



Young Muslims and mental health



What do we know about young people and mental health?

Anxiety and depression have increased in children, from 1 in 9 children in 2017 to

1 in 5

in 2021.

(NHS Digital, 2022)

70%

of children & young people don't get help early enough for mental health problems.

(Public Health England, 2015)

“Research suggests Muslims face some of the greatest mental health inequalities, yet too many encounter significant barriers to support.”

(Centre for Mental Health, 2023)

Young Muslims and mental health

We recognise that faith and mental health can be really closely connected. Many Muslims may find their faith helps them face the pressures and stresses of life and can be a great source of comfort during difficult times.

We understand young people and know that growing up can naturally lead to questions about identity and beliefs. Our mission at Kooth is to help young people from all faiths and cultures make sense of themselves through this journey and to provide welcoming and inclusive support for all by respecting and being curious about what matters to them most.

Muslims sometimes struggle to seek help for mental health problems – why?

Sometimes, cultural beliefs and pressure to have faith and sabr (patience) may isolate a person and impact their mental health. This can become incredibly disheartening, and people may avoid talking to anyone about their feelings due to the stigma associated with mental health as a result. Some common thoughts might include:

‘How I’m feeling is God’s will or a test from God so I must accept and live with it patiently.’

‘If I was a better Muslim, I wouldn’t feel this way.’

‘How I feel is a punishment for my sins.’

‘Mental health issues are a Western idea.’

‘What will people say
and think of me?’

I’m worried about the conse-
quences of sharing how I feel’

While we understand the stigma and shame associated with mental health issues in all societies and cultures, we also respect and validate these worries and fears, and recognise how common they are.



Did you know?

Mental health problems are not a Western idea.

Some of the earliest documented mental health hospitals were in 7th century Baghdad. These buildings provided mental health support and were in the centre of town so people could visit showing that people with mental health conditions were not hidden away. Instead people were offered a wide range of support including talking therapy.

Abu Zayd Al-Balkhi (850-934)

Described several types of mental health conditions

Encouraged medical doctors to focus on psychological symptoms as well as physical

Encouraged talking therapies
as a way to manage distress

Looking for faith and culturally sensitive support for your child?

As a parent, it's natural for you to want to find the very best support for your child - especially if they're experiencing mental health issues or going through a difficult time and could benefit from additional support. If you're a parent looking for support for your child, it's also natural to want that support to be sensitive to your own culture and beliefs.

We've put together some frequently asked questions to help you learn more about Kooth and the support we offer.



FAQs for parents

What is Kooth and how can it help my child?

Kooth helps children and young people who may be struggling with their mental health. We are a free, safe and anonymous online service with no long waiting lists and no need for a GP or school referral. Young people access text-based support from highly qualified mental health professionals from a phone, tablet, or computer. Through Kooth, your child can access free mental health support, peer support, and a whole library of safe, age-appropriate resources. We do not diagnose, or give medical advice. We simply listen to young people, validate their experiences, and help them find ways to cope.

How can I trust Kooth as a service that works?

Kooth is the largest digital provider of mental services for children and young people in the UK, established over 20 years ago. It's commissioned primarily by the National Health Service and is accredited by the British Association of Counselling and Psychotherapy. Our service which has supported thousands of young people from different backgrounds, cultures, and faiths over the years is guided by research and decades of expertise in digital mental health.

Why is addressing mental health concerns so important?

Whatever our age, our mental health and wellbeing deserve the same thought and care as our physical health. When we take care of our mental health and wellbeing, and feel

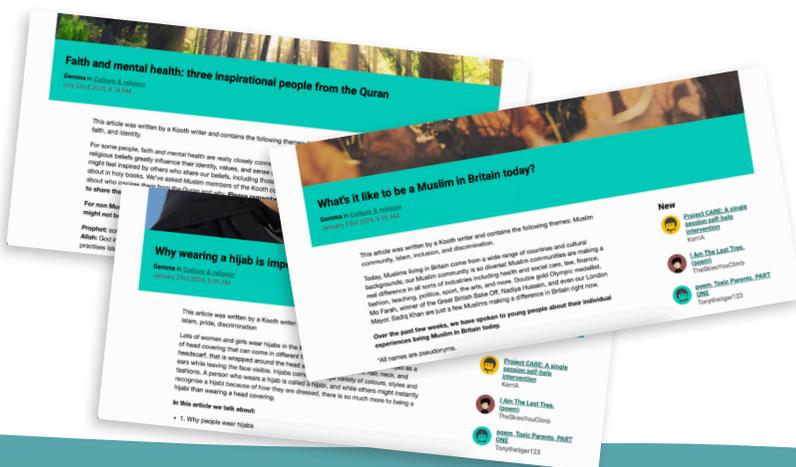


able to open up about our difficulties rather than bottling things up, we're much more likely to be able to thrive in other areas of life, including education, relationships with others, and how we feel about ourselves.

How is Kooth sensitive to the Muslim faith and culture?

Kooth strives to help everyone regardless of their faith, culture or race. We pride ourselves on creating a warm and inclusive space for our service users to access the support they need, whatever they're going through. Holistic mental health and wellbeing are at the heart of everything and we recognise faith and culture play a significant part in the lives of many young people.

Kooth provides robust and relevant diversity staff training and our team is from a range of backgrounds, cultures, and faiths. We draw on research and relevant experience and work directly with people of different faiths to create help helpful resources, ensuring our content is culturally appropriate.



Can my child talk to someone from the Muslim faith?

Young people sometimes ask to chat to a Kooth mental health professional from the same culture or faith. We understand that it can feel important to talk to someone who may share cultural values and beliefs, and we do our best to make this happen by matching young people with the most appropriate practitioners. Where this is not possible, we ensure that our team is trained to support service users with sensitivity and understanding of personal preferences and beliefs.

“Following your faith in a multicultural, fast paced and ever-changing society has its challenges and Kooth recognises that young people often find themselves facing dilemmas around keeping a balance between the different aspects of their identities or roles they have to play in different settings.”

- Muslim Practitioner

What if I'm looking for religious advice or guidance for my child?

Faith is a personal journey, and while it might play an important role in a young person's life and even impact their mental health and wellbeing, we're not qualified to provide religious guidance. Our mission is mental health, and our guidance will always be grounded in that.

Our aim is to simply walk alongside young people in whatever they're going through to help them explore their own thoughts, feelings, and beliefs. We help them find new ways of coping and refer them to other places for safe support when needed. We will never give medical advice; our support is always balanced, appropriate, and rooted in mental health and wellbeing over anything else.

How much information do you share with parents about what is discussed in chat sessions?

Our service is anonymous so while we don't generally share information with parents about the care of their child, you can always contact us at **parents@kooth.com** if you want more information about our support. Being able to sign up anonymously enables young people to speak more freely, and helps us as a service to keep them safe because they are more likely to tell us what is really going on. It's natural for parents and carers to want to know about the important aspects of their child's life, including their mental health. We know it can feel worrying when there are things we don't know. We also know that, for all of us, it's important to have spaces that feel safe and where we can share some of our thoughts and feelings, without worrying about the impact on the person that we're talking to. There are a lot of reasons why people may not feel able to share their difficulties with parents and carers. Please be assured that we always encourage young people to speak to their support network about what they are experiencing. If your child tells us something worrying about their safety, we will also ask for their identifiable information so we can get them the support they need.



How can your service complement other support in my child's life?

Many young people use Kooth support alongside other support services in their lives, such as CAMHS, school counselling, social services support, and faith and community support. Some young people find it hard to access face-to-face support. Where this is the case, our mental health professionals can explore these barriers, and in some cases, help them engage with the support available to them elsewhere. Sometimes young people use our service to practise what they want to say to someone face to face. This can make it easier for them to share what's going on with the people around them, such as a teacher, family member, Imam, or another trusted adult.

“As a Muslim practitioner I understand how important it is to seek support from people around you such as family, community leaders and school teachers, but it is also important to reach out to specialist services such as Kooth. More and more parents recognise Kooth as a service that can provide young people with information and support similar to the way you would access support from local Libraries, GPs and schools.”

- Muslim Practitioner



Will my local mosque or Imam be aware of Kooth?

Our Kooth engagement team does a lot of work in the community to raise awareness about Kooth and to answer any questions. This includes many local schools, mosques, GP surgeries and community centres. Community leaders can contact our team directly by emailing kel@kooth.com.

How do you stop bullying on the site?

Kooth is a safe place for everyone. While we encourage young people to submit their own articles, journal entries and discussion posts, everything that is submitted to the platform is checked by a moderator before it's published. Our moderators review all submissions to ensure that they meet our community boundaries and age rating guidance. Some submissions may be edited, or not published, if they do not meet our boundaries and guidelines. This process ensures that no bullying, harassment, or trolling takes place on the site.



How can I share any other concerns or ask more questions?

We know that as a parent or carer, you might have lots of questions about how Kooth work and how we might support your child. We've answered some of the key questions that people ask us, but if you have any other queries or concerns, we'd love to hear from you.



Please email us at
parents@kooth.com.



