

# DEBUNKING ISLAMOPHOBIA



**Equity Committee**

Thank you for participating in our film screening of “The Muslims are Coming”! This leaflet will provide more information about the issue of Islamophobia and provide opportunities for you to help combat Islamophobia and ensure every Muslim is treated with the respect they deserve.

## **How Can I Take Further Action?**

### **1. Learn more about the Islamic faith**

Islamophobia exists because of division from, and ignorance of, Muslim communities. Break down these barriers by visiting TRU’s Multi-Faith Chaplaincy and learning more about the Islamic religion. Visit [tru.ca](http://tru.ca) or drop by their office in Old Main 1421 to strike up a conversation.

### **2. Celebrate an Islamic holiday in the community**

One of the best opportunities to meet Muslims and learn about their community in a casual setting is to attend an Islamic holiday celebration. The Kamloops Islamic Association is the best place to look for opportunities to attend upcoming Islamic holidays. Keep an eye out for the local festival of Eid al-Fitr on June 14 in 2018, which marks the end of Ramadan the Islamic holy month of fasting. Visit [ayeshamosque.com](http://ayeshamosque.com) to find upcoming events in Kamloops.

### **3. Stand up for Muslims**

Help challenge Islamophobia whenever you see it! Don’t be a bystander whenever you see, hear, or read Islamophobic scare mongering. Please:

#### ***Stay calm: Don’t fight fire with fire***

Islamophobia often results in angry outbursts, which is based on the fear of losing one’s culture and identity to Muslims and Islam. Tell the person expressing this anger that you want to work with them to identify where these Islamophobic feelings come from so you can both understand each other’s perspectives better. If you feel like you can’t calmly engage in a discussion right now, it might be better to wait until another time. Responding with anger usually just hardens a person’s views and fuels their Islamophobia.

#### ***Explain the dominant stereotyping of Muslims and Islam***

Muslims, like every human being, are not perfect and some can exhibit problematic behaviors. However, it is completely wrong to take the behavior of a tiny minority of Muslims and generalize about the behavior of ALL Muslims based on that minority. Therefore, the minority fundamentalist view of Islam does not represent the mainstream and moderate Islamic majority.

## ***Continue having an open dialogue***

The best way to eliminate Islamophobia is via an ongoing dialogue about the ways that the media, society, and culture shape our views of Muslims and Islam. Understanding where Islamophobia comes from and what fuels it is key to opening people's hearts and minds. Continue debunking Islamophobia in small, but impactful, ways through dialogue with your friends and family whenever you can.<sup>1</sup>

## **4. Avoid perpetuating these common 5 Islamophobic myths**

### ***Muslims are violent terrorists***

The proportion of Muslims committing violent acts and terrorism is a tiny minority, consistent with other religious groups. All mainstream Islamic religious authorities condemn violence and reaffirm that the Qu'ran does not promote any form of violence.

### ***Islam is intolerant of other religions***

This myth ignores history. Large areas of Europe, the Middle East, North Africa, and Asia have had centuries of peaceful co-existence between Muslims and other religious groups.

### ***Islam oppresses women***

The Qu'ran does not mandate limiting women's rights like requiring women to wear a burqa or niqab, or prohibiting women from driving or being independent. The Qu'ran mandates modesty, prayer/theological obligations, ethical standards, etc. that apply equally to men and women. Countries that limit women's rights do so for patriarchal cultural reasons, not religious ones.

### ***Muslim means the same thing as Arab***

The majority of Muslims are actually from South-East Asia with 60% from Indonesia, Pakistan, Malaysia, etc. Additionally, not all Arabic people are Muslim. There are large Christian and Jewish populations in Syria, Egypt, Iraq, Lebanon, and elsewhere across Arabic regions.

### ***All Muslims are the same***

There is actually a lot of diversity and differing interpretations of Islam between groups of Muslims. Shia, Sunni, and Ibadi communities in particular have a lot of debate, discussion, and different traditions/religious obligations. Islam is constantly changing and evolving over time.

# FAQ'S

## What does “Islamophobia” mean?

Islamophobia is defined as “unfounded hostility towards Muslims [and Islam], and therefore fear or dislike of all or most Muslims.”<sup>2</sup>

## Why is Islamophobia a big issue in 2018?

The convergence of ongoing political and social crises involving refugees, fundamentalist Islamic terrorism, media outlets perpetuating stereotypes about Islam, and politicians who use these stereotypes to fear-monger about Muslims to win elections has resulted in a toxic climate of Islamophobia.

## Why should I care about Islamophobia?

Islamophobia divides and weakens our community by encouraging prejudice and discrimination. It emboldens fundamentalist Islamic terrorism by making it seem like Western societies are intolerant of moderate, mainstream Islam, and it encourages violence against Muslims in our communities. In fact, hate crimes against Muslim Canadians have increased dramatically in recent years as a direct result of growing Islamophobic sentiments.<sup>3</sup>

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1. Loutfi, Assia. 2017. “5 Easy Ways We Can Stop Islamophobia Together”. Mvslim. [mvslim.com/5-easy-ways-we-can-stop-islamophobia-together/](http://mvslim.com/5-easy-ways-we-can-stop-islamophobia-together/).
  2. University of California, Berkeley. 2016. “Defining “Islamophobia” | Center For Race & Gender”. Crg.Berkeley.Edu. [crg.berkeley.edu/content/islamophobia/defining-islamophobia](http://crg.berkeley.edu/content/islamophobia/defining-islamophobia).
  3. Paling, Emma. April 14, 2016. “Hate Crimes Against Muslims Double in Canada (And It's Not A Coincidence)”. Huffington Post Canada.

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