

Conversation 3: How can we make use of the available mental health resources and services?

**** Green font is action for the facilitator****

Print Handout: How can we make use of the available resources and services?

Print Stories

Make sure to take 2 pieces of large paper and markers for this session to create the circle of care.

Time: 90-120 minutes

Preparation for the group:

- **Decide on a date and time**
- **Reserve a venue** for the group for at least 2.5 hours (for set up and take down)
- **Advertise** the discussion group in your place of worship with this invitation **template**
- **Review** the **facilitators video** ahead of time
- **Read** the relevant info sheets ahead of time
- **Practice** the conversation outline a few times
- **Make sure you have enough copies** of the handout for each member
- **Take a sign-up sheet and pen** with you
- **Arrive early and set up chairs** in a circle before everyone arrives
- **Warmly greet** everyone when they arrive

Starting the session:

Gather the group together. Open with reading from the Qu'ran or a prayer. (10 minutes)

رَبِّ اشْرَحْ لِي صَدْرِي وَ يَسِّرْ لِي أَمْرِي وَ اَحْلِلْ عُقْدَةً مِّن لِّسَانِي

*My Lord open my heart for me and make my task easy for me
and remove the knot from my tongue (Qur'an, 20:25)*

Ask everyone to share their name with a warm up activity/Icebreaker (10 minutes)

Share a favourite Quranic ayat or favourite Hadith of the Prophet and why. **Ask them to keep it short.**

1. When we or other people are in distress we choose to make use of a variety of mental health approaches. We may not be equally comfortable with the different treatments.

Explain: We are going to listen to 2 stories, and while we are listening take note of how you respond to these scenarios.

Introduction:

Karim and Farrah are two independent individuals who live with severe depression and anxiety. At this moment neither are able to work in their professions, and each have moved into the home of their parents for care.

Ask for two people who read clearly and with a loud voice.

Ask them to each read one story (from the handout)

First Story:

Karim's mother is a Registered Nurse (RN) and is intent on encouraging Karim to seek medical help for his condition. She has obtained prescription medication for Karim and offers it to him every morning with his breakfast. Karim works full time in computer technical support. He has researched extensively various treatments to depression and anxiety. He is weary of medication as an option for his recovery. Instead he signs up at the gym with a personal trainer. He is also seeing a naturopath and is taking vitamins, minerals and focussing on specific food groups. He has joined a men's group at his local Islamic community centre. Attending the weekly group helps

him learn ways to manage his anxiety and increases his participation in the life of the community. Even though Karim's moods fluctuate, his dedication to his way of life helps him to readjust to the distressing times. Karim's mother remains anxious that his condition will deteriorate without proper medication. She is particularly concerned that he will become suicidal. Karim is volunteering at his place of worship in order to build up his skills to return to work.

Second Story:

Farrah had a very hard time when she had to quit her job and move home. Her anxiety attacks were happening almost on a daily basis. Her parents stepped in with providing a good structure, with healthy foods, exercise, and a generally loving and accepting environment. But Farrah's condition was not improving. Farrah came across a support group through an email from her Muslim Young Adult group mailing list. She attended the support group and learned that there were other people suffering from similar symptoms who had been managing to have a less stressful life with a certain kind of medication. This sparked curiosity and a glimmer of hope and she called a mental health help-line. She was given the contact information for two clinics and the emergency room at the hospital. She went to a drop-in clinic who referred her to a psychiatrist, but the wait list was 4 months. In the intervening 4 months her condition deteriorated to such an extent that her mother called the psychiatrist's office and managed to get her in sooner because of a cancellation. She finally got in for her first assessment and got her medication but that just made her drowsy and she spent many hours a day sleeping. She went through 4-5 medication trials, each one taking around 6 weeks with adverse side effects, excessive weight gain, hand tremors, emotional flattening and numbness, etc. Farrah questioned her use of medication and if these trials were a sign that God did not want her to take the medications. However, she persisted because the members of her support group were living examples that there could be hope. They had been through the hardships of the medication trials and had found relative stability and recovered enough to return to work. Today, two years later, Farrah has finally found the right dosages of the right medication. An Occupational Therapist (OT) assisted Farrah to return to work. Initially it seemed she would regain her capacity as a 6th grade teacher but over time the stress was too much for her. The OT worked with Farrah to adjust to a less stressful position in the system, to work as a teaching assistant.

Explain: We have heard two stories. Two people who found hope and recovery through making different choices and taking different paths towards healing. So often these things are not talked about. We get caught up in our own ideas and do not hear other people's thoughts or opinions. Today we want to hear a range of opinions, and be open.

Talking circle

Establish guidelines for the Talking Circle:

Say: We just want to hear the range of choices that people consider. Even if for us personally there are right and wrong choices, we just want to become aware of how others view these

issues.

Ask the group to talk about: How does some options or choices works for one person while they dont work for another. (5 minutes)

2. Options for a circle of care

On one large paper draw a circle in the middle and write Farrah/Karim in the middle.

Ask the group to list all the support people that Farrah and Karim relied on for their recovery.

Draw them around the circle. (use the following diagram as a model)

Ask the group who else might be in the circle of care that was not mentioned in the stories?

Add them to the diagram.

Give out the hand-out

Explain: We are going to break out in smaller groups and each group will explore and learn how to make initial contact with one of the people in the circle of care and then come back together to share. You have 5 minutes.

Break out into smaller groups - each taking one person in the circle of care. Referring to the handout: **How can we make use of the available mental health resources and services?**

(some may not be on the handout, eg. your faith leader, the personal trainer at the gym, etc.)

- **Tell the break out groups:** Figure out how you would gain access to that particular person for support.

From the time that the groups actually start working, **give them 5 minutes.**

Bring the participants back to the large group.

Ask each group to share their learning (2 minutes per group)

Offer the handouts for those who wish to take them home.

Closure:

Ask everyone to offer one or two words to capture what this workshop experience was like for them.

Offer an example of words that can be shared: hopeful, confused, perplexed, informed, relieved, curious.

