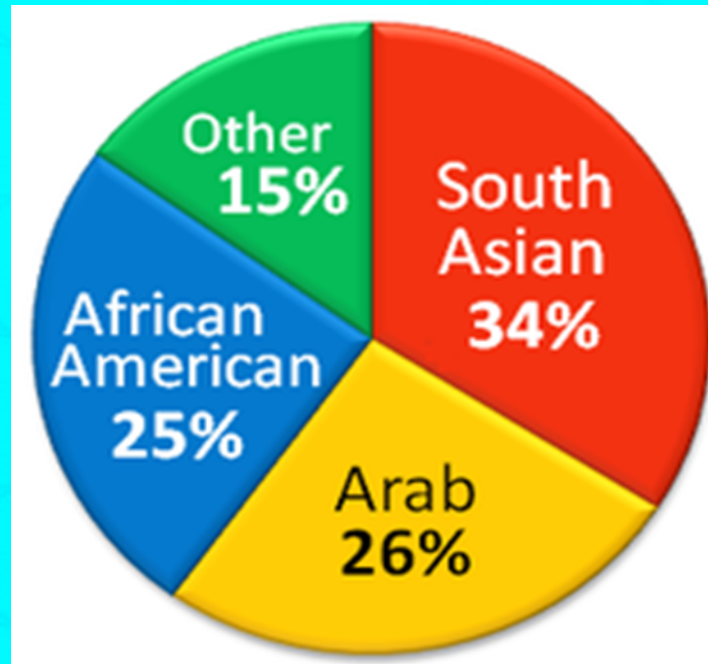
- Belief in Allah as the one and only God
- Belief in angels
- Belief in the holy books
- Belief in the Prophets
- Belief in the Day of Judgement
- Belief in Predestination

America and Islam

- Islam is a part of America.—U.S. President Obama in a speech addressing the Muslim world in Cairo in 2009
- The first country to recognize the independence of the United States was Morocco
- Muslims in America date back to the 1500's with the arrival of African Muslim slaves and Spanish Muslim explorers. In the early 1900's, immigrants from the Middle East arrived to the promised land they called - "Amreeka."
 - Among them is Mustafa Zemmouri as known as Estevanico, a black Moroccan Muslim who was employed by Spain.
 - He is considered the discoverer of New Mexico

Muslims in America

- % of total Muslims in America by region
- East: 32.2%
- South: 25.3%
- Central/Great lakes: 24.3%
- West: 18.2%



Present day Muslims in America

- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=eFsn49QxwI0>

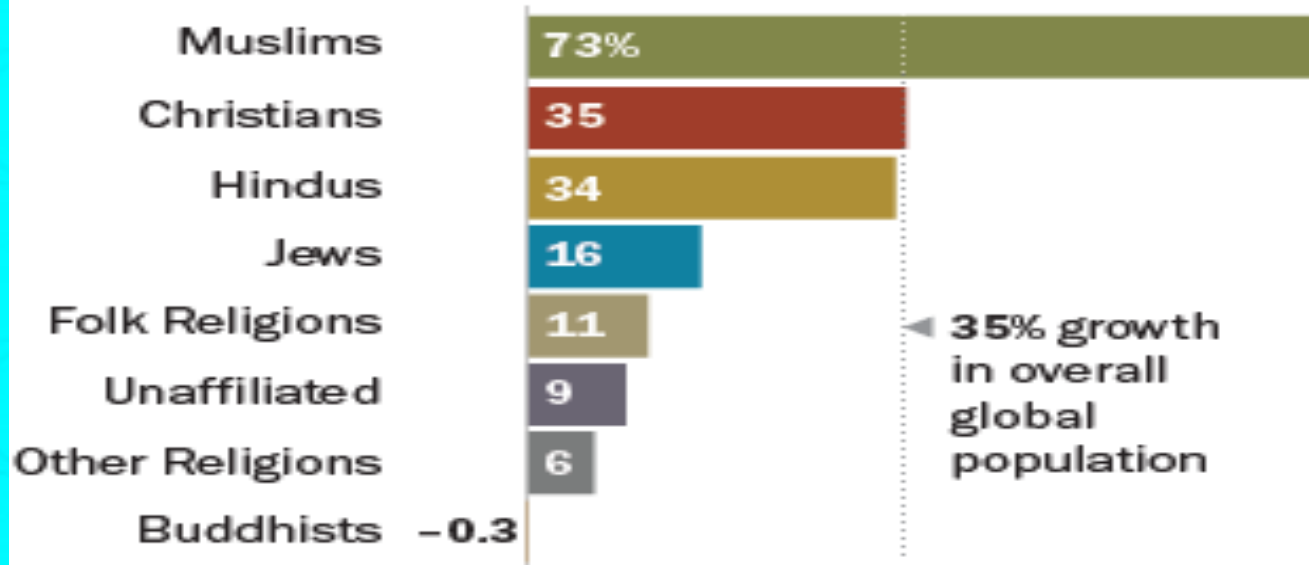
A Rising Population

Your chance to work with a Muslim patient or a Muslim colleague is on the rise.

Islam Growing Fastest

Muslims are the only major religious group projected to increase faster than the world's population as a whole.

Estimated change in population size, 2010-2050



Source: The Future of World Religions: Population Growth Projections, 2010-2050

PEW RESEARCH CENTER

Muslims in Maine

- The first group of Muslims arrived in Maine in the 1900s
- They were Albanians recruited Pepperell Textile in Biddeford
- There is a claim that their mosque in Biddeford was the first one established in the USA (<http://pluralism.org/>)
- The community of the Albanian Muslims was mostly wiped out by the Spanish influenza epidemic of 1918
- There is about 6,000 Muslims in Maine. Majority of them are refugees from Somalia, Iraq, Sudan, and Afghanistan
- There are eight mosques in Maine: four in Portland, two in Lewiston, one in Augusta, and one in Orono.
- You can visit a mosque regardless of your religion, feel free to schedule a tour or drop in.

Reza Jalali

file:///C:/Users/nafai201468/Downloads/Muslims%20in%20Maine_%20Eid%20Mubarak!.pdf

20% of American Muslims are Converts



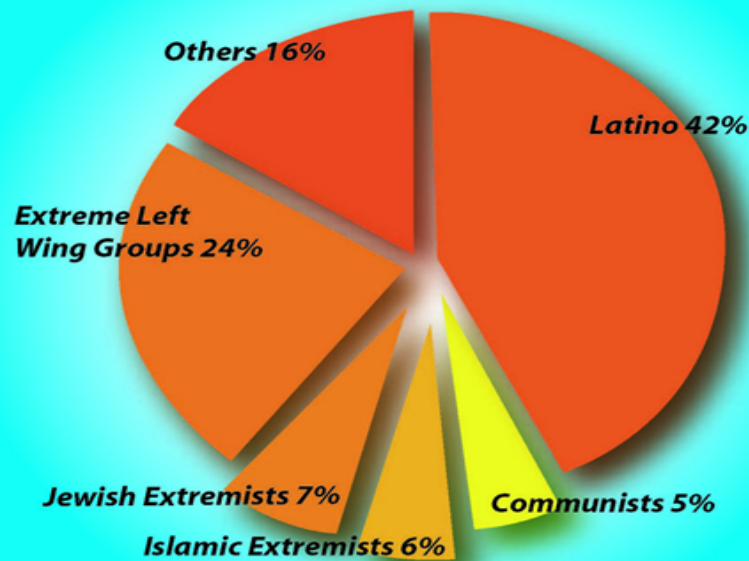
How other mainstream US religions view Islam?

In 1999 Pope John Paul II kissed the Quran as a sign of respect of the Islamic religion in front of a massive audience that included a delegation from Iraq's Christian and Muslim communities. It was a symbolic gesture of the Vatican's stance on the two faiths.



Good to know

- All Arabs are not Muslims and All Muslims are not Arabs
- Majority of terror attacks in the USA done by non Muslims
- Muslims are the biggest majority of victims of terror attacks



What Muslims in the US Fear

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2eTrabY5hm0>

- Hate crimes
 - Discrimination
 - Hate speech
 - Physical assault
 - PTSD
- Assumption that I am “one of them”, or one of the few that commit acts of terrorism against America that are considered extremists or mentally ill within our religious community.

Muslim Culture

- The term 'Muslim culture' is used broadly to represent many diverse Muslim cultural groups: the Asian Muslims, the Middle Eastern, the African, the European and the American Muslims, each with their own variations on customs and traditions
 - Sunni
 - Shite

Muslim Culture: Greetings “Salam”

- Respect for elders
 - How to address this in treatment
- Hand shaking
 - Follow their cue
- Eye contact
 - aka the “shoulder gaze” or “Do I have something on my chin?”
- Social distance vs. medical treatment
- Muslims do not bow to other people, as common in Eastern traditions

Muslim Culture: Headscarf “Hijab”



Islam encourages Muslims to dress modestly. Muslim women from diverse backgrounds observe modesty in their own way and that explains the variation in their dress codes across cultures. Wearing the Hijab (head covering) is a mark of devotion and commitment to Faith.

In some countries, wearing the Hijab is obligatory, but in others (as in the United States) it is considered a personal choice. It is not a symbol of repression and separation.



Muslim Culture: Food (Halal)

- Pork and its products and alcoholic drink are *haram* (forbidden) in Islam.
- Muslims eat *halal* meat which is meat (beef, chicken, goat, lamb) slaughtered in the Islamic way and blessed with the name of God.
- Use of alcohol/gelatin in products for medicinal purposes is allowed, but discouraged.

Muslim Culture: Ablution

Wudu- ritual washing in order to be considered “clean” before praying. Blood, urine, feces all make a Muslim “unclean” for prayer, therefore a specific washing protocol which includes a quick pat with damp hands/light rinse of the face, hair, ears, arms to elbows and feet is performed. This may take up to 5 minutes, and yes, you may walk in on your Muslim colleague with a foot in the sink...this is more awkward for you than them.

If water is not available or a Muslim is too sick to get out of bed they may use a rock to rub as “dry” ablution, called *tayammum*. So if you notice your client keeps a palm sized rock bedside, this is for religious intent.



Muslim Culture: Prayer

Salat- meaning one of the five segments of daily prayer to be performed, this is a physical act that requires room to move up and down and bend at the waist (preferable not to have an audience behind you, especially for women).

Do **not** interrupt/speak to a person in mid-prayer.

Do **not** step or walk directly in front of them.

If a fire alarm were to go off, a Muslim would interrupt their prayer, this would be one of the few allowed interruptions.

A Muslim is *duty bound* to pray on time.

Local prayer times can be found at www.islamicfinder.org.

A Muslim prays in the direction of Mecca, which is roughly northeast or east for most of the continental US



Of Note: Muslim Patient Prayer

- A Muslim who is sick may choose to pray in various positions of just sitting or even just laying down moving their eye lids in facsimile of the prayer movements.
- If you walk in on a client that seems “unresponsive” and is flickering their eyelids, check and see if they are whispering their prayers and seem to have an organized movement to their “unresponsiveness”. Remember, a Muslim will not speak to you during their prayers.
- Organizing therapies and interventions to avoid prayer time (remember it’s a fairly short 10-15 minute window typically) will garner affection and compliance from your client for your respect.

Muslim Culture: In the Home

Removing shoes when entering a Muslim house is appreciated for cleanliness reasons. Many Muslims keep separate shoes for wearing indoors. It is best to ask hosts if they would like the guests to remove their shoes, and follow accordingly.

- Emergency responders are **NOT** expected to do this.
- Hospital rooms are not considered “home”, shoes are expected.



Muslim Culture: Day of Worship

- Friday is the day of worship for Muslims.
 - Noon prayer is communal and includes a sermon
 - Most Muslims feel duty bound to attend this 45-90 minute commitment on Fridays depending on access, and make it fit into their work schedules accordingly.

Muslim Culture: Holidays

Eid- There are two Islamic holidays a year

Eid al-Fitr (end of Ramadan)

Eid al-Adha (Festival of Sacrifice)

“Eid Mubarak” or *“Happy Eid”*

Say (eye-eed moo bar ak) to wish a Muslim a happy holiday.



It can be difficult for Muslims and non-Muslims alike to anticipate the exact day of the holiday until just beforehand as it is based on a lunar calendar that shifts every year and the holiday itself cannot be announced without physical sighting of the new moon. So, while many Western calendars and even Islamic websites may state the holiday, in fact it can be determined up until the night before. This can lead to a lot of anxiety for students and clients in trying to give advanced warning and expectations around calling out.

Anticipated 2016 dates are: July 6 and September 13

Muslim Culture: Pets

- Cleanliness is importance as prerequisite to prayer, for one's person and the place of prayer. Animal saliva is considered unclean and must be washed off before prayer can be offered.
 - To avoid having to wash excessively, many Muslims generally do not keep pets, including dogs, inside their homes and avoid contact with them beyond patting.
 - In Western cultures, where many pet-owners consider them part of the family, the avoidance may be mistaken for dislike and cause offense where none is intended.
- Cats are fine to have at home

Muslim Culture: Fasting and Ramadan

Sawm- A Muslim may fast (abstain from eating, drinking, smoking, sexual relations and exhibit extra behavioral self-control) for a variety of reasons related to their faith.

- The fast lasts from early dawn to sunset, and yes, no drinking means not even water.

Ramadan is the holy month in which a Muslim fasts every day (dawn to sunset).

- A sick person and a person who is traveling are excused from obligatory fasting, as is a woman during her menses or if pregnant to prevent undue physical stress. Children are not required to fast until they reach puberty.
 - This said, many older Muslims struggle to balance their health needs and faith practice and may choose to fast regardless of contrary health status or medical/family advice.
 - Medicine dosage and timing may need to be adjusted during Ramadan, especially for lithium or IDDM. Muslims with eating disorders may also need extra support in this time.

Muslim Culture: Body Language

- Sitting with soles of feet or shoes facing a person sitting close by/accidental touching of feet may be considered impolite in some Muslim countries (mainly Arab). Touching of feet to another's body is considered disrespectful and, if that happens, a brief apology is helpful.

<http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/worldnews/middleeast/iraq/3776970/Arab-culture-the-insult-of-the-shoe.html>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=30GBFeYTybE>

Muslim Culture: Arts/Human Forms

- Drawing visual depictions of prophets is a sensitive issue for Muslims and has been the cause of much controversy. It is considered highly disrespectful to draw a visual representation of any prophet. (Only God can create these forms)
- The historical perspective is to discourage idol worshipping in accordance with the concept of monotheism, which is a central tenet of Islam
- Photographs (with specific client permission of course!) are religiously permissible (unlike the Amish for example).

Common Muslim Culture Misrepresentations in the West

- Cultural practices that occur in *some* countries, that are predominantly Muslim in faith, and are in direct opposition to the teaching of Islam, however persist due to cultural norms, for example:
 - Restricting rights, including education or work outside the home for women (Afghanistan)
 - Female genital mutilation (Sub-Saharan Africa)
 - Honor killing (Pakistan)
 - Restricting driving for women (Saudi Arabia)

Muslims and Illness

- During illness, Muslims are expected to seek God's help with patience and prayer, increase the remembrance of God to obtain peace, ask for forgiveness, give more in charity, and read or listen to more of the Quran
- Muslim believe that dying is a part of living and it is an entrance to the next life.
 - The Quran says, "To God we belong and to Him is our return."
- Blood transfusion IS allowed
- Abortion for the sake of the mother's health IS allowed
- Maintaining a terminal patient on artificial life support for a prolonged period in a vegetative state is not encouraged.

Muslims and Healthcare

- It is an Islamic cultural and religious practice to visit the sick home or in the hospital. Be open and understanding of visits by large family members and friends.
- Although Islam does NOT ban treatment by the opposite gender, some patients may insist on having the same gender clinician out of comfort.
- A Muslim may not speak English. Use an official interpreter and avoid using family interpretation in asking some sensitive/personal questions like menses, sex, etc...
- If possible, establish a relationship with an Imam (chaplain) or community leader that could serve as a religious resource
- Identify one or more Muslim physicians or other healthcare providers on your staff who can act as liaisons with Muslim patients.

OT Support of Muslim Clients

- Spirituality is redefined in the 2014 Occupational Practice Framework (3rd Ed.) under the occupation category of: religious and spiritual activities and expression. OT practitioners are encouraged to identify their client's daily spiritual routines that “allow a sense of connectedness to something larger than oneself or that are especially meaningful” in their life (AOTA, 2014)
- The Centennial Vision includes our profession's goal to be a “globally connected and diverse workforce” (AOTA 2007). This goal should include sensitivity to the religious and spiritual rituals of the future of our profession.

Supporting Muslim Coworkers

- Do not interrupt/speak to a person in mid-prayer, step or walk directly in front of them.
- Workplace prayer usually lasts about 7-10 minutes in addition to the 5-10 minutes needed for ablution.
- It is more respectful to refrain from distractors, i.e. music or loud conversations directly in area of person in prayer.
- A Muslim coworker is uncomfortable with after hour pub nights or discussing socializing in bars at the workplace.
- A Muslim coworker may come out to eat at a restaurant with the “work crowd” if they can sit at a slightly separate table than one where alcohol is present.
- A Muslim coworker may feel awkward during the holiday season and not return your Christmas greetings, do not take it personally.
- Muslims differ on the celebration of birthdays, many do not and may be uncomfortable with singing, cakes, etc. in the workplace. Typically we choose to honor our mother on this day.

Unsure? Ask!

- No two observers of ANY religion or culture do things the same. *(Does your mother and mother-in-law do things the same on holidays?)*
- Everyone appreciates attention 😊
- The way forward in cultural sensitivity and humility is to open a dialogue, have a mutually respectful discussion on ways to support one another.
 - This is not to debate religion, culture or politics
 - This is not to judge one another's choices

*"Wait?! Didn't you **just** say no images of humans in Islam? Why is this clipart of people ok?"*



This image is fine, as it's *not meant* to be a prophet and it's intentionally vague.

Anatomically correct drawings of people for healthcare or educational purposes is also ok! It's about the intention or purpose of the image.

Supporting Your Muslim Student



Supporting Muslim Fieldwork Students: Understanding Religion Rituals in Various Practice Settings



Sara Clark, MS, OTR/L; Western Michigan University, Said Nafai, OTD, OTR/L & Elizabeth Stevens-Nafai, MS, OTR/L; OT Morocco,

Sarah Alsadah, & Faryal Shaheen; Western Michigan University, Usama Quraishi, MS, OTR/L, Universal Institute & Safa Muntajibuddin, Rush University

Objectives

- Identify the daily religious rituals that Muslim students perform during traditional work hours.
- Identify different ways Muslim rituals are incorporated into different fieldwork practice settings.

"Discussions about religion rituals help make the fieldwork experience a success."
~ a FW Educator

Muslim Rituals

| Ritual | Time | Space |
|----------------------------|-------------------------------|--|
| Abulution (Wudu) | 1-3 times a day | Bathroom |
| Prayer (Salat) | 1-3 times per work day | Quiet, clean space facing Mecca approx. 2x3 feet |
| Holy Day (Jumah) | Every Friday, approx. 12:30-2 | |
| Holidays (Eid) | 2 x year, changes annually | |

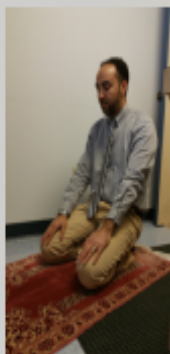
Considerations for Religion Adjustments

| Practice Setting | Considerations | Strategies |
|--------------------------------|--|--|
| Inpatient Hospital | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Male/female touch during self care and transfers • Caregiver training • Cooking groups | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Gloves • Keep door slightly open • Have another adult in the room • Explain fasting • Co-treatment |
| Outpatient Hand Therapy | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Male/female touch for tissue massage | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In large open room with other people |
| Outpatient Pediatrics | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Finicky feeders trials • Explaining headscarf to children | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Co-treatment • Speak to parents ahead of time |
| School System | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Explaining headscarf to children | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Answer a question with a question or a simple "I want to." |

Fieldwork Educator Discussions: Unique Preference for Each Student

When/How

- Prior to fieldwork experience:
 - formal email communication listing rituals
 - request a phone call
- -----OR WAIT -----
- First day of fieldwork experience



Muslim-OT Identity Development



Resources for prayer times can be found at www.islamicfinder.org

More Commonalities Than Differences



Resources

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/religion/religions/islam/>

<http://www.ispi-usa.org/guidelines.htm>

www.ispu.org/pdfs/620_ispu_report_aasim%20padela_final.pdf

<http://sharonpluralism.org/cultural-protocols/muslim-culture/>

[https://imana.org/muslim-patient-care/Health Care Providers' Handbook on Muslim ...](https://imana.org/muslim-patient-care/Health_Care_Providers'_Handbook_on_Muslim...) - Queensland Health

<https://www.health.qld.gov.au/multicultural/.../islamgde2ed.pdf>