

اتحاد الأخوات
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One Way of Life, One Sisterhood

April 2006 Sisters Lectures

السَّلَامُ عَلَيْكُمْ وَرَحْمَةُ اللَّهِ وَبَرَكَاتُهُ

DEPRESSION & THE MUSLIMAH ~ SISTER AISHA
Depression is a illness which affects many thousands of women. A sad reality is women suffer in silence. This lecture offers a practical solutions to this debilitating illness based upon Quran, Sunnah & Western Medicine.

FAMILY COMMUNICATION ~ UMM KHALID
The breakdown of families in the West is in epidemic proportion. One of the major factors in this breakdown is the lack of communication between family members. This lecture gives some practical examples and strategies to open the door of communication.

COPING WITH CHILDREN ~ UMM MOHAMMED
Mothers always find at times dealing with kids can be challenging. This lecture will provide some real life examples to show us how to love, care, discipline and teach our children according the example of our beloved Prophet Mohammed (Peace be upon him).

WHO ARE OUR EXAMPLES? ~ UMM RASHEED
Who are our role models? Who do we emulate? Many Muslimah want to be like western movie stars & singers. If we only look to our own religion we will find the greatest examples of women for all time.

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Depression & the Muslimah Speaker ~ Sister Aisha

Symptoms of Depression:

- Low mood, decreased ability to take pleasure in things, anxiety, decreased self confidence, negative thoughts, sleeping problems, low energy levels, impaired concentration and memory, indecision, decreased motivation, weight loss, bodily aches and pains (somatic pain), suicidal thoughts and behaviour.
- **First and foremost; turn to Allah (swt).** The Quran is the rope of Allah, so hold tight to it – read and contemplate over its meanings, play it in the house as much as possible. It is a healing and a mercy for us. Read Ayatul-Kursi, also read Surah Al-Ikhlâs, Surah Al-Falaq and Surah An-Nas three times, blow into cupped hand and wipe over your body. Try to do this everyday.
- **Make du'a** with certainty that Allah swt is listening to your calls for help. Turn to Allah in prayer, increase your sunnah prayers (especially during the last third of the night). The prayer is a gift for us and a time to draw closer to our Creator.
- **Attend regular Islamic classes or study circles**, especially for tafseer of Quran. Islam teaches us the blessings in hardships and how to cope. Learn how Prophet Muhammad (saw), his companions and the previous prophets coped with hardship in their lives.
- **Contact a local health professional** who can diagnose depression and devise a treatment plan for recovery. Counselling treatments such as Cognitive Behavioural Therapy (CBT) are usually effective for mild to moderate depression.
- **Take care of yourself**, eat healthy meals and exercise regularly. Take time to relax. Ask for help – reach out to trusted sisters and family, let them know when you need support.

Identify negative thoughts patterns:

'all or nothing'

-thinking in absolutes, black or white, good or bad, with no middle ground, eg; 'I'm hopeless, I'm a complete failure'

'awfulising'

- magnifying and exaggerating the importance of events and how awful or unpleasant they will be, over-estimating the change of disaster; whatever can go wrong will go wrong. If you have a setback you will view it as a never-ending pattern of defeat

'personalising'

-taking responsibility and blame for anything unpleasant even if it has little or nothing to do with you. If something bad happens, you immediately think 'it's my fault'

'focusing on the negative'

-focusing on the negative, ignoring or misinterpreting positive aspects of a situation. You focus on your weaknesses and forget your strengths, looking on the dark side. If you've done a good job, you filter out and reject the positive comments and focus on the negative.

'jumping to conclusions'

-making negative interpretations even though there are no definite facts. You start predicting the future, and take on the mantle of 'mind reader'. You are likely to predict that negative things will happen.

Living by fixed rules

-tending to have fixed rules and unrealistic expectations, regularly using the words 'should' 'ought' 'must' 'can't'. Eg; "The house should be perfectly clean everyday."

Such thinking is thought to produce a low mood which leads to reduced activity. To break this negative cycle a number of things can be done:

Understanding the problem

Understand the many factors both in the present and the past that have led you to feel the way you do.

Challenge negative thinking

Recognise that the way you think determines the way that you feel. Identify negative thinking patterns and replace them with more rational & positive thoughts.

Increase activity levels

Gradually increase your activity levels – particularly physical activity. Identify and work towards short and longer term goals.

Use support systems

Confide in a trusted, practicing sister or family how you feel, someone who can give you Islamically appropriate advice and support.

Assert yourself

Express yourself assertively. Set reasonable boundaries and be prepared to say "no" excessive demands.

Recommended reading: Al Quran, books of du'a; eg; (*Fortress of the Muslim*), *Don't be sad* by (Aaidh ibn Abdullah al-Qarni)

Websites

www.depressionet.com.au

www.blackdoginstitute.org.au

www.beyondblue.org.au

With the society that we live in, we find ourselves in a ever compromising situation. The family unity is the heart of society. With dysfunction within the family, we usually find dysfunction in the society. The main cause of family dysfunction is one that goes ignored, COMMUNICATION. We think we know how to talk to our families, our children, and our husband. It seems easy enough. You just open your mouth and speak. But you see my sisters, there is much more to communication than speech.

"Communication is any behaviour, verbal or non-verbal, this is perceived by another." (Dwyer. J, The business Communication Handbook, 3rd Ed. Prentice hall, 1993)

Parents

They raised us from babies and helped shaped us into adults. We owe them our time, love and kindness.

Narrated Abdullah bin Masud RAA: I asked the prophet SAWS, 'Whish of the deeds are most loved by Allah?' The Messenger of Allah SAWS said, 'Salam at its proper time.' I asked what next? He SAWS replied 'Kindness to parents.' I asked 'What next?' He replied, 'Jihad in the Way of Allah.'

Bukhari & Muslim

From this hadith we see two deeds beloved to Allah, salah & jihad. When kindness to parents is mentioned we see how important it really is.

Children

Children are our future, The ummah of tomorrow. If we do not acknowledge their importance, how will they acknowledge our later? Speak kindly, simply and follow through. Make sure they understand the challenges that face them. Ask them to say what they think you meant.

Children will need interaction to learn. Get involved with them and their life. Set aside a few minutes everyday to get them involved.

Family time is supposed to give us a change to do something we could not normally do within our busy schedules. Relax and enjoy being together. Allah knows if you will share more time tomorrow.

Amr bin Shuaib RAA reported on the authority of his father the Messenger of Allah SAWS said: 'He is not one of us who shows no mercy to our young ones and does not acknowledge the honour due to our elders.'

Husbands

As we have rights over our men, they have rights upon us. They maintain us. We share our lives, we share the burdern of raising a family. You should share a few minutes to discuss things. Men cannot read our minds. In some cultures it is a shame to talk with the men about certain things. Sisters need I remind you the Prophet SAWS taught us our deed. He told the women how to clean themselves after their period. He discussed how to clean ourselves after intercourse. He was the best example given to mankind. He fulfilled the mission Allah swt gave him. He was the leader of the Muslim state and a father and husband.

THINGS TO REMEMBER

- 1) **Choose your word carefully. Do not use words that may not be clear in their meaning. Don't use big words for little kids.**
- 2) **Timing is everything. When your husband comes home he doesn't want to hear all the problems of the day straight away. Remember the story of the female Companion. He husband returned from a journey, while he was away their son died. Upon his return he asked how was their son. The wife said he was well. She prepared herself for him. In the morning the father discovered his son had died. He went to the Prophet SAWS to complain. The Prophet SAWS was pleased with the actions of the wife.**
- 3) **BE AWARE OF THE FEELINGS OF THE OTHER PERSON. Khadija RAA, Ummul Mumineen stood by the Prophet SAWS when he was shaken by the first revelation. She calmed her husband, by saying, ' Surely Allah would not disgrace him.' She built up his confidence when he was down.**
- 4) **Give your full attention to the matter. You will not get the whole message of you don't concentrate. Even worse you may get it completely wrong!**
- 5) **The responsibility does not belong to one single person. It is a collective responsibility on all members and beyond that to the previous generations .**

Coping with Children

Speaker — Umm Mohammed

6 Step Strategy for Better Parenting.

Identify the first sign of Meltdown

This is the first sign that indicates to you that your going to begin to lose control. It may be that you have a flushed face or butterflies in your stomach or head palpitations. You need to identify what signals the start of your meltdown. It's very important that you do this as this is a chain of behaviour that has become programmed into you.

Consciously choose to cope

You can use your first signal of meltdown as a cue to cope. Once you discover what your meltdown signal you can make a conscious decision to cope.

Make an Incompatible Response.

You need to get past your impulse moment; what this means is that you must make it impossible to abuse your child. So what should you do? Some good strategies are, leave the room, go outside, even if it's for only 10 minutes. Do whatever it takes to ensure that you will not abuse your child.

Tell an 'Accountability Person'

You are abusive because you can be. There is no accountability for your actions (but we must always remember Allah is All Knowing). Therefore in order to stop this cycle you have to take responsibility for your actions. Choose a friend, family member or someone that you trust to be your accountability person. Every ime you do something destructive tell your person of choice, or write it down and call this person and tell them. When discussing your actions it is really important to not only discuss what you did but how you felt.

Engage in Positive Interaction

When you have finished you impulse stage, go back into the room with your child. Give them a BIG HUG and kiss. Even pat them on the back. The point is to do something nurturing and positive.

Keep it LONG TERM

You will need to speak to someone on a regular basis to deal with what's happening. You may like to go to a sheikh, close friend, family member or somebody who will listen and continue to guide you in the right direction.

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Coping with Children—CONTINUED

Conclusion

Keep in mind that the Prophet (SAWS) said:

Whoever is not kind to young people is not one of us. And the best teaching that a parent can give to a child is the teaching of good manners and good character.

Also, most importantly you have to make sure you guard yourself. Too many women are overwhelmed by their children and families. This puts a stress not just on the relationship with the children, but also strains the relationship with our spouse.

WHO ARE OUR EXAMPLES ? ~ UMM RASHEED

A question we need to ask ourselves is who do we aspire to be like. Are our role models ones which instil within ourselves good character or morals? Or are our role models the cause of a disease in our heart?

Muslim Women are truly blessed.

We have role models for being mothers, wives, daughters, ambassadors, bankers, business women, doctors and how to be teachers.

We need only look back into Islamic history we see the greatest examples for women are the women from the time of our beloved Prophet (peace be upon him). Khadijah bint Khuwaylid, Summayah, Umm Ayyemen, Fatimah bint Mohammed, Aisha bint Abu Bakr & Fatimah bint Asab (may Allah be pleased them) are some of the greatest women to have ever be upon this earth. The Prophet (peace be upon him) showed great respect for these women. There is a hadith, when Fatimah bint Asad passed from this doonya he (peace be upon him) said:

'I have my shirt to be used as part of her shroud, so that she would be the dressed the dress of paradise.'

Why do Muslimah look to unhealthy and immoral role models when we have a role model who was greeted by Allah through the Angel Jibril.

'Narrated Abu Hurairah (may Allah be please with him): Jibril came to the Prophet (peace be upon him) and said, 'O Allah';s Messenger! This is Khadija coming to you with a dish

Whether you wake up 1 hour earlier before everyone else wakes up, to either read Quran, a book, exercise or something you can use as an outlet so during this time you are not bombarded with everyone else's problems and issues. This time should be used as a way to control ourselves and our actions, in order to be better parents and role models for our children, inshallah. Allah swt has gifted us with children and its our duty to nurture and maintain them.

And I shall finish with a quote from the Holy Quran:

'O You who Believe, save yourselves and your families from the fire, whose fuel is men and stone.' Surah Al Tahrim: 6

having meat soup. When she reaches you, greet her on behalf of her Lord and on my behalf and give her glad tidings of having a palace made of Qasab in Paradise, wherein there will be neither any noise nor any toil.'

In our modern time, we are encouraged to take role models who go against Islamic values. Singers are now named with Muslim names. This is to trap our youth into thinking it is okay to idolise these western singers. If we look at these people we know they are NOT the best examples. However the shayton wants us to follow them. The shayton aims to take us away from worshipping Allah swt. It uses these 'idols' of music and the big screen to do this. Step by step it changes us from worshipping the One Ilah, Allah, to worshipping these singers and actors. This happens slowly & many of us do not realise we have left worshipping Allah and have started worshipping the creation.

My dear Sisters in Islam, don't be fooled by the sparkles of this doonya. What Allah swt has for the believers in the hereafter is pleasures we cant imagine during this life. Being obedient to Allah is the way to attain the pleasures of the next life. Let us ask Allah swt we be among those who submit to Him according to the Quran and the Sunnah of our Beloved Prophet Mohammed.