



Resilient Me: Supporting the Mental Health and Wellbeing of Young Muslims

The Mental Health of Young Muslims

Research by The Children's Society has found over 70% of children and young people who experience a mental health problem have not had appropriate interventions at a sufficiently early age. 'Before the pandemic, one in eight children and young people aged 5-19 in England had a diagnosable mental health condition¹. The pandemic will have posed serious challenges to the mental health of young people and there is also growing evidence that lockdown has had a much wider impact on children's mental health that could have long term implications.

In addition, more than 16% of people who had tested positive for coronavirus when they died were from black, Asian and minority ethnic (BAME) communities. Young Muslims are more likely to come from BAME backgrounds, live in multigenerational households and have parents or family members working in key worker roles. Many young Muslims come from collective cultures in which their identity is ingrained with their family, yet they have been unable to come together at this distressing time, unable to support sick family members and unable to perform funeral rites and grieve together.

Furthermore, the results from Children's Mental Health Week show the overwhelming majority of 12 to 16 year olds in England (75%) think it would be helpful if they had a counsellor or another professional at their school to talk to when they're feeling down and upset. A survey conducted by BCBN on mental health and young British Muslims in 2019 shows that 90% of participants aged 18-30 years old said it was important for mental health services to be culturally/ faith sensitive.

We also know that bullying within schools and other religious hate crimes has doubled since the rise of terrorist attacks. Childline conducted more than 2,500 counselling sessions regarding faith-based bullying over three years to children as young as 9. Considering that the pandemic has worsened mental health, returning to a hostile school environment could have long term implications.

As adults we know the uncertainty and problems that the pandemic has brought. Many of us have been experiencing anxiety around finances, worries about the health of family and strained relationships. Our resilience and patient perseverance have been severely tested. This is all felt more severely by young people, who may not have yet developed the skills and knowledge to be able to cope. Many young people live in crowded conditions, come from low-income backgrounds and are dealing with family conflicts. This means that once they return to school, they'll need something that is trauma informed as well as upskilled staff trained to deal with their wellbeing.

¹ Mental Health of Children and Young People in England (2017) <https://bit.ly/2YNoaUk>



The Resilient Me Programme

When students return to school they will need to have holistic interventions in place to help reintegrate them. An increased importance is placed upon well being services to be integrated into school life and deal with mental health holistically. Young people and their families will need help to 'manage mental health, self-esteem, friendships and relationships'.

While general mental health support is available for young Muslims, the 'Resilient Me' Programme is informed by research which indicates the importance of culturally informed and faith sensitive mental health services for young Muslims. Delivered in partnership by The Children's Society and Better Community Business Network (BCBN), the 'Resilient Me' Programme is a unique service designed to better recognise, understand and support the Mental Health and Wellbeing of young Muslims.

Resilient Me's whole school approach makes mental health and wellbeing everyone's business, with all parts of the school community working together to prevent and recognise emotional distress in young people before it can escalate into adult trauma and related mental health difficulties. The programme seeks to empower young people to take charge of their mental health and wellbeing, through teaching strategies that build emotional resilience, listening to their concerns and creating safe spaces for them to share worries.

'Resilient Me' aims to ensure diversity and representation are embedded within the curriculum and schools are equipped with the tools they need to discuss the issues faced by young Muslims. This will help to create supportive school environments in which young people are empowered to express their faith, culture and identity holistically without fear of discrimination that they might face in other settings.

Programme Content

- Producing a "school report" that will benchmark well-being of young people against the national averages and provide the school with insights into any well-being challenges they might face
- Using this bespoke school data to start working with the organisation around its approach to well-being and mental health
- Providing access to The Children's Societies in house counsellors or creating referral pathways to faith sensitive support when students are identified with a mental health need
- Providing ongoing toolkits, links and resources for organisations to send to, or use with, their students
- Running sessions on school's existing digital platforms to engage with young people in providing mental health and wellbeing support to students
- Providing online training for school staff, welfare teams, pastoral support, reception staff
- Delivering online awareness sessions for parents, families and the wider community
- Engaging with the wider school community, external organisations and experts to inform programme delivery
- Ongoing efforts around research and assessment of the needs of young Muslim people to inform the programme and provide adequate support

The
Children's
Society



B | C Better Community
B | N Business Network

Find out more: www.childrenssociety.org.uk/what-we-do/our-services/resilient-me

For more information on the programme, please contact
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Donate and support the programme www.launchgood.com/resilientme

By donating, you are giving Muslim young people the support they need to build emotional resilience, cope better with the stress of Covid-19 and return safely to school to achieve their potential.