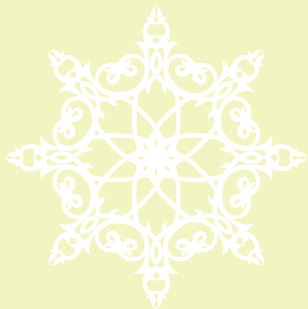
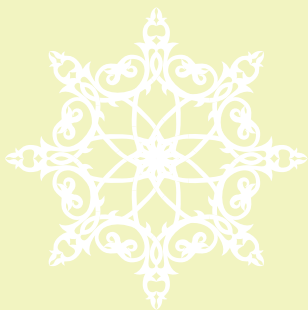




FEELING STRESSED?

- A leaflet for Muslims -



WHAT IS MENTAL ILLNESS?

In times of stress it is natural to feel down or upset, sometimes this can become serious and turn in to an illness. Mental illness is any illness of the mind. It can affect how you think, how you feel and how you behave. Mental illness can affect anybody.

WHAT IS IT LIKE TO HAVE A MENTAL ILLNESS?

You may feel sad, worried or scared. You may start to believe unusual things or have unusual experiences. You may find it hard to think clearly and you may do things you would not normally do. Your work or studies may suffer and you may feel alone.

IS MENTAL ILLNESS REAL OR JUST IMAGINED?

We know that these illnesses are **real illnesses** – just like physical illnesses such as diabetes. They are caused by actual changes in the way the brain works. They can run in families and can be caused by stress. Therefore it is very important that people seek **medical** help for these problems.

If someone is having these experiences, it is important for them to see a doctor.

WHAT IF MY PROBLEM IS CAUSED BY JINN POSSESSION OR EVIL EYE?

People can mistake mental illness for Jinn possession or Evil Eye. So, even if you feel that you may be possessed or cursed, it is important that you see a doctor to find out if you have a mental illness.

WHAT ABOUT FAITH HEALERS AND TRADITIONAL REMEDIES?

If you use traditional remedies it is important that you also see a doctor as they may have other treatments which work. Some traditional remedies can be harmful to someone with mental illness, so you should check with the doctor before taking them. Hitting or beating someone with mental illness will never make them better and is a crime.



CAN'T I JUST GO TO MY FRIENDS OR FAMILY FOR HELP?

Of course. Most of us will go first to our friends and family if we are going through a difficult time, but sometimes this is not enough. If these problems continue or become serious, you should speak to your doctor. If you have a mental illness, you will need the help of a trained professional.

WHAT WILL THE DOCTOR DO?

First the doctor will talk to you about your problem to find out if you have a mental illness. The doctor may offer you treatment, or may ask you to see a psychiatrist (a doctor who specialises in treating mental illnesses).

The psychiatrist will ask you about the problems you are having, before talking about ways they can help you.

Everything you tell your doctor or psychiatrist will be private. If you do not speak English someone can translate for you.

WHAT TREATMENTS ARE AVAILABLE?

- **Medications** prescribed by the doctor or psychiatrist
- **Talking therapies** (talking to an expert about your problems in detail).
- Help with your **social situation** (housing, finances etc).

IS THE MEDICATION WIDELY USED?

Medications for mental illness do work and are widely used. They can make you feel much better and are not addictive. Side effects are usually mild and tend to wear off after a couple of weeks.

It is sometimes necessary to take medication to recover from a mental illness. If someone has a chest infection, they may have to take antibiotics. Similarly, if someone has depression they may have to take antidepressants.



ISN'T PRAYER ENOUGH TO CURE THIS ILLNESS?

Prayer is very important, but since we know that these problems are caused by an illness, it is important to seek help from a doctor for the problem in addition to prayer. The Prophet (PBUH) said:

“Make use of medical treatment, for Allah has not made a disease without appointing a remedy for it...”
(Kitab Al-Tibb of Sunan Abu-Dawud)

I AM WORRIED ABOUT WHAT OTHER PEOPLE WILL THINK IF THEY FIND OUT I HAVE A MENTAL ILLNESS.

It is important to get help for a mental illness as it can affect your family life, job and relationships. The earlier you get help, the sooner you will get better.

1 in 4 people will, at some point in their lives, have a mental illness, so we must all make an effort to treat people with mental illnesses with sympathy and encouragement, just as we do for people who have other illnesses.

If you are having any of these experiences you should see your doctor. If you think someone you know may have a mental illness, you should advise them to see their doctor. Here are some other sources of help and information:

● Samaritans

t: 08457 909 090 w: www.samaritans.org

● Muslim Youth Helpline

t: 0808 808 2008 w: www.myh.org.uk

● NHS Direct

t: 0845 4647 w: www.nhsdirect.nhs.uk

Download this leaflet here: www.rcpsych.ac.uk/info

For free print copies contact: leaflets@rcpsych.ac.uk

