

Sources:

Sahih Bukhari

Abu Dawud

[www.islam-online.net/fatwaapplication/arabic/display.asp?hFatwaID=14468](http://www.islam-online.net/fatwaapplication/arabic/display.asp?hFatwaID=14468)

[www.islam-usa.com/im14.html](http://www.islam-usa.com/im14.html)

<http://sharif.islamicmedicineonline.org/psychology.htm>.

UCLA Medical Center Learning Series, "Depression." 5/95

- **1-88-88-Anxiety**
- **Helpful Resources**

• [Http://www.nimh.nih.gov](http://www.nimh.nih.gov)

• National Mental Health Association (800) 969-6642

#### **Muslim Psychologists:**

- Dr. Ilham Al-Sarraf : Pasadena, CA (626) 799-4765
- Dr. Shireen Ansari: Irvine, CA (949) 654-2424
- [Http://www.islamonline.net](http://www.islamonline.net) Cyber Counseling Available



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## Muslim Women's League

## Islam and Inner Peace

### The Power of Islam

In Arabic, the word Islam, means peace. As Muslims, when we put our trust in Allah and follow the Islamic way of life prescribed in the Quran and Hadith, we find the greatest source of inner peace, which can be given to us by Allah alone.

### The Quran

Allah tells us that the Quran "...is a guide and a healing to those who believe." (Quran 41:44) Besides being a source of spiritual inspiration and inner calmness for those who read it, it contains stories that provide us with lessons on how to cope with difficult situations.

Yacub, the father of Prophet Yusuf (peace be upon them) was in so much agony over the separation from his son that he went blind. His patience and belief in Allah were demonstrated in his statement, "I only complain of my distraction and anguish to Allah..."(Quran 12:86) Sure enough, Allah listened to his prayer, and reunited him with his son.

Prophet Ayyub (peace be upon him), when afflicted by the loss of his family, possessions, and health, began to lose hope. He then made a supplication to Allah, saying, "Truly distress has seized me but You are the most Merciful of those that are Merciful." (Quran 21:83) Allah later rewarded what He had taken, rewarding Prophet Ayyub with twice as much as he had before. These stories were provided for us in the Quran in order for mankind to benefit from the lessons they teach and to teach us to use the same supplications used by the Prophets during their times of need.

### The Hadith

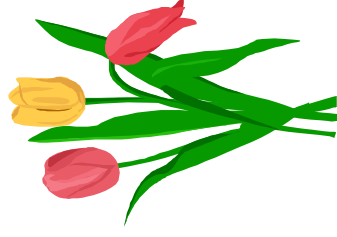
Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) taught us numerous supplications (duas) to preserve inner serenity. One such dua is the following:

*"Oh Allah, I seek refuge with You from distress and sorrow, from helplessness and laziness, from miserliness and cowardice, from being heavily in debt, and from being overcome by men."*

In addition, remembering Allah often as well as asking for forgiveness are easy and valuable ways to speed up one's recovery. Allah tells us, "Verily in the remembrance of Allah do hearts find rest." (Quran 13:28)

Whether you have severe stress, depression, or an anxiety disorder, there is no doubt that you are suffering greatly. However, there is hope, and it is possible to feel better. The Prophet (peace be upon him) once said that "Allah has sent down both the disease and the cure, and He has appointed a cure for every disease." By following these Islamic guidelines and by seeking help, you will find the cure to help you recover, insha'Allah.

## Stress, Anxiety, and Depression



Helping you live a normal life.

## Does this sound like you?

Do you suffer from any of the following?

- ◆ Loss of appetite
- ◆ Insomnia or over-sleeping
- ◆ Fatigue
- ◆ Feelings of inadequacy or guilt
- ◆ Difficulty concentrating
- ◆ Thoughts of death or suicide
- ◆ Sudden bursts of fear for no apparent reason
- ◆ Feelings of loss of control
- ◆ Upset stomach or the urge to vomit
- ◆ Shaking or trembling
- ◆ Chest pain or racing heart
- ◆ Difficulty breathing

If you feel any or many of these symptoms, you may have **severe stress, depression** or an **anxiety disorder**. To learn more about these conditions and how to cope with and treat them using both Islamic and medical methods, please read on. There are ways to help you live a normal life once again.

## Stress

Stress refers to a physical and mental condition which is caused by having to adapt to change. It is much more serious than people assume it to be because it can have several negative effects on your life. It may cause feelings of anxiety, irritability, mental fatigue, an avoidance of responsibilities and relationships, self-destructive behavior, self-neglect, poor judgment, excessive worry about illness, frequent illness, exhaustion, and/ or bodily pain. These symptoms can be very dangerous to your health as well as to your relationships with others, and they require that you take measures to control your stress levels. Here is how you can start:

**Slow Down** - If you find yourself always in a hurry, remember to slow down. Rushing will only stress you out more.

**Get Organized** - Disorganization creates stress. Set priorities as to what is important and focus on finishing those tasks first.

**Balance Your Life** - Do not spend all of your time on responsibilities such as your home, the job, or studies. Set times for doing things for yourself that can help you relax and better enjoy your day. Examples are reading, napping, walking, and even stopping to think about Allah and His creations.

**Recognize Your Limits** - Set realistic limits for yourself. "Allah burdens not a person beyond what he can handle" (Quran 2: 286). So if you cannot do everything, remember that nobody is perfect.

**Avoid Upsetting Thoughts** - Watch what you tell yourself. If you find yourself thinking negative thoughts, they will add to your stress level, making small things seem much worse than they really are. Try to be more positive about things. Remind yourself that Allah will help you get through your difficulties if you seek His help.

**Prayer** - As Muslims, we are privileged with the ability of taking five breaks every day. One can look at the five prayers as means of taking a step back from

our daily routines to be in the presence of Allah. This is an opportunity to forget about all worldly concerns and to ask Allah for His help and blessings in any aspect of one's life. After making wudu and briefly connecting with Allah, you will feel much more refreshed and ready to face your busy schedule. Take the time to ask of The Creator, and He will not leave your prayers unanswered.

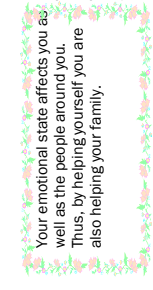
## Depression

Depression is a condition that is three times more likely to affect women than men. It is estimated that nearly 15% of all adults experience at least one episode of depression in their lifetime.

Depression is a state of mind or emotion associated with deep sadness, a sense of hopelessness, or a loss of interest and pleasure in everyday activities. Some of its symptoms include loss of appetite, too little or too much sleep, fatigue, difficulty concentrating, and thoughts of death and/ or suicide.

This condition can be triggered by various events or changes in a woman's life that may be difficult to cope with. Hormonal changes due to menstruation, pregnancy, child birth, and menopause, as well as diminished health or other social crises can be factors that contribute to developing depression.

Depression is a real medical condition that is diagnosed in numerous women. It is neither something that is in a person's imagination, nor is it a *haram* (Islamically prohibited) state to claim to be in. Depression involves changes of various chemicals in the brain, causing a change in moods, something that is beyond your control.

Your emotional state affects you as well as the people around you. Thus, by helping yourself you are also helping your family.

Manic Depression, also known as bipolar disorder, describes a condition in which a person experiences times of extreme hyperactivity and high energy levels while at other times she feels extremely low and depressed.

Much research has been done on the different types of depression, and clinicians are very skilled in treating these conditions. Medication as well as therapy are effective in

bringing one's thoughts and feelings back under control. Increasing numbers of Muslims are entering the mental health field and are integrating Islamic principles in their practices. Religious leaders, such as Imams, can be helpful as well. It is up to you, however, to ask for help.

## Anxiety Disorders

General anxiety disorder is characterized by tendencies of constant worry, even when there is no trouble or cause for worry. The body feels frequent unexplained aches and pains as well as tension. The person has trouble concentrating on one task and becomes easily tired, yet she has difficulty sleeping.

People with panic disorder, a type of anxiety disorder, are known to have sudden bursts of intense fear for no apparent reason. During such panic attacks, the heart beats races, it becomes difficult to breathe, sometimes causing a feeling that one is choking. A person may become dizzy, sweat, shake, tremble, feel the need to vomit, or she may feel that she is going crazy or is dying. She avoids places in which she has experienced panic attacks in the past, in fear that they will return. She lives in constant fear of getting another attack. The condition may last from a few months to a few years.

In the case of anxiety disorder, treatment with medication and therapy can help a person return to living a normal life. Again, all that is required is a willingness to receive help.

If you know someone who may be suffering from any of these mental conditions, there are many ways in which you can help. First, find out more about the condition. Look for symptoms that may indicate that she is suffering from one of these illnesses. Offer to help the person, and call one of the hotlines listed in this brochure as well as the person's doctor. The sooner you step in to help, the less she will suffer from her illness.