

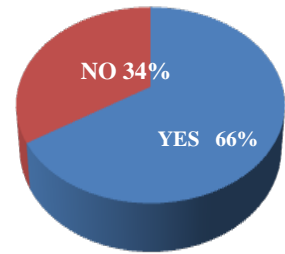
Healthy Marriages for Strong Families

Campaign to Stop Domestic Violence and to Foster Healthy Families Khutba Prep Sheet

Proposed Khutba Topics:

1. A Strong vs. an Abusive Family
2. Domestic Violence in Muslim Community
3. The impact of Domestic Violence on Our children & Families

In a 2011 national survey conducted by Project Sakinah and Peaceful Families Project every two out of three (66%) Muslim Americans reported to know someone being abused in their closer circle. One out of two (53 %) of them reported to be abused themselves. This included various types of abuse by a family member. This means a huge number of American Muslim households have a presence of abuse of some form. Which also means that a significant number of our children are being raised in an unhealthy environment that is detrimental to their mental, emotional and physical growth.



We are asking our imams and khateebis to team up with us in addressing this issue through their sermons (khutbas) in the context of family life. We believe that the Eid prayer is a great opportunity for us to educate and engage more community members in this very important discussion about saving Muslim families and ultimately Muslim children in America.

In this document, we have compiled a few talking points for imams' convenience. More khutbas on these topics could be viewed on Project Sakinah's website: <http://projectsakinah.org/Resources-Tools/Videos>

Attributes of Strong Families

A healthy relationship between intimate partners is characterized by mutual respect, equality, trust, communication, and freedom. Each person is allowed to be an individual within the relationship. Both people grow independently of each other and as a couple. A healthy relationship grows strong family.

After twenty-five years of worldwide research involving over 14,000 strong families, Dr. Nick and Nancy Stinnett and Joe and Alice Beam identified six qualities that they have in common:

1. have a high degree of *spiritual well-being*. Their belief in God gives them strength and purpose.
2. are dedicated to promoting each other's welfare and happiness. They value the unity of the family and have a high degree of *commitment* to the family as a group.
3. express a great deal of *appreciation* to each other. They build each other up psychologically. They give many sincere compliments and express appreciation well and often.
4. have *positive communication skills* and spend large amounts of time talking with each other. They are very good listeners.
5. spend a lot of *time together* – quality time in generous quantities. They structure their life-style to make the time together happen.
6. have the ability to deal with stress, crisis and conflict. They offer strong support to the one in crisis and see it as an opportunity for growth.

Source: Stinnett, Dr. Nick and Nancy with Joe and Alice Beam. *Fantastic Families/6 Proven Steps to Building a Strong Family*. Howard Publishing Co., West Monroe, LA, 1999.

The Abusive Family

An **unhealthy relationship** is characterized by a cycle of abuse. The abuser uses disrespect, fear, jealousy and possessiveness to create an imbalance of power. This is abuse. It grows a violent, dysfunctional family. Such families with abusive relationships suffer severe consequences that affect several individuals in multiple generations.

Domestic violence is a form of oppression. It happens when one person in the relationship tries to control another person or exert power by using one of many control tactics or forms of abuse:

- Verbal: name calling, insults
- Psychological: isolation, intimidation, threats (to divorce, to ruin reputation, to hurt family members, to deport, etc), withholding affection
- Physical: pushing, hitting, pulling hair, throwing objects, destroying property
- Sexual: Forced or prohibited sexual activities, including forcing to watch pornography
- Financial: Depriving of financial access, using financial dependency to instill guilt
- Spiritual: Misusing Qur'an/hadith to control behavior, interfering with religious practice, preventing access to learning about Islam, etc

Impact of Domestic Violence:

There is a very long list of impacts of domestic violence on children and adults. We are only listing a few here to include in khutba:

Negative Impact on Victim:

- Abused person lives in state of anxiety or fear, not knowing when next attack will come
- Abuse can lead to emotional illnesses (depression, anxiety, etc), physical illness because immune system is compromised under chronic stress, injury, and sometimes death.

Negative impact on children:

- Child witnesses suffer as much as child victim of abuse
- Children may develop emotional, physical, and relational problems
- Both or one parents lose the custody of children. In the absence of Muslim foster parents most kids are then being placed in non-Muslim foster care and adoptions, in the absence of extended family members in the US.

Abused Children & Adults May Engage in:

- Drug use
- Self-destructive behavior
- Self-injury
- Suicide threats and/or attempts
- Aberrant sexual behavior
- Prostitution

Negative Impact on Abuser:

Behaving abusively towards another has long-term effects on the abuser. The abuser may get what he/she wants in the short-term, but over the long-term, are likely to suffer consequences that may include:

- loss of connection with Allah
- alienating friends and family
- losing the respect of their peers/family/community
- being alone
- expulsion from school
- losing their job
- having a criminal record (and losing personal freedom)

What We Should Do:

1. We must be proactive in taking all measures in preventing family violence within the households.
2. Kids must be taught to respect religion, family and culture from an early age through loving communications. As a result, there will be less frustration and discord.
3. Children from the young age must be taught to not stress too much on their rights and too little on their duties and the importance of having realistic expectations in a marriage.
4. Respecting girls and women should become a norm in all circumstances.
5. Should take all due measures to grow strong families through implementation of proper programs, trainings and services at our mosques and within our community.
6. Should Speak Up and Take Action to stop all kinds of family violence. According to the Peaceful Families & Project Sakinah's 2011 survey, when Muslims learned of violence within a family, their most common responses were to pray for the victim (43%) or to talk to him or her (44%). Only Less than 15 % tried to intervene directly. This needs to change.
7. Join hands with Project Sakinah, a national initiative to grow strong families and stop family violence. ProjectSakinah.org

Relevant Verses of Quran & Ahadith:

Healthy Relationships:

- "And among His signs is that He created for you mates from among yourselves that you may dwell in tranquility with them, and He has put love and mercy between you; verily, in that are signs for people who reflect." (Qur'an, 30:21)
- Men & women equal in eyes of Allah (49:13) & created from single soul (4:1)
- Spouses are garments for one another (2:187)
- Marriage based on mutual love & compassion for purpose of mutual tranquility (30:21)
- Communication should be positive (16:125, 14:24)
 - Mocking, name-calling prohibited (49:11)
- Qiwaamah is a responsibility for men to guide family in the manner of the Prophet (pbuh), & not a license to abuse, hurt, or control (4:34)
- Prophet's leadership in home & community based on gentleness (3:159), shura (42:37-38 & 65:6)
- It is not our job to control others, just to advise (88:21-24)
- The Prophet (may peace and blessings be upon him) said, "Treat women well." [Muslim, Ibn Majah]
- "The best among you is the best to his family." [Ibn Majah]
- Abu Hurayra stated, "The Messenger of Allah, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, said, "The most perfect of believers in belief is the best of them in character. The best of you are those who are the best to their women." [at-Tirmidhi]
- "O ye who believe! Ye are forbidden to inherit women against their will. Nor should ye treat them with harshness, that ye may Take away part of the dower ye have given them,-except where they have been guilty of open lewdness; on the contrary live with them on a footing of kindness and equity. If ye take a dislike to them it may be that ye dislike a thing, and Allah brings about through it a great deal of good." (Quran 4:19)

Abuse is not Islamic:

- Abu Huraira reported: The Messenger of Allah, peace and blessings be upon him, asked, "Do you know who the bankrupt are?" They said, "The one without money or goods is bankrupt." So the Prophet said, "The bankrupt are those from my nation who come on the Day of Resurrection with prayer, fasting, and charity, but

comes also insulting, slandering, consuming wealth, shedding blood, and beating others. They will each be given from his good deeds; if his good deeds run out before the score is settled, their bad deeds will be cast upon him, then he will be thrown into the Hellfire.”

- "How does anyone of you beat his wife as he beats the stallion camel and then embrace (sleep with) her?" (Al-Bukhari, English Translation, vol. 8, Hadith 68, pp. 42-43)

Community & Family's Role

- Islam mandates intervention. "Must stand for justice" (4:135)
- Narrated Anas: Allah's Apostle said, "Help your brother, whether he is an oppressor or he is an oppressed one. People asked, "O Allah's Apostle! It is all right to help him if he is oppressed, but how should we help him if he is an oppressor?" The Prophet said, "By preventing him from oppressing others." (Bukhari)
- "Help the oppressed & the oppressor". Companions said, "We know how to help the oppressed, but how do we help the oppressor?" Prophet (pbuh) said, "by preventing him/her from committing further oppression)
- Must help & defend oneself in the face of oppression (42:39-40)
- Blame is on the perpetrator, not the victim (42:42)
 - Do not ask the victim, "What did you do to make him angry or to make him hit you?" Rather, hold the perpetrator accountable and provide comfort & safety for victim.
- Divorce can be a peaceful solution when safety & well-being cannot be obtained in the marriage (*imsaak bi ma`ruf aw tasreeh bi ihsaan*). (2:226-234 & 65:1-12)

For Help & Services in your community, please check out Project Sakinah online Directory of Services: <http://projectsakinah.org/directory>

For more information about the issue and other resources, please visit: ProjectSakinah.org.

* Some information used in this document was provided by Salma Elkadi Abugideiri, Peaceful Families Project, www.peacefulfamilies.org