

Culturally Responsive Care-Cultivating Inclusion Committee Monthly Moment

Islamic Practices, Culture, and Ramadan

Islam refers to the religion practiced by Muslims. Islam means “submission to the will of God.” The *salah* refers to the ritual of 5 daily prayers practiced by the Muslim community. These occur predawn (the *fajr*), at noon (the *dhuhr*), mid-afternoon (‘*asr*), at sunset (*maghrib*) and evening (‘*isha*).

Prayers-what faculty, staff and students need to know:

The Muslim practitioner may need to wash their arms prior to prayer.

They will need a clean place to pray.

Especially in winter when the sun sets earlier, your client (and family members) or student may need to interrupt what they are doing to complete the sunset prayer. Also be aware of the possible need to pray if you have clients or students at noon or mid-afternoon.

You don’t need to make any assumptions about the person’s religion, typically the person will tell you that they need to pray.

Some Muslims may want to pray in private, others will pray in the presence of others. There are schedules on the clinic room doors so you can see if the room is available for prayer.

Some will pray for a few minutes (hurried) and some will take 5 to 15 minutes.

Muslims in the United States are diverse, representing 68 different nations. As in many other religions, there are specific denominations.

Your awareness of and respect for Muslim practices is important because many Muslims face prejudice in American society.

Cultural Considerations in Healthcare:

Minimize physical contact and eye contact when the health care provider is of the opposite sex.

Some Muslim women will be accompanied by a spouse or male family member and may prefer to communicate through them.

Decision making may involve the extended family.

The concept of good health includes physical, psychological, spiritual and social factors.

Religious intervention may be sought.

Ramadan:

Ramadan occurs at different times each year because it follows the Hijiri calendar. It is the most significant aspect of the Islamic year. For 2026, it occurs from February 17th through March 19th.

Fasting from sunrise to sunset during Ramadan is expected for Muslims beginning at puberty. Some families use a gradual process, beginning at age 7 or 8 with partial fasts. There are exceptions to required fasting such as illness, pregnancy, and old age.

Health care providers need to be aware of how fasting may affect their client's performance and participation in a therapy session or evaluation. Those teaching Muslim CSD students in the classroom may consider accommodations as needed.

From Rami Ismail, a pilot who posts about Muslim traditions:

[Post by @ramiismail.com — Bluesky](#)

“Ramadan is incredibly communal. As Ramadan also emphasizes Muslims' constant requirement to show generosity towards the less fortunate, communal meals will be served up at mosques. And that community maintains even in the most difficult of times.”

Breakfast before sunrise: *“Suhoor is -often and when possible- a familial meal. Families wake up together, eat together, drink together, maybe pray together, and - depending on the schedule and the time between suhoor and their normal wake-up time - return to sleep.”*

“Ramadan Mubarak” means “Have a blessed Ramadan.”