

# Self-Help Booklet

“One step at a time”




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## Introduction

This booklet is for you to use either with your therapist or on your own. It includes basic information about Islam and some teachings that you may find useful.<sup>i</sup>

The booklet was developed from research with Muslim service users and therapists from different backgrounds. It is intended to be a resource for people who wish to refer to their faith for support in their wellbeing. It may also help therapists to increase their knowledge of Islamic teachings that service users may find helpful.

Wherever you see this symbol  there will be a learning point or suggested action. There are also blank spaces for you to add your own ideas for actions that you would find helpful.

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<sup>i</sup> All the teachings in this booklet have been checked by a psychological therapist also trained as an Islamic jurist, who has suggested the learning points and actions highlighted.

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## Dealing with difficult events in life

Everyone experiences testing times in life and we may feel sad when this happens. Many of the prophets of God experienced such tests. The Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him)<sup>ii</sup>, for example, grieved at the loss of his young son Ibrahim:

***Then he wept more and said, “The eyes are shedding tears and the heart is grieved, and we will not say except what pleases our Lord, O Ibrahim! Indeed we are grieved by your separation.”<sup>1</sup>***

This hadith shows that even people with strong faith can feel extremely sad when such events happen. It does not mean that they have failed to turn to God enough to deal with their difficulties.

A range of problems can cause people to feel sadness such as:

- family tensions or a breakdown in relationships
- disability, long-term illness or the death of a loved one
- poverty and unemployment or financial problems
- racism, for example in employment, housing, education and in the media
- problems caused by moving to the UK from a different country
- dependence on drugs

**Common responses** to these situations can include:

- feeling down or depressed, crying, taking less pleasure in things
- feeling grief, fear, stress or physical symptoms such as pain and tiredness
- feeling angry or irritable
- feeling guilt, shame, despair
- feeling hopeless, helpless or as though you would like to die

So you should not be hard on yourself for feeling like this. We are reminded throughout the Qur'an and Ahadith about Allah's Mercy towards his creation and we are taught to be merciful to ourselves.



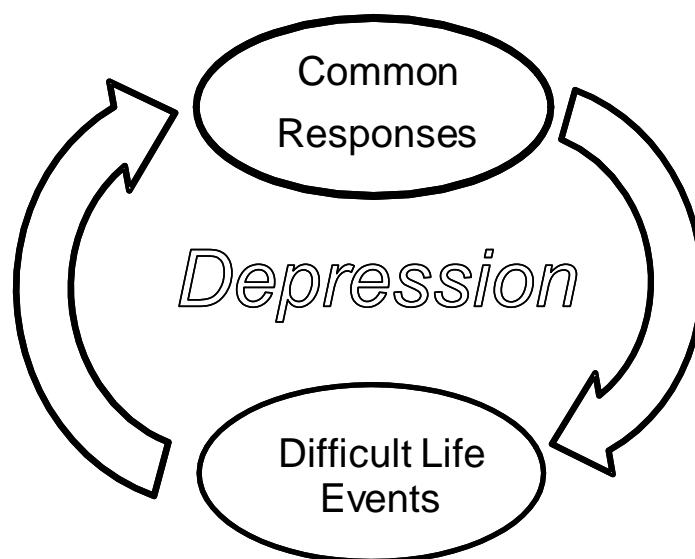
**Don't forget to be merciful towards yourself.**

***My action points:***

<sup>ii</sup> when Muslims hear or say the name of the Prophet Muhammad they are encouraged to say 'sallallahu allayhi wa sallam'; which means 'may the Blessing and Peace of Allah be upon him'.

When you feel sad about something your behaviour can change. You may avoid meeting people, and not want to go out any more. You may stay in bed and sleep too much, watch television all the time, not do housework or paid work or stop looking for work. You may stop praying, going to the mosque or reciting the Qur'an. Alternatively you could try to fill every minute of the day to avoid facing problems or lash out at others, including your family. You may start smoking, using drugs or overusing prescription medicines, eat too much junk food or act like life is already over.

These behaviours are understandable however they will make your problems worse. Think about what happens when you respond in this way – how does it affect your problems? The diagram below shows how such common responses can feed back into the difficulties you are facing:



### **Some examples of common responses**

**Relationship problems:** Some families may have expectations about the roles that certain family members should fulfil and these can clash with what individuals feel capable of or want for themselves, leading to tension and the breakdown of relationships. For example, elder sons may be expected to take responsibility for their parents and other family members and respond to their needs at all times. Young people may be expected to conform to their parents' wishes about whom and when they should marry. These expectations may also exist at a community level so that people find it hard to speak to anyone about their difficulties. People who are facing these expectations may be told they have a family responsibility or religious duty and this can make them feel angry, guilty or confused about how to respond and helpless to change the pressure they feel under. Marriage breakdown and relationship difficulties are "difficult life events" to which feelings of helplessness and withdrawing from others are common responses.

**Migration issues:** Some Muslims have migrated to the UK, particularly older people, young people who came for marriage and refugees or asylum seekers. Low income, limited ability in English and recent migration can all contribute to the problems they face. People who migrate to the UK are often paid very low wages for working very long hours. Migration, pressure to change, low wages, and social exclusion are all “difficult life events”. Fear of other people and frustration can turn into hopelessness as time passes without these problems being solved, so that passivity and hopelessness become common responses.

**Discrimination:** Discrimination happens all too frequently and often leads to avoidance. For example, someone may be repeatedly discriminated against at work (e.g. being looked over for promotion, made to work undesirable shifts and complete undesirable tasks). Frequently, people in these types of situations do speak up, but over time if nothing in the environment changes or the environment becomes increasingly punishing, an individual can become passive and avoid speaking up. Being passive reduces the difficult emotions involved in trying to change the environment. However, this does not address the long-term problem of being discriminated against in the workplace, and may actually increase the likelihood that a person will continue to experience this. In this example, discrimination is the difficult life event and the common response is passivity and avoidance.

### **Avoiding Bad Feelings**

In some cases a person may become very focused on not feeling bad, and many of the common responses are attempts to avoid bad feelings. Feeling bad is hard and it is natural to not want to feel this way. The question is, what can be done to not feel this way? Sometimes we may avoid doing things so that we don't feel bad, even if these things have a cost. We may go to sleep when feeling upset. Or if we feel like crying we may avoid going to places where crying is likely. We may avoid social situations entirely or attend passively and without enjoyment. When feeling badly enough, it is easy to give up, become hopeless and passive. This avoidance and passivity, which we may call 'getting stuck', can cause a spiral into depression. Another way of thinking about getting stuck is being focused on short term solutions to problems, which are about just feeling better as soon as possible, rather than on long term solutions to problems.

### **Staying Active**

This booklet aims to help you break out of this cycle even when you feel this is extremely difficult. This treatment is about getting active in life again. It is about taking steps to solve problems, rather than avoiding such action, feeling overwhelmed, and shutting down to stop feeling so terrible. The focus of the treatment is on coming up with action plans, to help you start doing things that you used to do before you became depressed, and things that you don't have the energy to do. The goal is to get you back on track in life.

This is an active treatment that will require work. The key is to do things differently in life. Treatment will be about working out what needs to change



and how to change it. The therapist will listen very carefully to your story and then work with you to come up with plans for what to do differently during the week.

Being active will lead to improved mood and you will be working from the outside to make you feel better on the inside – you cannot afford to wait until you feel better to start solving your problems.

This active approach is in line with Islamic teachings. Persevering and continuing patiently with life is how Muslims are recommended to respond to difficulties:

*"Be sure we shall test you with something of fear and hunger, some loss in goods or lives or the fruits (of your toil), but give glad tidings to those who patiently persevere. Who say when afflicted with calamity: "To Allah we belong and to Him is our return." They are those on whom (descend) blessings from Allah and Mercy and they are the ones that receive guidance."*<sup>2</sup>

In Islam all situations are a test and we should not assume that the difficulties that we face in life are punishments or signs that Allah is displeased with us. Likewise, we should never think that the success and pleasures that others enjoy are signs that Allah is pleased with them or that they are privileged. We are encouraged to remember Allah in good and in difficult times.

The Prophet Muhammad (pbuh) said: ***"For every misfortune, illness, anxiety, grief, or hurt that afflicts a Muslim - even the hurt caused by the pricking of a thorn - Allah removes some of his sins."***<sup>3</sup>

All of these difficulties, if dealt with patiently by the believer, are a means of obtaining Allah's forgiveness as well as His reward.

### ***Have hope***

The Qur'an reminds us:



'So, truly with every difficulty, there is relief. Truly with every difficulty there is relief. Therefore, when you are free from [your immediate task] still labour hard, And to your Sustainer turn [all] your attention.'<sup>4</sup>

'And whoever does evil or wrongs himself but afterwards seeks Allah's forgiveness, he will find Allah Oft-Forgiving, most Merciful.'<sup>5</sup>

'On no soul do We place a burden greater than it can bear. Before Us is a record which clearly shows the truth. They will never be wronged'<sup>6</sup>



***Do not lose hope and gain strength through believing that difficulties will not last.***

### ***My action points:***

Being active is an important part of being a Muslim. Four of the five pillars of Islam are based on action and Allah expects us to act in accordance with what we believe.

### ***Core beliefs and practices in Islam: The Five Pillars of Islam***

The Islamic faith rests upon five pillars; these are the five basic obligations that Muslims aim to satisfy.



1. Declaration of faith (Shahadah): sincerely declaring that 'There is no god but Allah and Muhammad is the Messenger of Allah', with full conviction of the meaning and purpose of this statement - the purpose being to live life in accordance with God's guidance

2. Prayer (Salah): performing the five compulsory prayers at the appointed times each day. They have set patterns and words that need to be recited.



3. Zakat: paying a tax on one's wealth to benefit the poor and the needy if one has savings over a certain threshold for over a year.



4. Fasting during the month of Ramadan (Sawm): this is obligatory on all healthy, adult Muslims, except for certain categories of people for whom it is too difficult or harmful to do so.

5. Hajj: pilgrimage to Mecca if one has the resources to do so.

### ***Tie your camel: do your part***

Change starts with the individual. There is a cause and effect of our actions and we cannot change things unless we ourselves make an effort to change.

***One day Prophet Muhammad, (pbuh), noticed a Bedouin leaving his camel without tying it. He asked the Bedouin, "Why don't you tie down your camel?" The Bedouin answered, "I put my trust in Allah." The Prophet then said, "Tie your camel first, then put your trust in Allah"***<sup>7</sup>

Muslims must never become fatalistic. Although we know only Allah is in control and that He has decreed all things, we are each responsible for making

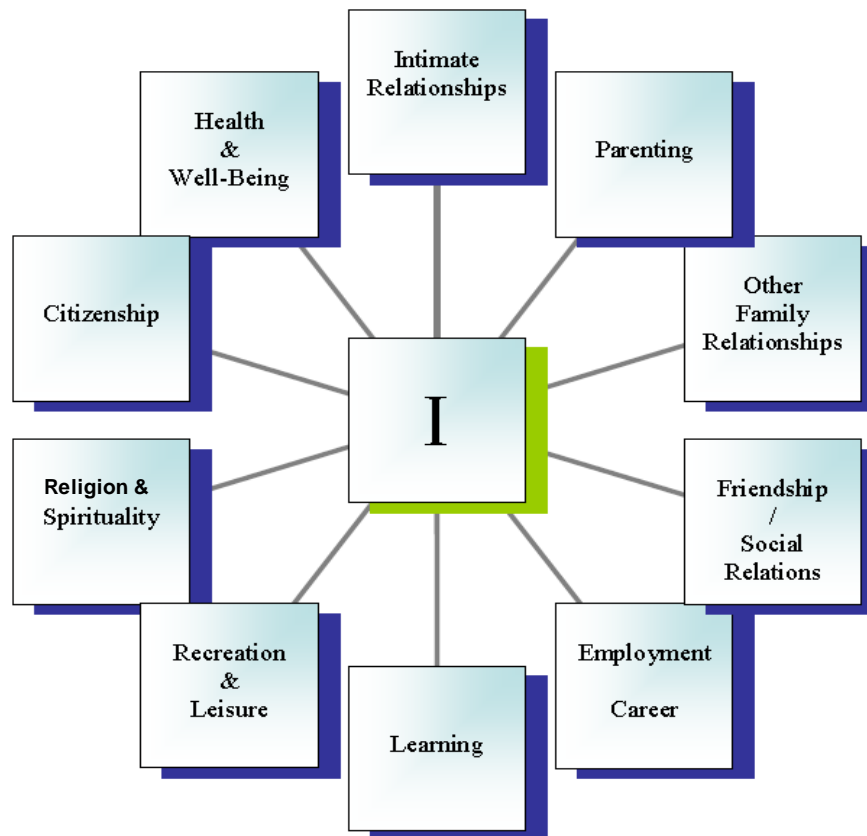


the right choices and doing the right thing in all situations of our lives. "Indeed, Allah does not change people's condition unless they change their inner selves" <sup>8</sup>

**What do you think about this? Does it make sense to you? Write your understanding of the treatment in your own words:**

## Your Values

The form below is a starting point for thinking about what is important to you and is a key part of the therapy. You can fill in the form with your therapist or on your own and can refer back to it as a reminder of what you are aiming to achieve through therapy. Think about your own values and what is important to you – this will help you decide what kind of activities will help you feel better.



The sheets you are about to fill in are used to help with making sense of YOUR life values. They list different areas of life that are valued by most people. It may be that you have values in each of these areas, or you may find that some are more relevant to you than others. Focus on any area that is of importance to you. This is not a test to see if you have the “correct” values, these life areas are designed to help you work out what your personal values are. You will be describing the qualities that you would like to be present for you in each area. Describe how you would like to treat people, including yourself, if you had the ideal situation. There is no ‘right’ or ‘wrong’ way to do this, just ‘your way’ so it is ok to use extra sheets of paper if needed.

## **Values Summary Form**

**What do you care about, what would you want to work towards, in the best of all situations?**

### **1. Marriage/intimate relationship values:**

Importance:

Goals /actions:

### **2. Parenting values:**

Importance:

Goals /actions:

**3. Other family relationship values:**

Importance:

Goals /actions:

**4. Friendship / Social Relationship values:**

Importance:

Goals /actions:

**5. Employment or Career values:**

Importance:

Goals / actions:

**6. Learning values:**

Importance:

Goals /actions:

**7. Recreation & Leisure values:**

Importance:

Goals /actions:

**8. Spirituality/religious values:**

Importance:

Goals /actions:

**9. Citizenship values:**

Importance:

Goals /actions:

**10. Health & Well-Being values:**

Importance:

Goals /actions:

**Once you have filled in this form you should be able to use it to complete the values action map on the next page.**



## Values Action Map

This form can be used to create a path that will help you achieve one of your values. Pick a value you are willing to work on, and set out some goals linked to the value that feel manageable. There may be short and long-term goals for each value. For each short term goal, write down specific actions, which may involve several further small steps. Then consider what barriers are likely to come up in terms of unwanted experiences or thoughts. For each barrier you list, consider what strategies could help you overcome these barriers.

Value:			
Goals	Actions	Barriers	Strategies
Value:			
Value:			

The key to this treatment is identifying, completing and reviewing activities in detail. This means thinking about what, when, where and with whom activities will be completed. Think about these activities as experiments and things to try out. You should also think about any obstacles you might face and how you will overcome these. Try to visualise or role-play an activity in preparation for actually doing it.

## **Your therapy sessions**

The goal of this treatment is to teach you a new skill – the skill of responding with activity when difficult life events happen and you feel bad. Learning a new skill takes time and it is important to attend therapy sessions and learn this skill, even if you start to feel better immediately. We would ask you to commit to at least 6 sessions, even if you feel better beforehand.

It is important to discuss with your therapist any obstacles you might face in returning for therapy sessions and how to overcome them so that you can deal with possible avoidance patterns that you might fall into. For example if you tell someone about the appointment or put a reminder somewhere you will easily see it can help to increase the chances of your returning

It is important to talk to your therapist also about any practical issues that get in the way of you coming to sessions, such as transport, childcare, difficulty getting time off work, family crises, and so on. Plans to overcome these obstacles or feelings should be discussed and scheduled. You could ask the therapist or a supportive family member to give you a reminder call on the day of the appointment, for example.

You should also contact your therapist if you decide to cancel your appointment or terminate treatment, for example, if you are not improving as quickly as you want to you. This will provide a chance to discuss any avoidance patterns that might be at work and the long term problems that will arise from these. Even if you don't feel like attending, going to your session would be taking an active step towards feeling better.

## **Involving your family**

Whether you involve your family in this treatment is up to you and will depend on how helpful you feel this could be. Family members can be important in supporting you to get the most from treatment and if you think someone might help in this way you should tell your therapist you would like them to be involved. You may want a family member to be involved in some areas of therapy but not others.

Supportive family members can help you make time for yourself, encourage you when your motivation is low or remind you to do activities you set as goals for yourself. If you feel you need support to get family members involved in your treatment speak to your therapist about this.

## Getting motivated

You may find it very difficult to motivate yourself to become active, and feel hopeless about, for example, being able to get out of bed. It can be helpful to think of this like the battery of a car that has 'died' - we need to give it a push start before it will get moving again. The initial stage of pushing is the hardest part – once it has started it is easier to keep it going. Taking the first step is the hardest part but once you take this it will get easier and your motivation will increase.

If someone is faced with the choice of getting out of bed or staying in bed, they are likely to choose to stay in bed because it is the 'safer', easier and so more attractive option – less effort is required and it is more comfortable. But if you rolled yourself out of the bed on to the floor you would have more incentive to get up instead of staying where you are. Getting up in the morning is also easier if you can do some preparation the night before e.g. laying out clothes or items for an attractive breakfast would provide extra incentives to get out of bed.

Your therapist has been trained to help people get active again and has 'tricks and tips' that will help. You will start off small at a level that feels right for you and build on your achievements. Think about what you might be able to achieve - something that will be a little challenging but not overwhelming.

## One step at a time

Doing small but regular actions is recommended by the Prophet Muhammad (pbuh).

Abu Hurayrah recorded:

'The Prophet (pbuh) said: religion is very easy, and whoever overburdens himself in it will not be able to continue in that way. So you should try not to be extreme, but try near perfection and accept these good tidings that you may be rewarded; gain strength by worshipping in the mornings, and during the last hours of the nights.'<sup>9</sup>

The Prophet, (pbuh), was asked: 'Which deed is most beloved to Allah?' He said, 'The one that is done regularly, even if it is little.'<sup>10</sup>



*Do whatever you can manage – start small and build up*

***My action points:***



The following pages give some examples of activities that you can try if you feel that increasing your religious activity will be helpful to you.

➡ **Choose around five actions to build into your action plan**

Muslims are encouraged to follow the *Sunnah* which is the practice of the Prophet Muhammad (pbuh), and to do the acts of worship that he taught. For example, reciting the Qur'an regularly is a strong practice of the Prophet. The purpose of these obligatory and *Sunnah* acts of worship are to instill within a Muslim the awareness of God (Allah). This awareness of Allah in the life of a Muslim is known as *taqwa* (God consciousness) that eventually leads to *Ihsan* (sincerity/realization). The following extract from a hadith describes how these elements of Islam were taught to Muslims by the angel Jibril:

"One day when we were with Allah's Messenger, a man with very white clothing and very black hair came up to us. No mark of travel was visible on him, and none of us recognized him. Sitting down beside the Prophet (pbuh), leaning his knees against his and placing his hands on his thighs, he said: "Tell me, Muhammad, about Islam." He replied: **"Islam means that you should testify that there is no god but Allah and that Muhammad (pbuh) is Allah's Messenger that you should observe the prayer, pay the Zakat, fast during Ramadan, and make the pilgrimage to the House if you are able to go there."** He said: "You have spoken the truth."

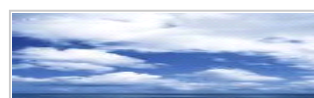
We were surprised at his questioning him and then declaring that he spoke the truth. He said: "Now tell me about *Iman*." He replied: "It means that you should **believe in Allah, His angels, His books, His messengers, and the Last Day, and that you should believe in the decreeing both of good and evil.**" Remarking that he had spoken the truth, the man then said: "Now tell me about *Ihsan*." He replied: "It means that you should **worship Allah as though you see Him**, for though you do not see Him He most certainly sees you." <sup>11</sup>

In Saheeh Muslim it is reported that the Prophet (sallallaahu 'alayhi wa sallam) said: "Allah does not look at your outward appearance and your wealth, rather He looks at your hearts and deeds." <sup>12</sup>

➡ **Try to focus all your attention on Allah during your worship to reach the state of Ihsan. Focus on the meaning of the words and each action of prayer.**

➡ **Try to do things that are good for yourself and others; be kind towards yourself and kind towards others.**

**My action points:**



### ***Remembering God (dhikr)***

The Prophet *Muhammad* (pbuh) said:

"Allah says 'I am as My servant thinks I am. I am with him when he makes mention of Me. If he makes mention of Me to himself, I make mention of him to Myself; and if he makes mention of Me in an assembly, I make mention of him in an assembly better than it. And if he draws near to Me an arm's length, I draw near to him a fathom's length. And if he comes to Me walking, I go to him at speed.'" <sup>13</sup>

Muslims are reminded of the benefits of remembering and being conscious of Allah (*taqwa*) in various verses in the *Qur'an*:

"Whoever has consciousness of God, He will make matters easy for him" <sup>14</sup>

"... Without doubt in the remembrance of Allah (*Dhikr*) do hearts find tranquillity" <sup>15</sup>

"And your Lord says: 'Call on Me; I will answer your (prayer).'" <sup>16</sup>

By remembering Allah we are communicating with the only One who not only Hears and Knows all, but who can change our situation and give us the patience to deal with our difficulties.

"Remember Me, and I shall remember you; be grateful to Me, and do not deny Me" <sup>17</sup>

Prophet *Muhammad* (pbuh) emphasised the importance of calling on God by His Most Beautiful Names. In his own supplications to God, he is known to have said, "*Oh God, I ask you of you by every name with which You have named yourself, or that You have revealed in Your book, or that You have taught any of Your creation, or that You have kept hidden in the unseen knowledge with Yourself.*" <sup>18</sup>

The Prophet (pbuh) said, "Allah has ninety-nine names, i.e. one-hundred minus one, and whoever knows them will go to Paradise." <sup>19</sup> Reciting the Names of Allah can give hope by reminding you that you are not alone and Allah is able and ready to help you.

### ***Du'a for protection***

If you feel your health is affected by something that could harm you, think about how you can protect yourself from this. It was reported by Al-Hakim, that whoever reads the following verse when he rises in the morning will be protected...until he retires in the evening, and whoever says it when retiring in the evening will be protected from then until he rises in the morning.

I seek refuge in Allah from Satan the outcast. Allah! There is none worthy of worship but He, the Ever Living, the One Who sustains and protects all that exists. Neither slumber nor sleep overtakes Him. To Him belongs whatever is in the heavens and whatever is on the earth. Who is he that can intercede with Him except with His Permission? He knows what happens to them in this world, and what will happen to them in the Hereafter. And they will never encompass anything of His Knowledge except that which He wills. His Throne extends over the heavens and the earth, and He feels no fatigue in guarding and preserving them. And He is the Most High, the Most Great.<sup>20</sup>



*Be positive about Allah's help, rather than being pessimistic or hopeless.*



*Remember that you have a two-way relationship with Allah, take the first step towards Him in order for Him to take a step towards you.*

***My action points:***

### ***The Source of Healing***

Muslims believe that good health is a blessing from God and that reciting and following the *Qur'an* is a means of obtaining this blessing:

"He will heal the heart of the believers."<sup>21</sup>

"And when I become sick, He heals me."<sup>22</sup>

"Mankind there has come unto you a guidance from your Lord, a healing for that which is in your breasts, a guidance and mercy for the believers."<sup>23</sup>

"And We reveal of the *Qur'an* that which is a healing and a mercy for the believers..."<sup>24</sup>

"[The *Qur'an*] is a guidance and a healing for those who believe."<sup>25</sup>



*Recite the Qur'an believing that Allah will heal you through it.*



***My action points:***



### ***Connecting with the Qur'an***

The *Qur'an* is the word of Allah and so connecting to the *Qur'an* means connecting to Allah. Muslims are taught that reading and listening to the *Qur'an* helps refresh our hearts and our minds.

"O mankind! There hath come to you a direction from your Lord and a healing for the (diseases) in your hearts, and for those who believe, a Guidance and a Mercy."<sup>26</sup>

We can recite it out loud or in a low voice. Listen to it in the car. When you are praying, recite portions of the *Qur'an*, let it be a means to heal your heart of stress and worries. You might choose to invest in recordings of the *Qur'an* with translation.



***There is blessing in reciting the Qur'an.  
Whenever Allah is mentioned, His Mercy  
descends on the individual or group.***



***My action points:***

### ***Beginning with the Name of Allah***

It is recommended for Muslims to say "Bismillah al Rahman al Rahim" before any action, the translation of which is "In the name of God, the most Gracious, the most Merciful". For example when we eat, put on our clothes, or go out of the house. If you are finding things hard to do, this simple formula can act as a support to help you do actions that you may find difficult.

Prophet *Muhammad* (pbuh) said: "Whenever Jibril came to me with a revelation, he would recite bismillah."<sup>27</sup>

Below are quoted some Ahadith, or sayings of the Prophet *Muhammad*, (pbuh) regarding bismillah:

*Saying bismillah is recommended before eating:*

The Prophet (pbuh) said, "Say bismillah, eat with your right hand and eat what is in front of you."<sup>28</sup>

*When drinking water:*

Ibn Abbas, a companion of the Prophet *Mohammad* (pbuh), reported that the *Messenger of Allah* (pbuh) said, "Mention the Name of Allah when you start drinking and praise Him after you have finished."<sup>29</sup>

*At the beginning of ablution:*

The Prophet (pbuh) said, "Make *wudhu* [Ablution] in the name of Allah"<sup>30</sup>

***My action points:***



### ***Cleanliness and ablution***

Cleanliness is a key part of Islam and this can be both physical and spiritual. By keeping clean and doing *wudhu* or ablution we wash away the harmful effects of our past actions. The other part of cleanliness is to eat healthy food, and to keep yourself and where you live clean.

It is every Muslim's responsibility to look after his or her physical and mental health. Allah has entrusted us with our body and mind and ultimately we belong to him, so it is our responsibility to protect these. Without good physical and mental health it is difficult for us to fulfill our duties for both our worldly life and our religion.

"Surely Allah loves those who turn to Him again and again and He loves those who purify themselves" <sup>31</sup>

The Prophet *Muhammad* (pbuh) said:

"Cleanliness is half of faith" <sup>32</sup>

Uthman, another companion of the Prophet (pbuh) reports that the *Messenger of Allah* (pbuh) said, "Whoever performs ablutions (*wudu*) and does this well, their sins will leave their body, even from under the nails."<sup>33</sup>

➡ ***Make wudu with the intention that you will be blessed by Allah and purified through this action.***

Abu Wa'il al-Qass said: We entered upon Urwah ibn Muhammad ibn as-Sa'di. A man spoke to him and made him angry. So he stood and performed ablution; he then returned and performed ablution, and said: My father told me on the authority of my grandfather Atiyyah who reported the *Apostle of Allah* (peace be upon him) as saying: Anger comes from the devil, the devil was created of fire, and fire is extinguished only with water; so when one of you becomes angry, he should perform ablution.<sup>34</sup>

Narrated Abu Huraira, Rasulullah<sup>iii</sup> (pbuh) said:

There are five prayers and from one Friday prayer to (the next) Friday prayer is an expiation (of the sins committed in between their intervals) if major sins are not committed.<sup>35</sup>

Narrated Abu Huraira: I heard Allah's Apostle (pbuh) saying:

"If there was a river at the door of anyone of you and he took a bath in it five times a day would you notice any dirt on him?" They said, "Not a trace of dirt would be left." The Prophet (pbuh) added, "That is the example of the five prayers with which Allah blots out evil deeds."<sup>36</sup>

***My action points:***



### ***Calling on Allah – du'a***

Allah tells the believers to call on Him and ask of Him. Du'a is a reminder that you are not alone and a way for you to receive the Mercy of Allah. Allah always listens to those who call on Him and responds to their prayers according to His own Wisdom

Hadeeth narrated by Abu Hurayrah: "Make du'a and be assured of being answered, and know that Allah does not answer a du'a from a careless heart which is not concentrating"<sup>37</sup>

Allah is a divine and limitless power; He responds to the needs and requests of His servant. Remember du'a is a dialogue between you and Allah – He always listens. Du'as for different occasions or for general dhikr can be found in *Fortress of the Muslim*, available online:

[www.islamawareness.net/Dua/Fortress/](http://www.islamawareness.net/Dua/Fortress/)

<sup>iii</sup> This means 'Prophet of Allah', referring to the Prophet Muhammad (pbuh)

## Dealing with unhelpful thoughts

Negative thoughts are natural when someone is feeling depressed but can be unhelpful if they maintain the cycle of depression and 'feeling stuck'. It is important to consider whether your thoughts are helpful in getting you engaged with activities important to you. If not, then consider what else you could have been doing during the time that you have spent on these thoughts? What is going on in your life that you are not enjoying/engaging with/ or is passing you by whilst you are thinking in this way? The thought record sheet below can help you think about what you could do instead of spending time on unhelpful thoughts. For example, look back at the hadith about *Ihsan* or worshipping Allah as though you see Him. Concentrating on Allah in this way during prayer is a way of training yourself to refocus your thoughts on something that is good for your wellbeing.

You might believe you need to feel better on the inside before you can change your behaviour but remember that we often behave differently from how we feel on the inside. For example, we may feel hungry but we would not eat food that may be in front of us that doesn't belong to us. Or we may restrain ourselves from shouting when we feel angry. Therefore we are capable of behaving differently to how we feel internally.

Sometimes negative thoughts may be linked to religious beliefs, for example if you feel guilty or sinful – in such cases the teachings below may be a helpful way of thinking differently about your relationship with Allah. Try reading the Names of Allah and thinking about any experiences you have had that remind you of the positive way that Allah describes Himself.

If you feel you need religious advice from someone with in-depth knowledge of Islam to help you deal with your thoughts or feelings discuss this with your therapist, who may be able to help you find a suitable person.

### ***Allah's Mercy and Forgiveness***

Allah's mercy and forgiveness are key teachings in Islam and Muslims are reminded of the overwhelming forgiveness and generosity of God:

'Say: O my servants, who have transgressed against their souls, despair not of the mercy of God, for God forgives all sins.'<sup>38</sup>

'For all men and women who submit to God, for all men and women who believe in God, for all devout men and women, for all true men and women, for all men and women who are patient and constant, for all men and women who humble themselves, for all men and women who give in charity, for all men and women who fast, for all men and women who control their chastity, and for all men and women who engage much in God's remembrance - for them has God prepared forgiveness and a great reward.'<sup>39</sup>

'Our Sustainer! Bestow on us mercy from your presence and dispose of our affairs for us in the right way.'<sup>40</sup>

"O my Sustainer! I seek refuge with You, from asking You for that of which I have no knowledge. And unless You forgive me and have mercy on me, I should indeed be among the losers" <sup>41</sup>

'And whoever does evil or wrongs himself but afterwards seeks Allah's forgiveness, he will find Allah Oft-Forgiving, most Merciful.'<sup>42</sup>

The Prophet Muhammad (pbuh) is quoted as saying:

"When *Allah* completed the creation, He wrote in His Book which is with Him on His Throne, "My Mercy overpowers My Anger."<sup>43</sup>



***Remember Allah's compassion.***

### ***Seek help through Sabr***

"Seek help through Sabr (patience, perseverance) and prayer". <sup>44</sup>

This instruction from Allah provides us with two critical tools that can ease our worries and pain - patience and prayer. Sabr includes self-control, reflection followed by perseverance, endurance, and a focused struggle to find a solution. Unlike patience, which implies resignation, the concept of Sabr includes a duty to remain steadfast to achieve your goals despite all odds.

Being patient gives us control in situations where we feel we have little or no control. We cannot control everything that happens to us but we can control our reaction to our circumstances. Sabr helps us grow spiritually and remain positive at times of difficulty. Suhaib ibn Sinan narrated that the Prophet *Muhammad* (pbuh) said:

"How remarkable is the case of the believer! There is good for him in everything, but this is not the case for anyone except for the believer. When the believer receives any good, he is thankful to Allah, and gets a reward. And when some misfortune befalls him, he endures it patiently, for which he is (also) rewarded."<sup>45</sup>



***Try to be positive and to persevere when you think about how to find solutions to any problem***

### ***My action points***



### Thought Record Sheet

Situation	Unhelpful Thoughts / Images	Feelings: Emotion/s rate 0 – 100%	Alternative response / what could I do or think instead?	Action plan / Defusion technique. What's the best thing to do?	Re-rate emotion 0 – 100%
<i>What happened? Where? When? (Day &amp; time) Who with?</i>	<i>What went through my mind? What disturbed me? What did those thoughts/images/memories mean to me, or say about me or the situation? What am I responding to? What 'button' is this pressing for me? What would be the worst thing about that, or that could happen?</i>	<i>What emotion did I feel at that time? What else? How intense was it? What did I feel in my body?</i>	<i>Is this thought stopping me from doing something more helpful that is more in line with my value and goals?</i>  <i>What am I not doing as a result of this thought/image?</i>  <i>What is the evidence for and against this thought?</i>	<i>What could I do differently? What would be more effective? Do something! What will be most helpful for me or the situation? What will the consequences be of doing or not doing....?</i>	<i>What am I feeling now? How intense is that feeling now?</i>

*Adapted from: [www.getselfhelp.co.uk](http://www.getselfhelp.co.uk)*

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[www.get.gg](http://www.get.gg)



## Be part of your community

Linking with the community can give you a chance to benefit from it and also to spend time in the company of good people. Group activities can offer an opportunity to form links and friendships that reduce isolation. Giving charity can help you feel you are part of the community in a positive way.

'Remain then conscious of God as best you can, and listen [to Him] and pay heed. And spend in charity for the good of your own selves: for such as are saved from their own greed -it is they who shall reach a happy state.'<sup>46</sup>

The Prophet also said: "Every act of goodness is charity."<sup>47</sup>

➡ *Giving charity can be done in all sorts of ways for example smiling at someone or using your time to help others.*

➡ *Going to Jum'ah (Friday) prayer can help you feel part of the community and be in the company of Muslims who practice their faith*



## Ending therapy

Look back over any notes you have made in this booklet and with your therapist to remind yourself about the progress you have made. Then answer the questions in the Staying Active Guide on the next sheet and keep this in an important place so you can review it weekly. It would be a good idea to plan a 'self-therapy' session once a week to continue the work of looking at your activity and any avoidance. This will help you plan new activities and review your previous plans, continuing the process you began during this therapy and practising the new skills you have learnt.

***My action points:***

## Staying Active Guide

**Things to remember: What was helpful about therapy? What made me feel the best? What is important to remember?**

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_
4. \_\_\_\_\_

**How will I notice if I am becoming depressed again? What specific things do I do that suggest I may be depressed?**

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_
4. \_\_\_\_\_
5. \_\_\_\_\_

**Important activities to continue (both activities that I enjoy AND activities that are important to do but I would rather avoid doing):**

1. \_\_\_\_\_

**Obstacles to doing it:**\_\_\_\_\_

**Plan for overcoming obstacles:**\_\_\_\_\_

2. \_\_\_\_\_

**Obstacles to doing it:**\_\_\_\_\_

**Plan for overcoming obstacles:**\_\_\_\_\_

3. \_\_\_\_\_

**Obstacles to doing it:**\_\_\_\_\_

**Plan for overcoming obstacles:**\_\_\_\_\_

4. \_\_\_\_\_

**Obstacles to doing it:**\_\_\_\_\_

**Plan for overcoming obstacles:**\_\_\_\_\_

5. \_\_\_\_\_

**Obstacles to doing it:**\_\_\_\_\_

**Plan for overcoming obstacles:**\_\_\_\_\_

**Think about the next year of your life. What events—holidays, anniversaries, changes of seasons, specific things your partner may do or may not do—will be difficult for you to handle?**

1. \_\_\_\_\_

2. \_\_\_\_\_

3. \_\_\_\_\_

4. \_\_\_\_\_

5. \_\_\_\_\_

**How will I cope with these events and situations? What specific actions will I take? This list could include talking to family and friends, and calling your therapist for help if you need it.**

1. \_\_\_\_\_

2. \_\_\_\_\_

3. \_\_\_\_\_

4. \_\_\_\_\_

5. \_\_\_\_\_

### The Names of Allah

<b>Allah</b>	<b>The God.</b> The only one Almighty. He alone is worthy of worship.	<b>Al-Mubdi</b>	<b>The Originator.</b> He who creates all creatures initially without matter or model.
<b>Al-'Adl</b>	<b>The Just.</b> He who is Equitable.	<b>Al-Mughni</b>	<b>The Enricher.</b> The Sufficer.
<b>Al-Aakhir</b>	<b>The Last.</b>	<b>Al-Muhaymin</b>	<b>The Guardian.</b> He who watches over and protects all things. (Helper in Peril)
<b>Al-Afu</b>	<b>The Pardoner.</b> He who pardons all who sincerely repents.	<b>Al-Muhsi</b>	<b>The Appraiser.</b> He who knows the number of every single thing in existence, even to infinity.
<b>Al-Aleem</b>	<b>The Knower of All.</b> He who has full knowledge of all things.	<b>Al-Mu'eed</b>	<b>The Restorer.</b> He who recreates His creatures.
<b>Al-Ahad</b>	<b>The One.</b> The only One.	<b>Al-Mu'izz</b>	<b>The Bestower of Honors.</b> He who confers honor and dignity.
<b>Al-Awwal</b>	<b>The First.</b>	<b>Al-Mujeeb</b>	<b>The Responder to Prayer.</b> He who grants the wishes to those who appeal to him.
<b>Al-Aziz</b>	<b>The Mighty &amp; Strong.</b>	<b>Al-Muqet</b>	<b>The Nourisher.</b> He who gives every creature it's sustenance.
<b>Al-Adheem</b>	<b>The Magnificent.</b> The Most High. He who is Most Splendid.	<b>Al-Muqaddim</b>	<b>The Expediter.</b> He who brings forward whatever He wills/Forewarner

<b>Al-Badee'</b>	<b>The Incomparable.</b> He who is without model or match, and who brings into being worlds of amazing wonder.	<b>Al-Muqsit</b>	<b>The Equitable One.</b> He who does everything with proper balance and harmony.
<b>Al-Ba'ith</b>	<b>The Resurrector.</b> He who brings the dead to life, and raises them from their tombs.	<b>Al-Muqtadir</b>	<b>The Creator of All Power.</b> He who disposes at His will even of the strongest and mightiest of His creatures.
<b>Al-Baaqi</b>	<b>The Everlasting One.</b> Eternal	<b>Al-Mumeet</b>	<b>The Taker of Life.</b> He who creates the death of a living creature.
<b>Al-Bari</b>	<b>The Maker of Order</b> (Skilled Worker). Evolver who created all things so that each whole and its parts are in perfect conformity and harmony.	<b>Al-Muntaqim</b>	<b>The Avenger.</b> He who justly inflicts upon wrongdoers the punishment they deserve.
<b>Al-Barr</b>	<b>Source of all Goodness.</b> He who treats His servants tolerantly, and whose goodness and kindness are very great indeed.	<b>Al-Musawwir</b>	<b>The Shaper of Beauty.</b> He who designs all things, giving each its particular form and character (Sculptor).
<b>Al-Baseer</b>	<b>The All-Seeing.</b> Allah grants esteem to those invoking this Name 100 times between the obligatory and customary prayers in Friday congregation	<b>Al-Muta'ali</b>	<b>The Supreme One.</b> He is exalted in every respect, far beyond anything the mind could possibly attribute to His creatures.
<b>Al-Baasit</b>	<b>The Reliever</b> . He who releases, letting things expand.	<b>Al-Mutakabbir</b>	<b>The Majestic.</b> He who demonstrates His greatness in all things and in all ways.



<b>Al-Baatin</b>	<b>The Hidden One.</b> He who is hidden, concealed.	<b>Al-Mudhill</b>	<b>The Humiliator.</b> He who degrades and abases.
<b>Ad-Daar</b>	<b>The Distresser</b> The Creator of the Harmful. He who creates things that cause pain and injury.	<b>An-Nafi</b>	<b>The Creator of Good.</b> He who creates things that yields advantages and benefit.
<b>Al-Fattah</b>	<b>The Opener.</b> He who opens the solution to all problems and makes things easy.	<b>An-Nur</b>	<b>The Light.</b> He who gives light to all the worlds, who illuminates the faces, minds and hearts of His servants.
<b>Al-Ghaffar</b>	<b>The Forgiving.</b> He who is always ready to forgive.	<b>Al-Qabidh</b>	<b>The Constrictor.</b> He who constricts and restricts.
<b>Al-Ghafur</b>	<b>The Forgiver</b> and Hides Faults.	<b>Al-Qaadir</b>	<b>The All Powerful.</b> He who is Able to do what He wills as He wills (Providence).
<b>Al-Ghani</b>	<b>The Rich One.</b> He who is infinitely rich and completely Independent.	<b>Al-Qahhar</b>	<b>The Subduer.</b> He who dominates all things, and prevails upon them to do whatever He wills (Dominant).
<b>Al-Hadi</b>	<b>The Guide.</b> He who provides guidance.	<b>Al-Qawi</b>	<b>The Most Strong.</b> The Possessor of All Strength.
<b>Al-Hafeedh</b>	<b>The Preserver.</b> He who guards all creatures in every detail.	<b>Al-Qayyum</b>	<b>The Self-Existing One.</b> He who maintains the heavens, the earth, and everything that exists.
<b>Al-Hayy</b>	<b>The Ever Living One.</b> The living who knows all things and whose strength is sufficient for everything.	<b>Al-Quddus</b>	<b>The Pure One.</b> He who is free from all errors.

<b>Al-Hakeem</b>	<b>The Perfectly Wise.</b> He whose every command and action is pure wisdom.	<b>Ar-Rafi'</b>	<b>The Exalter.</b> He who raises up.
<b>Al-Hakam</b>	<b>The Judge.</b> He who judges and makes right prevails.	<b>Ar-Raheem</b>	<b>The All Compassionate.</b> He who acts with extreme kindness.
<b>Al-'Ali</b>	<b>The Highest.</b> The Exalted.	<b>Ar-Rahman</b>	<b>The All Merciful.</b> He who wills goodness and mercy for all His creatures.
<b>Al-Haleem</b>	<b>The Forbearing.</b> He who is Most Clement.	<b>Ar-Raqeeb</b>	<b>The Watchful One.</b>
<b>Al-Hameed</b>	<b>The Praiseworthy.</b> All praise belongs to Him, and who alone do the tongues of all creation laud.	<b>Ar-Rashid</b>	<b>The Righteous Teacher.</b> He who moves all things in accordance with His eternal plan, bringing them without error and with order and wisdom to their ultimate destiny (Unerring).
<b>Al-Haqq</b>	<b>The Truth.</b> He who's being endures unchangingly.	<b>Ar-Ra'uf</b>	<b>The Kind.</b> He who is very compassionate (Indulgent).
<b>Al-Haseeb</b>	<b>The Accounter.</b> He who knows every detail.	<b>Ar-Razzaq</b>	<b>The Sustainer.</b> He who provides all things useful to His creatures.
<b>Al-Jabbar</b>	<b>The Compelling.</b> He who repairs all broken thing, and completes that which is incomplete.	<b>As-Sabur</b>	<b>The Patient One.</b> He who is characterized by infinite patience.
<b>Al-Jaleel</b>	<b>The Glorious.</b> He who is Lord of Majesty and Grandeur.	<b>As-Salaam</b>	<b>The Source of Peace.</b> He who frees His servants from all danger.

<b>Al-Jaami'</b>	<b>The Gatherer.</b> He who brings together what He wills, when He wills, where He wills.	<b>As-Samad</b>	<b>The Eternal.</b> He who is the only recourse for the ending of need and the removal of affliction.
<b>Al-Kabir</b>	<b>The Greatest.</b> He who is supremely great.	<b>As-Sami</b>	<b>The Hearer of All.</b> Allah takes care of all the needs of those who invoke this glorious Name one hundred times.
<b>Al-Karim</b>	<b>The Generous.</b> He whose generosity is most abundant.	<b>Ash-Shahid</b>	<b>The Witness.</b> He who is present everywhere and observes all things.
<b>Al-Khabir</b>	<b>The All Aware.</b> He who has the knowledge of inner & most secret aspects of all things.	<b>Ash-Shakur</b>	<b>The Rewarder of Thankfulness.</b> He who gratefully rewards good deeds (Appreciator).
<b>Al-Khafid</b>	<b>The Abaser.</b> He who brings down, diminishes.	<b>At-Tawwab</b>	<b>The Acceptor of Repentance.</b> He who is ever ready to accept repentance and to forgive sins (Relenting).
<b>Al-Khaliq</b>	<b>The Creator.</b> He who brings from non-being into being, creating all things in such a way that He determines their existence and the conditions and events they are to experience.	<b>Al-Wakeel</b>	<b>The Trustee / Guardian.</b> He who manages the affairs of those who duly commit them to His charge, and who looks after them better than they could themselves.
<b>Al-Latif</b>	<b>The Subtle One.</b> He who knows the minutest subtleties of all things.	<b>Al-Wali</b>	<b>The Protecting Friend.</b> He who is a nearest friend to His good servants.
<b>Al-Majid</b>	<b>The Majestic One.</b> He whose glory is most great and most high.	<b>Al-Wahhab</b>	<b>The Giver of All.</b> He who constantly bestows blessings of every kind.

<b>Al-Ma'jid</b>	<b>The Glorious.</b> He, whose dignity and glory are most great, and whose generosity and munificence are bountiful.	<b>Al-Wahid</b>	<b>The Unique.</b> He who is Single, absolutely without partner or equal in His Essence, Attributes, Actions, Names and Decrees.
<b>Al-Malik</b>	<b>The Absolute Ruler.</b> The Ruler of the entire universe (King of Kings).	<b>Al-Wajid</b>	<b>The Finder.</b> He who finds what He wishes when He wishes (Perceiving).
<b>Malik-ul-Mulk</b>	<b>The Owner of All.</b> The King of the Kingdom.	<b>Al-Wadud</b>	<b>The Loving One.</b> He who loves His good servants, and bestows his compassion upon them.
<b>Al-Mani'</b>	<b>The Preventer of Harm.</b> The Withholder.	<b>Al-Waali</b>	<b>The Governor.</b> The Protecting Friend. He who administers this vast universe and all its passing phenomena.
<b>Al-Mo'min</b>	<b>The Inspirer of Faith.</b> He who awakes the light of faith in our hearts.	<b>Al-Wasi'</b>	<b>The All Comprehending.</b> He who has limitless capacity and abundance.
<b>Al-Mateen</b>	<b>The Firm.</b> He who is very steadfast.	<b>Al-Warith</b>	<b>The Inheritor of All.</b> He who is the Real Owner of all riches.
<b>Al-Muhyi</b>	<b>The Giver of Life.</b> He who confers life, gives vitality, revives.	<b>Az-Dhahir</b>	<b>The Manifest One.</b> He who is Evident.
<b>Al-Mu'akhkhir</b>	<b>The Delayer.</b> He who sets back or delays whatever He wills.	<b>Dhull-Jalali-Wal-Ikram</b>	<b>The Lord of Majesty and Bounty.</b> He who possesses both greatness and gracious magnanimity.

**Use this space to make notes about things you have found helpful**

## Glossary

Alhamdulillah: 'praise be to Allah'. Muslims say this to express thankfulness to God or praise Him.
Allah – the Arabic name for God.
Attributes of God (Names of Allah): the qualities God describes Himself as having in the Qur'an, such as the The Provider and The Most Merciful (see the 99 Names of Allah).
Bismillah: 'in the Name of Allah' Islamic teachings promote beginning any good action with these words.
Dhikr: an Arabic word meaning remembrance of Allah. This can take the form of short supplications that can be recited at anytime to increase one's worship and as a protection from harm, for example, from the evil eye or <i>jinn</i> .
Five pillars of Islam: these are the foundations of the Islamic religion that Muslims are required to fulfill
Hadith (plural <i>ahadith</i> ): a saying or reported action of the Prophet Muhammad. Alongside the Qur'an, Hadith can be one of the sources of Islamic teachings that Muslims may look to for evidence of what is permissible in Islam or recommended behavior.  The major collections of ahadith are: Bukhari, Muslim, Abu Dawud and Tirmidhi. The collections of ahadith are named according to the scholar who collected them.
Ihsan – the highest pinnacle of faith achieved through focused attention on God.
Iman – belief in Allah, His angels, books, prophets, the Day of Judgement and in Divine Decree (Qadr)
Messenger of Allah - refers to the Prophet Muhammad who is described in the Qur'an as the last in a line of prophets sent by God to mankind
Muhammad: the final Prophet sent by God to mankind. Muslims are commanded to say 'peace be upon Him' (in Arabic ' <i>sallalaho allayhi wassallam</i> ') after saying the Prophet's name. This may be abbreviated in texts to PBUH or SAW.
Qadr: destiny, the decree of God.
Qur'an: the revelation of God's word via the Angel Jibril (Gabriel) to the Prophet Muhammad. Alongside the Sunnah (see below) it is the scriptural source of teachings about the religion of Islam.

Ramadan: the ninth month of the Islamic calendar. This is the month during which Muslims observe obligatory fasting.

Salah: ritual prayer which Muslims are commanded to perform five times a day at appointed times. The prayers are known as *Fajr* (pre-dawn), *Dhuhr* (midday), *Asr* (mid-afternoon), *Maghrib* (after sunset), and *Isha* (night). Additional optional prayers can also be performed at any time except when the sun is rising or setting. *Tahajjud* prayers in the last third of the night are especially recommended but are not obligatory.

Sawm: fasting from sunrise to sunset during Ramadan.

Sunnah: Prophetic tradition, that is, the way in which the Prophet Muhammad conducted himself. Islamic teachings encourage Muslims to follow the Prophet Muhammad's way of life as the best example of how to live in accordance with the teachings of the Qur'an.

Surah: a chapter of the Qur'an.

Taqwa: consciousness of God.

Tawheed: Muslims believe that God has no partners, is neither female nor male and has no beginning or end

Wudu: ritual ablution or washing that Muslims perform before they pray. It is performed by beginning with the Name of Allah and washing one's hands, mouth, nose, face, forearms, head and feet

Zakat: the obligatory tax that Muslims pay on their wealth to benefit the poor and needy. This applies when one has savings for a year which reach a particular threshold.

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