

BLACK MUSLIM COVID COALITION

MEDICAL APARTHEID, COVID & BLACK MUSLIMS - WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW

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Minutes by: Sirad Hassan, 2018 Deeply Rooted Fellow, Muslim Wellness Foundation

1. Opening

- a. Misinformation spreads as quickly as the virus itself
- b. Rapid changes, within the span of hours
- c. Efforts need to be united and guided by our intentions to serve the creator first, in the best way possible

2. Agenda

- a. Basic information about the disease -> getting acquainted with the language -> acknowledge healthy mistrust in our communities -> health disparities/pre-existing conditions -> what do next steps look like
- b. Making dua'a for our community - especially those of us who have loved ones who are incarcerated, detained, lack of access to care, undocumented
- c. We must lift up and acknowledge those who are exceptionally vulnerable during these times

3. Who are the speakers?

- a. Dr. Kameelah Rashad - founder and president of the Muslim Wellness Foundation
- b. Dr. Safiyya Shabazz - board certified family physician; owner and medical director, Fountain Medical Associates, PC
- c. Dr. Noor Jihan Abdul-Haqq - board certified pediatrician; owner and lead pediatrician, Peace of Mind Pediatrics

4. National Black Muslim COVID Coalition Mission + Goals

- a. Thinking about all of our experiences - how will this moment impact us?
- b. Liberation, healing justice and self-determination are all linked
- c. Build upon the legacy of our ancestors and elders in the Black Freedom Movement

- d. Interdisciplinary, intergenerational, multi-ethnic, faith, and healing centered, trauma-informed organizing approach
- e. Frameworks: radical healing, healing centered engagement, cycle of liberation
- f. Support optimal physical/emotional health (not just in crisis situations)

5. National BMCC Pandemic Phase-Based Interventions

- a. Different phases: Pre-Pandemic Planning, Early Pandemic Phase, Later Pandemic Phase, Post-Pandemic Recovery, Sustaining Community Health & Wellness
- b. Not all locations in the world, and within the US, are at the same pandemic-phase

6. What is COVID-19?

- a. These diseases have been around for a long time, but there are many types
 - i. Hence, why they are listed on cleaning items! Certain strands are more deadly
- b. Most notable: SARS, MERS, SARS CoV2 (novel coronavirus)
- c. Public health crisis b/c of its nature to be rapidly spreading and highly contagious
- d. WHO declared COVID-19 as an outbreak in Jan 30, 2020
 - i. March 11, 2020: Officially declared a pandemic
- e. Explain the image of COVID-19: electron microscope of a coronavirus
 - i. Corona = means crown, looks as such in 2D view
- f. Symptoms: fever, dry cough, fatigue, body aches, sore throat, loss of smell/taste (it presents differently for people, but these are just some of the symptoms that commonly present)

7. Frequently Used Terms:

- a. Pandemic
- b. Social Distancing
 - i. Cutting contact with other individuals decreases the spread of the disease
 - ii. Exceptional results
 - 1. Normal behavior - 5 days: 2.5 people infected, 30 days: 406 people infected
 - 2. Social Distancing (75% less contact) - 5 days: 0.625 people; 30 days: 2.5 people
- c. Flattening the Curve
 - i. Thinking of the capacity of the health care system in the context of a graph

- ii. There's a limit to how many sick people can be treated at hospitals
- iii. Overwhelming the health system with no interventions in place will cause for there to be WAY more deaths, as the health care system will not have enough beds or ventilators
- iv. Flattening the Curve - buying time by causing the infection to spread slower and NOT overwhelm the healthcare system (i.e. there will be enough hospital beds for those who get sick)
- v. This prevents unnecessary deaths
- d. Community Spread
 - i. Multiple people in a physical community are infected and you are not sure of how you got infected
 - ii. Scenario -
 1. Strong recommendations to worship at home, but doesn't follow
 2. Everyone is suspected of having corona
 3. Hospital staff must wear mask from going from patient to patient
 4. Don't want to spread virus to those who are in the hospital
 - iii. NYT Article - Georgia town has rampant spread of coronavirus several days after a funeral
- e. Asymptomatic
- f. Ventilator
 - i. Does the work of your lungs to get air into your body
 - ii. Helps assisting with oxygen exchange
 - iii. ABCs - medical terminology (Airway Breathing Circulation)
 - iv. People need ventilators and time - average time is 8 days

8. What Does This Mean for Black Muslims?

- a. There will be community spread at the masjid (avoid)
- b. Flatten the curve, observe Ramadan at home
- c. Recognize that pre-existing conditions reduce likelihood of access to care
- d. Difficult to foresee how this will look in the next month, but we must do so in order to avoid many deaths in our communities
- e. Listen to a sheikh online, follow and pray in your own home
- f. Recognize that there is a blessing (& privilege) that many people have homes with internet access and running water
- g. Feels like we are fighting an invisible enemy

9. Projections about COVID-19

- a. Total COVID-19 deaths projected to August 2020 - 93,765

- b. Many people have already and will continue to die who have not been tested for COVID-19, recognize that there is a large discrepancy in the data b/c there probably are more deaths from underserved communities
- c. This will take us into the summer, but the graph (insha'Allah) will plateau

10. The Racist History of American Medicine

- a. CDC, WHO, Health Care Providers will have helpful information, but that does not eliminate the distrust faced by the Black and/or Muslim communities
- b. Making masks, do what you need to do, to keep peace of mind by trying to avoid breathing contaminated air (differences of opinions about this)
 - i. A barrier can be better than nothing!
- c. Medical Experimentation
 - i. Tuskegee Experiment
 - ii. Henrietta Lacks (HeLa cells, JHU)
- d. Health Disparities
 - i. Definition: preventable difference in the burden of disease in certain communities due to social status, gender, race, etc
 - ii. Black women practitioners are doing the most to fight these disparities along racial and gender lines → positive work being done
 - iii. These disparities make a visible difference in whether or not you live or die
 - iv. Article: When White Folks Catch a Cold, Black Folks Get Pneumonia
 - 1. A lot has to do with our environments (second-hand smoking, asthma, environmental racism, lack of health literacy)
 - 2. We can't do immune boosting, we are not at that point - looking for an outside army, but your inside army is not able to be satisfied with the nutrients it receives due to your circumstances
 - v. Communities slowly trying to teach about how to create healthier meals within places that are food deserts

11. African Americans Live With More Diseases

- a. Live with greater prevalence of high blood pressure, diabetes, stroke
- b. Please be away from hospitals if at all possible
- c. Pre-existing condition does NOT mean you will die, practice extra safe precautions if possible
- d. Cardiomyopathy
- e. Unfortunately, African Americans are more likely to die at early ages from all causes

- f. Seek out caregivers and health providers who understand the Black Muslim experience

12. Precautions & Recommendation

- a. Sahih Al-Bukhari narration: “If you hear of an outbreak of plague in a land, do not enter it; if the plague breaks out in a place while you are in it, do not leave that place”
- b. It is important to recognize that this is a PROBLEM. Act accordingly.
- c. Handwashing
- d. Fasting - restricting your diet, you would not need to go to the market as much (immune booster) & RATION foods
- e. Drive Thru for Pharmacy or other similar trips

13. Doctor’s Advice:

- a. Vitamin C + Zinc
 - i. Don’t take too much! You might run the risk of creating a copper deficiency.
- b. Quercetin (antihistamine)
- c. Fasting
- d. Exercise
- e. Quit Smoking

14. Question & Answer

- a. This crisis is worse than many of the wars we have seen as Americans
- b. Unfortunately, it will take someone near a person for them to see how dangerous in this crisis
- c. Spread information to others about resources to allies within and outside of our communities

15. Next Steps

- a. Talking to our elders - have them bear witness to where we are, and hear how they coped with previous moments of crisis - what is this bringing up for them right now?
- b. Help our elders with social isolation and get them connected with technology
- c. Pray for our African American brothers here in America but also those Black folks on other continents

d. Get Involved

- i. Black Muslim Coalition website (organizing/supporting member)
- ii. Disseminate information to your communities

16. **Reminder:** these are suggestions and advice, do not use this as replacement for medical advice from your health care providers. Bear in mind that Allah SWT is the knower of all things, and our creator is in control. We're spreading information, not the virus!