

WHO AM I?

Workshop on Identity



AUSTRALIAN
multicultural
foundation



Outcomes of this workshop

- Vision – To help young Australian Muslims be confident with their unique Identities.
- Recognise the importance and depth of our identity
- Understand what it means to be Muslim
- Be able to define our identity
- Being confident with who you are
- Recognizing and acknowledging our environment and its impact on our identity
- Identifying our internal and external obstacles
- Learning to deal with our internal obstacles
- Learning how to react with external obstacles.



SESSION 1: WHAT IS
IDENTITY?

Session 1: What is Identity?

- The concept of identity is unique to one's own self.
- Identity relates to the basic values that dictate the choices we make
- Its the individual's experiences throughout his life that form a person's identity.
- Identity is never final and continues to develop over time
- Give it a try - Explore your own current identity through your lived experiences.
 - Culture
 - values
 - Qualities/Strengths
 - Life Goals



SESSION 2: WHY IS
IDENTITY IMPORTANT?

Session 2: Why is it important?

- Fulfilled people are able to live a life true to their values and pursue meaningful goals.
- Lack of a coherent sense of identity will lead to uncertainty about what one wants to do in life.
- Being confident in your identity and accepting your own unique self allows for a better mental health and better life decisions.
- “When people misrepresent themselves or present themselves in out-of-character ways to impress an audience, the behavior is unnatural and exhausting. The behavior requires greater cognitive resources, because the mind is filled with self-doubt, self-consciousness, and negative thoughts. Moreover, when people look to immediate audiences to help them define who they should be, how they should look, and what they should do, they are in danger of acting in ways that endanger their health, such as eating disorders and alcohol or drug abuse. For example, eating disorders are due in part to concerns about body appearance. Alcohol and drug use are related to peer pressure and acceptance” - Dr Shahram Heshmat
- Helps understand others



SESSION 3: WHAT IS MY
SPIRITUAL IDENTITY?

Session 3: What is our Spiritual Identity?

- Some of us may still not have gone through the journey required to have constructed their spiritual identity.
- Spiritual intelligence is essentially the ability of a person to process the world around them and discover meaning and significance
- When a person with high spiritual intelligence goes through life, his mind is constantly abstracting positive meaning and significance from the events that unfold around him. This fuels positive spiritual states such as inspiration, optimism, gratitude, and perseverance
- Spirituality and the quest for meaning appear to be very important in providing optimal mental health care and developing one's identity.
- Often, we feel the pressure to define ourselves through our jobs, financial status, successes, grades, appearance, what other people say about us and many other means. However, a stable sense of self cannot fully exist when we place our identity in external things.
- "I set out on a journey of Love, seeking truth, peace and understanding - *I am still learning*" - Muhammad Ali
- Activity - <https://yaqeeninstitute.org/yaqeen-institute/whats-your-spiritual-personality-take-our-new-quiz-to-find-out/>

Session 3: What is our Islamic Identity?

- One common spiritual identity we all have been introduced to, is the Islamic identity. Some of us may have been born as so-called Muslims, and some may have found this identity by themselves.
- To be labelled a so-called Muslim one must simply believe in only one God, Allah, and believe that Prophet Muhammad (Pbuh) was his slave and messenger.
- Islam aims provide a set of guidelines that help us make decisions in this world, alongside those guidelines it teaches us who we are, where we come from, and where we are going. Answering the very questions that many people struggle to answer throughout their lives.
- To confidently believe in the teaching of Islam, Islam encourages us to question its belief and seek out the knowledge to find out what this belief entails.
- The beauty of our faith is that it is not a blind faith but we have to reach that conclusion ourselves through our own unanswered questions.
- Activity - What aspects of this identity do you feel connected to? What aspects of this identity do you struggle with and are not too confident in?



beautifies Islam ~~vs.~~ Culture

Muslims make up a global community of beautiful cultures. Sometimes, however, our spaces are dominated by those who unintentionally offer their own interpretation of Islam as the only right way. It creates a notion that a normative “**Muslim culture**” exists, that becoming Muslim requires you to fit a certain mold or become a completely different person.

This infographic introduces the beauty of Islam enriched by culture and what it can offer to the global Muslim community.

Every community has their own
body of cultural knowledge, and that
diversity is recognized by God...



O mankind! We created you from a single pair of a male and a female, and made you into nations and tribes that you might get to know one another..”

[QURAN 49:13]

The Case of Salman the Persian



Salman the Persian embraced Islam...



...but he wasn't inferiorized for not being Arab.



One of his contributions came from his **cultural knowledge** of building a trench in warfare...



...ultimately making the Muslims victorious in the Battle of the Trench.

The Case of Malcolm X

Malcolm X embraced orthodox Islam...

...but didn't stop being African American.

Islam gave him the solution to racism and validated his fight for justice...

...but he still implemented his African American cultural knowledge in his fight.

El-Hajj Malik El-Shabazz



"I'll probably continue to use [the name] Malcolm X... as long as the situation that produced it exists."

-Malcolm X

"O you who believe! Stand out firmly for justice, as witnesses to Allah, even if it be against yourselves, your parents, and your relatives, or whether it is against the rich or the poor..."

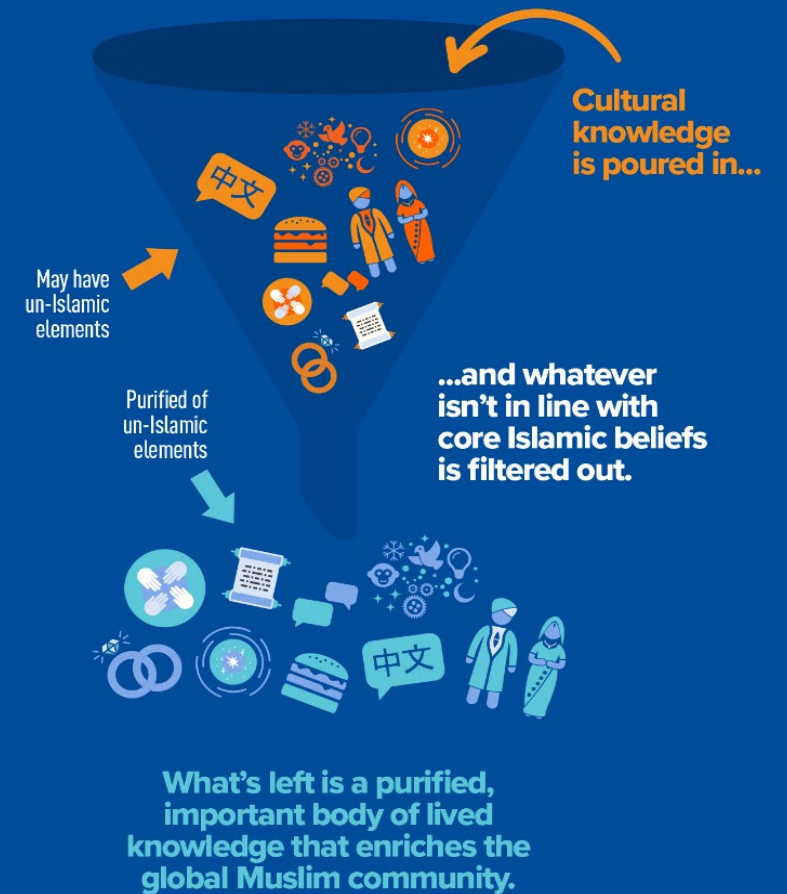
[Quran 4:135]

"Black people, in America, as they begin to strive to throw off the shackles of mental colonialism will also probably reflect an effort to throw off the shackles of **cultural colonialism** and...begin to reflect desires...and standards of their own."

-Malcolm X

You see...**culture** and Islam **CAN** coexist...

Islam is like a filter...





SESSION 5: DEALING
WITH INTERNAL
OBSTACLES

Session 5: Dealing with Internal Obstacles

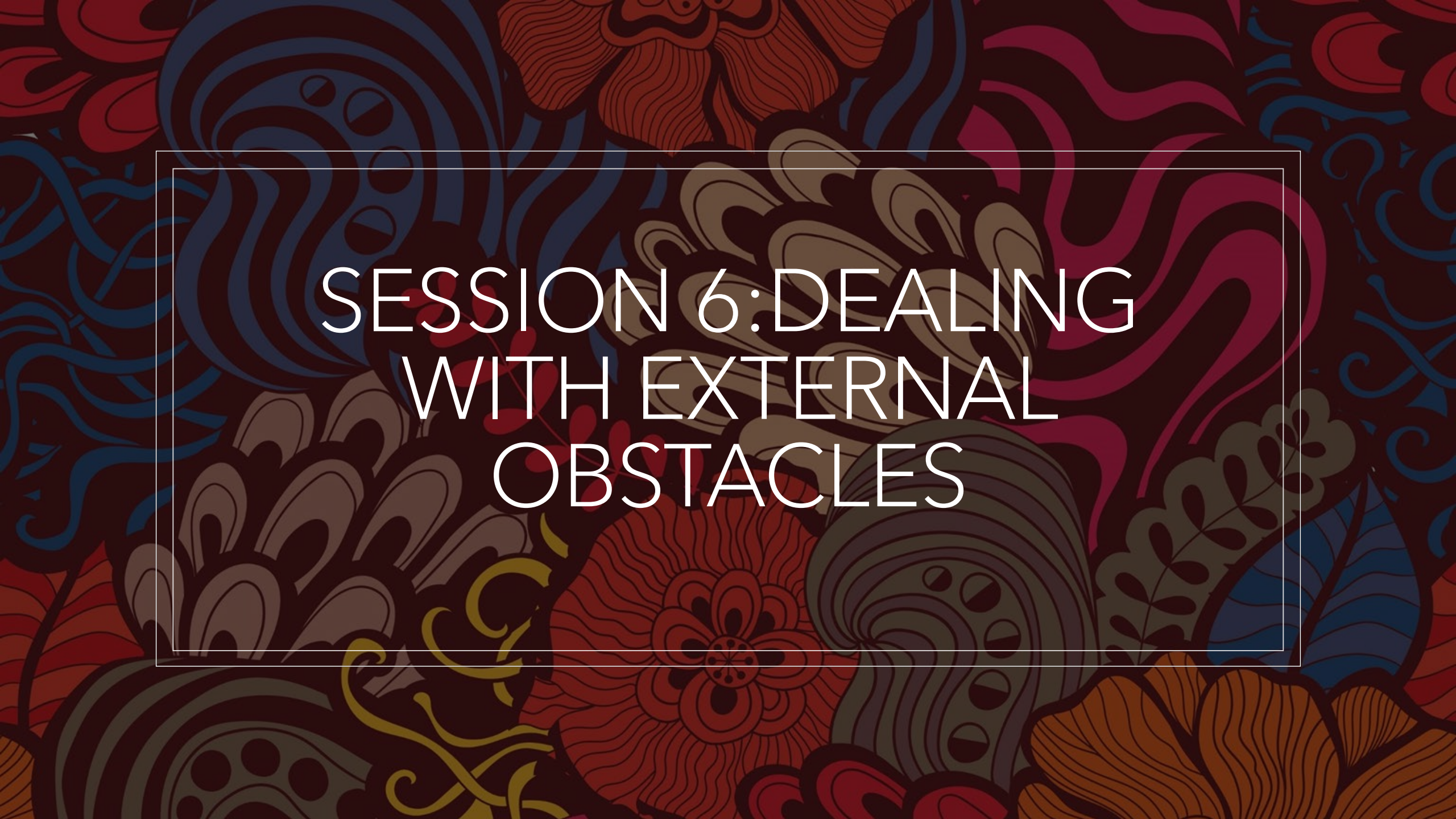
- What are some of the questions regarding who we are? Where we come from? And Where we are going do you not have clear answers to?
- What are some internal obstacles that prevent you from being or feeling confident in your identity?
 - Reflect on:
 - Confidence
 - Self esteem/ worth/ love
 - Relationship with God
 - Guilt
 - Doubts
 - Have a look at what you wrote about things you find difficult about Islam or what you are not so proud of.

Session 5: Dealing with Internal Obstacles

- Often the dealing with external obstacles requires us to deal with internal obstacles first.
- Dealing with these often requires a deeper look inside and the need to find value within yourself
- It is often a process that could take years to find value in yourself as you grow older and slowly build your own value within your immediate environment, this can lose all of its value if the environment changes.
- The trick is to view yourself as God sees you, that way no matter which environment you are placed in your value in the eyes of God is the only thing that can keep you grounded.
- It is ok to have doubts, Sahabah had doubts
 - Verily we perceive in our minds that which every one of us considers it too grave to express. He (the Holy Prophet) said: Do you really perceive it? They said: Yes. Upon this he remarked: That is the faith manifest.
- Actively seek answers.
- These are some resources
 - Yaqeen
 - Local Imam
 - Islamic teachers
 - Parents

Session 5: Dealing with Internal Obstacles

- Develop strong relationships with friends that share the same values as you. Build and strengthen the relationships with your muslim friends.
- TALK ABOUT YOUR INTERNAL OBSTACLES.
- SOCIALISE.
- DO NOT LET YOUR OBSTACLES STAY BUBBLED UP INSIDE YOU.



SESSION 6: DEALING
WITH EXTERNAL
OBSTACLES

Session 6: Dealing with external obstacles

- The way a person relates to their cultural practices and surroundings can significantly affect the way they feel about themselves.
- Their personal perspective is especially affected when these surroundings are disrupted or shifted into something new.
- A lot of people tend to change the way they act and behave depending on their surroundings, resulting in the suppression of existing identities.
- Activity - Define your environment.
 - Friends - who are they?
 - Family
 - Atmosphere
 - Work
 - Culture
- Answer the question - Can you openly express yourself within your environment? Are you unknowingly suppressing who you are to stay at peace with your environment?

Session 6: Dealing with external obstacles

| Scenarios | How to respond |
|---|----------------|
| <p>Case 1: Someone comes and calls you ugly, fat and wants to start a brawl with you. What do you do?</p> | |
| <p>Case 2: Someone tells you, that you do not belong to Australia and you should go back to your country. What do you do?</p> | |
| <p>Case 3: Someone tells you that you will never be good enough. You failed an exam you tried really hard for. What do you do?</p> | |
| <p>Case 4: You're family does not like you wearing a hijab, but you believe you should. What do you do?</p> | |

Session 6: Dealing with external obstacles

- Assess the situation - talk to friends and people you trust to think of solutions. When looking for solutions, solutions will find you.
- Respond positively - when being picked on
- Be kind - never lose your patience and remember to always be kind.
- Cultural clashes with your beliefs do not define who you are and should always pass through your Filter of values of beliefs.



SESSION 8: IMPRESSIONS
AND RESULTS