



Saving
F**ICE**

Faith & Cultural Empowerment

*A guide for reframing
the way forward*

A framework that centres faith as a tool to empower communities & individuals to prevent violence against women and children.



Muslim Women Australia

**AN INITIATIVE OF
MUSLIM WOMEN
AUSTRALIA**

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About

This guide arose from the Saving FACE project and provides organisations and practitioners who engage, or seek to engage, with Muslims in the Domestic, Family and Sexual Violence (DFSV) sector with:

- A roadmap for effectively engaging with faith communities.
- A set of principles, drawn from mainstream Islamic theology, that can be used to address DFSV.
- An understanding of how the Islamic principles compare and, in certain matters, contrast with the mainstream view.

This resource is not intended to replace the real and lived experience of Muslims, either practitioners or victim survivors, and wherever possible the sector should be seeking to partner and collaborate with individuals who have expertise of the religion and the community.

We hope that the guide will provide a useful tool for those practitioners who do not have ready access to this expertise and will serve to provide a basic level of understanding of the principles and dynamics present when dealing with Muslims and the Muslim community. For those segments of the sector that engage with Muslims and the Muslim community on an ongoing basis we encourage you to avail of the more in-depth training that will be available in addition to this resource.

The main purpose in making this resource available is our shared aim of eliminating violence against women and children. To make genuine, and sustainable change, within society we need a shared approach to this devastating problem. This includes efforts by governments at all levels, public and private institutions, and the community as a whole. We all have a role to play, and we take the view that the best placed to make changes within a community are those within the community itself. For faith communities generally, and the Muslim community in particular, this means people from within the faith who can bring the concepts, language, symbols and rituals of the faith itself as part of the solution.

A solution drawn from the values and beliefs of the community itself has the greatest chance of success.

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Executive Summary

The multifaceted nature of Family, Domestic, and Sexual Violence (DFSV) requires tailored approaches for different communities. Among these, faith-based groups, especially Muslims, offer unique challenges and opportunities due to their intricate intertwining of cultural and religious nuances. Addressing DFSV within these groups is not just about understanding these nuances, but about using them as tools for positive change.

MWA, a beacon for Muslim women's rights, has consistently emphasised principles of fairness, equality, and justice for over 40 years. Beyond advocacy, MWA has been instrumental in initiating tangible change, exemplified by introducing the first refuge for Muslim women grappling with DFSV in Australia. Their recent endeavour, the "Saving FACE" project, is groundbreaking in its recognition of faith as a catalyst for preventing violence. By seeking to establish a faith-congruent framework tailored for Muslim communities, it sets the stage for proactive prevention, heightened awareness, and resource creation for DFSV practitioners.

This guide is curated for organisations and practitioners to gain insights into the Muslim perspective on DFSV. It seeks to be an invaluable resource for organisations and practitioners. It is specifically tailored to those aspiring to work effectively within the Muslim demographic, providing:

- A step-by-step roadmap to engage faith communities in meaningful dialogues about DFSV.
- A foundational understanding of Islamic principles in relation to DFSV.
- Comparative insights juxtaposing Islamic tenets and mainstream perspectives on DFSV.

It's essential to note that this guide does not supersede or generalise the real, diverse experiences of Muslims. Instead, it's designed to bridge knowledge gaps, serving as a starting point and a reference. For more profound engagement, we advocate for immersive training that respects and acknowledges the deep-seated beliefs and practices of the Muslim community. Our core goal remains unwavering, the eradication of violence against women and children, leveraging the proactive role of faith communities.

Organised for ease of use and comprehensive understanding, the guide is divided into:

- A deep dive into the profound role of faith in shaping perceptions and solutions for DFSV.
- A meticulous overview of the principles and framework developed under the aegis of the Saving FACE project.
- An enriching section that houses supplementary information, delving deeper into faith principles, gender equality within Islamic ethos, a unique faith leadership model, and relevant terminologies and models.

In understanding and tackling DFSV within Muslim communities, this guide introduces and elaborates upon several pivotal models. Each model serves as a framework, designed to offer practitioners clarity, guidance, and strategic direction. The guide's intention is to move beyond mere theoretical discussions and to serve as a practical blueprint. These include:

- The MWA Cultural Competence Model
- The Faith-Centred Approach
- The Saving FACE Principles & Framework

Cultural competence, while foundational, is just the starting block. MWA's revolutionary Faith-Centred Approach amplifies this base by providing a multi-dimensional lens to understand, address, and prevent DFSV in faith communities. This approach seeks to disentangle faith and culture, recognising their distinct influences while appreciating their intersections.

Positioning males at the heart of its strategy, the "Saving Face" project underscores the pivotal role men can play in reshaping perspectives and actions regarding DFSV.

Through its framework, it seeks to illuminate the profound teachings of Islam that place community well-being at its core.

This framework, deeply embedded in Islamic teachings, is built upon a series of interconnected relationships. These relationships explore individual connections with the Creator, introspective relations with oneself, interpersonal dynamics within families, and the broader interactions within the community. Each facet offers insights and guidelines for fostering spiritual growth, personal well-being, familial harmony, and cohesive communities.

These models, intricately detailed within the guide, form the foundation of our approach. Their structured presentation aims to aid practitioners in effectively navigating the complexities of DFSV within the Muslim community.

Addressing DFSV in faith-communities demands a multi-pronged, informed, and compassionate approach. This guide serves as a cornerstone, ushering in an era of heightened understanding, collaboration, and tangible change. Through its faith-centric lens, it beckons organisations to partner in a journey towards a world free of DFSV.

Foreword

In a world teeming with complexities and challenges, it is our collective responsibility to foster positive change and promote the values of compassion, understanding, and respect. It is within this context that we proudly present the Saving FACE Sector Guide, a groundbreaking initiative by Muslim Women Australia—a community organisation with four decades of experience in collaborative efforts within the domestic and family violence sector.

This Sector Guide is a testament to our commitment to build stronger, more inclusive communities. It reflects our dedication to dismantling preconceived notions and dispelling myths, fostering authenticity and transparency in our collaborative efforts. Together, we aim to guide a path that is innovative, trusted, and all-encompassing.

Saving Faith and Cultural Empowerment, or Saving FACE, emerges from the depths of our commitment to the principles of faith and the unwavering belief in our capacity to create lasting, meaningful change.

At its core, this guide serves as a testament to our dedication to implementing sustainable transformations within faith-based communities.

In the Domestic, Family and Sexual Violence (DFSV) sector, we confront not only the darkness of violence but also the light of hope, the strength of survivors, and the dedication of advocates and professionals. Together, we are building a world where love and respect triumph over fear and control—a world where every individual can live free from the threat of DFSV.

The mission of the Saving FACE Sector Guide is a noble one—to enhance the capabilities of our communities to provide culturally, linguistically, and religiously appropriate care, and in so doing, contribute to the prevention of domestic and family violence in Australia.

As we navigate this guide, we will find an array of tools, strategies, and insights born out of the collective wisdom of those who have walked this path with authentic engagement and collaboration. It is a testament to the resilience of the human spirit and the belief that change is not only possible, but it is absolutely necessary.

We extend our heartfelt invitation to all to join us in this vital endeavour. We call upon you to collaborate with sincerity, to partner with authenticity, and to learn with transparency. Together, we will debunk myths, dispel misconceptions, and most importantly, pave the way for an inclusive, innovative, and trusted future.

In a world often tainted by misperceptions of power and control, where the essence of true masculinity is frequently misunderstood, we find ourselves in urgent need of reclamation. We must acknowledge the genuine spirit of a warrior—a spirit guided by Islamic principles and exemplified by the Prophet Muhammad, peace be upon him.

This spirit of masculinity stands as a symbol of righteousness and a protector of the vulnerable. It recognises vulnerability with the utmost respect and dignity. It is a quest that we should all embark upon, not merely for ourselves but for the sake of our shared humanity. Our purpose must be one of peace, compassion, and courage—heart to heart, mind to mind, and soul to soul.

As we launch the Saving FACE Sector Guide on the International Day of Peace 2023, let us remember that, like the butterfly spreading its vibrant wings and bringing joy to all who behold it, we too can radiate beauty and positivity. Our personal growth and the embodiment of our finest qualities are our gifts to the world—a reminder that we must remain open to change, embrace transformation, and endeavour to make the world a better place.

In the spirit of unity and shared purpose, let us embark on this journey together—a journey that holds the promise of brighter days, stronger communities, and a future where violence has no place. The Saving FACE Sector Guide is not just a resource; it is a beacon of hope, a testament to our dedication, and a call to action for all those who believe in a world built upon love, respect, and compassion.

With sincere gratitude, warmth and determination,

Hajeh Maha Krayem Abdo OAM
CEO - Muslim Women Australia

Introduction

Muslim Women Australia

Muslim Women Australia (MWA) is a representative body for Muslim women working to enrich humanity, advocating for equality and the rights of all women, through authentic leadership based on Islamic principles. MWA has been supporting and advocating on behalf of all women, and Muslim women in particular, for over 40 years. At the heart of the MWA is a commitment to fairness, equality, and justice in all its interactions and activities that support Muslim women.

MWA established the first refuge for Muslim women escaping Domestic, Family and Sexual Violence (DFSV) in the country and has continued to lead the way in changing community attitudes towards DFSV within the Muslim community and across the DFSV sector nationally.

While MWA has been at the forefront of supporting the victims of DFSV for over four decades it has always maintained a view that long-term sustainable change in this space is best achieved when men are part of the solution and are seen as more than just perpetrators who need to be changed themselves. MWA has always advocated for the role of men in the primary prevention space, particularly within the Muslim community. While MWA has had several initiatives to engage with men, such as the Linking Hearts Ambassadors Program,¹ the “Saving FACE” initiative is the first of its kind for the MWA and the sector generally.

1 <https://linkinghearts.org.au/lh-ambassadors/>

2 Chowdhury, R. (2023). The Role of Religion in Domestic Violence and Abuse in UK Muslim Communities. Oxford Journal of Law and Religion, rwad008.

Saving FACE (Faith & Cultural Empowerment)

Saving FACE stands for “Saving Faith and Cultural Empowerment’ and is a primary prevention initiative for Muslim men based on the concept that to engender sustainable change in faith-based communities primary prevention activities must be developed in the context of faith-based principles. The importance of this approach has recently been demonstrated in a UK based study looking at the nuanced role of faith in addressing DFSV for UK based Muslims². Where faith is often assumed to be a causative factor in DFSV, this research highlights how movement away from overarching faith principles facilitates and exacerbates DFSV. Additionally, victims and survivors were found to be utilising faith as a means out of the abuse and as a resource within their recovery process.

The premise of this project therefore, and the ethos of MWA overall, is that faith can in fact be a positive driver in the prevention of violence against women and children. The prevalence of violence against women and children is no greater in faith communities than the general population. All perpetrators of violence seek to justify their actions based on their own set of values and morals, however the research is very clear in that when all the justifications are stripped away what drives violence are factors that are common across all groups and are not specifically related to faith no matter how much a particular individual may seek to draw that connection.

Research further demonstrates that the utilisation of faith principles in addressing and preventing DFSV, holds an asset-based approach that can be tailored to individual circumstances.³ In light of this, faith and cultural empowerment is viewed as a critical strengths-based position from which DFSV can be addressed.

Saving FACE seeks to:

- Develop a faith-based framework that can be utilised for the creation of primary prevention activities relevant to local Muslim communities.
- Develop a methodology to be used by local communities to develop primary prevention initiatives.
- Work with regional and emerging Muslim communities to:
 - raise awareness about the underlying drivers of violence against women and children.
 - build capacity in relation to responding to violence against women and children.
 - pilot bespoke primary prevention programs in those communities.

And

- Develop a resource guide for service providers who are engaging with men from faith-based communities.
- Develop training for service providers on faith-based frameworks and how to engage faith communities.

This Resource Guide

This resource guide is the fulfillment of the above outcomes and is intended as a guide to any practitioner or organisation in the DFSV sector who engages, or intends to engage, with Muslims or sections of the Muslim community on primary prevention initiatives. While this guide is geared towards primary prevention, the concepts and principles it contains may be of value to assist and inform practitioners and organisations working with perpetrators, or victim survivors, who identify as Muslim.

This guide is comprised of three (3) substantive parts.

- Part 1 – The Role of Faith in addressing DFSV
- Part 2 – The Saving FACE Framework & Principles
- Part 3 – Additional Information & Resources

There continues to be a perception that faith, and religiosity, are inconsistent with the prevention of violence against women and children, or perhaps more specifically what may be considered ‘traditional’ or ‘orthodox’ faith positions.

In this context Islam, and Muslims, are generally seen to fall into this category of ‘traditional’ and

³ See 2

are perhaps considered, by some sections of society and the DFSV sector, as holding views and positions which are contrary to the generally accepted principles underpinning primary prevention work.

In **Part 1** we provide a review of the research available on the role faith can and does play in the prevention of DFSV. While there has been research on the issue of DFSV in culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) communities there is little that is specific to the Muslim community. Faith and religion have mostly been seen as a part of the CALD demographic. In this section we present an understanding of the challenges this approach presents and a case for why faith warrants a unique approach and introduce a model for how faith should form a central part of this solution to DFSV.

Part 2 then presents a high-level overview of the framework and principles that were developed in the Saving FACE project. As indicated above, at the heart of the project is a set of principles sourced from, and consistent with, traditional Islamic teachings that can provide a framework for addressing the problem of violence against women and children. This section provides practitioners with the basics to be able to engage with Muslim men, without the need to challenge them on theological issues, in a positive manner.

As part of our aim to build the bridge between the mainstream sector and the Muslim community on the issue of DFSV we undertook a mapping exercise between the Saving FACE principles and the Our Watch action statements. These are action statements developed by Our Watch that form the basis of its guide, “Putting the Prevention of Violence against Women into Practice.”⁴ The equivalent Saving FACE statements demonstrate that while there may be a difference in language and values the overall objective of reducing violence is shared by all interested parties and the framework developed under Saving FACE specifically for the Muslim community is well-placed to achieve this and, overall, is consistent with that of the sector itself.

Part 3 of the guide contains resources that will be relevant to practitioners including:

- more detailed information on the faith principles and framework
- an exploration of the issue of gender equality from the Islamic perspective
- presentation of a faith leadership model that is well placed to respond to issues of control and coercion in the DFSV space.
- Glossary of Terms
- Saving FACE models for printing

4 <https://media-cdn.ourwatch.org.au/wp-content/uploads/sites/2/2019/11/07042017/Putting-prevention-into-practice-AA-web.pdf> pp.14-15



Part 1 – The Role of Faith in Addressing DFSV

A Brief Research Review

Despite an increasing emphasis on, and need for, prevention of DFSV there is a paucity of programs that focus on men, let alone men from cultural and religious minority communities. With a growing literature focusing on women's experiences of DFSV, particularly from a secular perspective, there lies a significant gap in the role that men can play in faith-based communities.

Faith-based communities play an important role in many people's lives and it is therefore essential that DFSV initiatives take a community faith-based approach. In the primary prevention arena, where we are seeking to make social, cultural and institutional change within communities, faith can and is a fundamental part of achieving sustainable change.

In a 2019 literature review submitted to the Victorian Government for a working paper on faith-based responses to DFSV, a key point that the authors made in the overall approach to DFSV was the tension that often exists between faith and secular organisations. This, they noted, may be ‘a contributing factor for violence against women and family violence in faith settings’⁵. This is accentuated if there is not a genuine collaborative approach taken by policy makers when engaging with faith communities. This is of particular significance as the understanding of gender equality can sometimes be viewed differently between civil society and religious institutions, often due to misunderstandings from both sides.

A better understanding of faith communities is advocated through use of the web model of domestic violence and abuse⁶, developed in specific relation to DFSV in UK Muslim communities. The model sets out four levels of consideration required when working with faith communities. These are:

1. Individual psycho-social-spiritual level
2. Stakeholder level
3. Intersectionality
4. Macro level

The model can be viewed in figure 1 below.

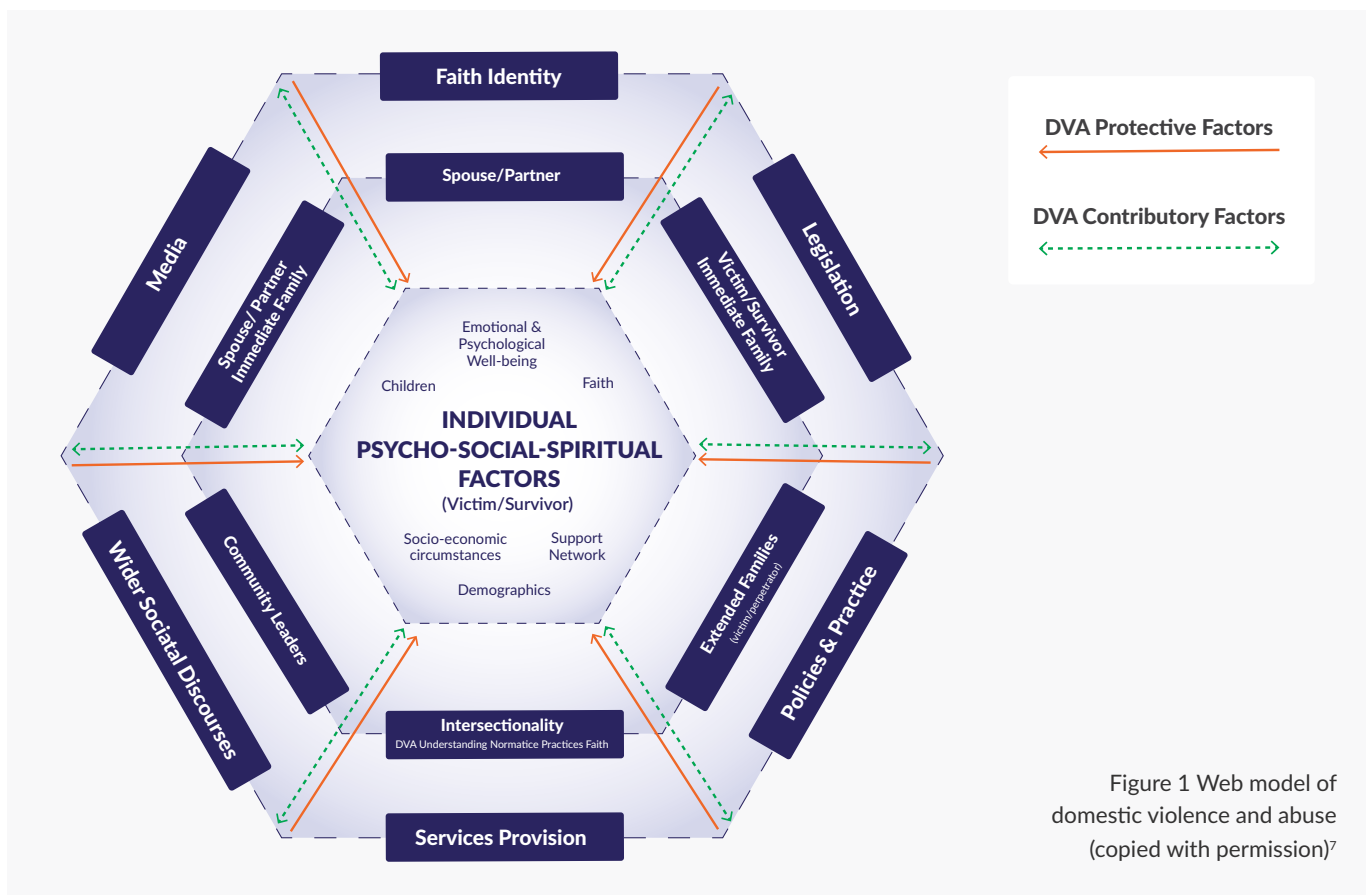


Figure 1 Web model of domestic violence and abuse (copied with permission)⁷

5 Vaughan, C. & Sullivan, C. (2019). Technical paper: Faith communities supporting healthy family relationships, Parkville: University of Melbourne. P.12

6 Chowdhury, Rahmanara.(2021). Web Model of Domestic Violence and Abuse. Brunel University London

7 Ibid

In setting out these four levels the approach is firstly victim-centred, allowing for the often-suppressed voices of victims to be given precedence and the individuality of circumstances to come through. This is imperative to avoid a one size fits all approach, thereby potentially further endangering individuals. At the individual level, understanding the specifics of each person is advocated, including the role of faith for that person. This is alongside more widely known areas of consideration such as social support, demographics, presence of children, socio-economic circumstances, and emotional and psychological wellbeing, alongside how these may all intertwine to shape experiences.

At the level of stakeholders there is a recognition that faith communities are more often collectivist communities, where individual decisions may not always manifest in a completely autonomous manner and whereby the collective wellbeing of families and communities by extension are also considered. This is significant for someone experiencing and wanting to leave DFSV situations within a faith community. It therefore becomes important to understand who the stakeholder groups are for each victim and the nature of the role they play; whether positive or potentially harmful, and potential implications for interventions.

At the level of intersectionality, consideration is given to all the protected characteristics with three areas noted as particularly significant. These include literacy levels in relation to DFSV, cultural normative practices and faith (used interchangeable with religion). Religious teachings have been found to be protective of violence towards women. To achieve this there are faith leaders and community members who use the scripture to condemn violence against

women, while others promote gender equality and contextualise 'their readings of scripture by historicising patriarchal elements'⁸. Significantly, victims utilising faith-based resources firstly, as a means of obtaining a safe route out of the abuse and secondly, as a coping and resilience resource within their recovery process, has been identified⁹. The underlying protective elements within religion for faith communities thereby hold a central position to DFSV. Without due consideration, missed opportunities for intervention manifest and inequities in how DFSV are addressed continue to perpetuate. In contrast, superimposition of cultural normative practices over holistic faith principles have been found to exacerbate and maintain DFSV. This nuanced difference is crucial for service providers to understand and accommodate within support services.

Finally, at the macro level, are considerations regarding how stigmatised and minoritised communities experience living in wider society. A key issue that is raised from the research is how particular religious or cultural groups are judged based on the actions of an individual. That is, an action, or even language, used by an individual from an already racialised group will be viewed as an issue across the community. On the other hand, when the same act is conducted by someone from the majority group it is viewed as an individual problem, not a community one. This point is of particular significance in that not only can it result in the suppression of DFSV but can also lead to discrimination of an already racialised and marginalised community. This is further perpetuated by wider negative societal narratives which then directly feed back into the provision of services. Crucially, this has been found to hinder reporting of DFSV and limit victim

8 Ibid. p.13

9 see 2

opportunities for accessing support.¹⁰

This intersection between faith and culture is a critical element to come to terms with when dealing with minority communities in the primary prevention space. Not only are entire minority communities judged by the actions of individuals but the conflation of cultural norms and faith, by members of those communities, broader society and the sector generally, is problematic. Faith cannot sit alone as it intersects with culture and experiences of migration and therefore it is necessary to understand which components contribute to gendered violence. This intersection is demonstrated within the web model of domestic violence and abuse whereby an entire system approach to understanding DFSV and subsequent interventions is advocated.

It is important to note that whilst the web model of domestic violence and abuse provides a holistic framework when working with faith communities, due to its versatile nature it is advocated for use with all population groups¹¹. This aligns with the wider approach of MWA in supporting individuals from all backgrounds.

The Intersection of Culture and Faith

There is a significant amount of research around the uniqueness of the issues and challenges that cultural and religious minorities face in Western countries. This must be taken into consideration not only in how programs are developed but also how to assist members of these groups to bridge the gap between the home and host cultures.

10 Chowdhury, R., & Winder, B. (2022). A Web Model of Domestic Violence and Abuse in Muslim Communities—A Multi Perspective IPA Approach. *Social Sciences*, 11(8), 354.

11 Ibid

12 Cuevas, Carlos & Cudmore, Rebecca. (2017). Intimate partner violence prevention among underserved and understudied groups: The roles of culture and context, in Renzetti, C., Follingstad, Diane, & Coker, Ann. *Preventing Intimate Partner Violence : Interdisciplinary Perspectives*.pp15-16

Research into projects from a cultural and contextual perspective, with a key focus on the limited amount of DFSV prevention projects that target minorities, noted that it:

'...is no longer appropriate to assume that mainstream treatment and prevention work targeting the general population will be effective with increasingly diverse populations that have historically been understudied and are often underserved in the social services and prevention arenas'.¹²

In that research the authors draw on comparable social issues which could support the development of DFSV programs. Most notably they highlight programs that look at adolescent and young adult relationship programs that take a dynamic approach to working with underserved groups. This means including community members as experts in the development of this content.

Another key prevention program that they highlight is bystander education and training programs as these can increase victim empathy. However, due to the heterogenous nature of the groups discussed they note that bystander interventions need to be adapted to the particular audience as most current research is focussed on mainstream audiences.

Of particular significance through their research review of minority groups is the importance of addressing gender equality while also taking in a culturally appropriate approach. As such, the

authors state:

‘...prevention programs for males who hold traditional cultural values should be sensitive to these values but emphasise the more respectful and less controlling behaviours of traditional male roles’¹³

They highlight that there are many barriers for minority groups to access DFSV services, particularly as most programs are not tailored to the cultural and religious specificities of the target groups. However, *‘a number of steps can be taken to overcome barriers to prevention programming in underserved communities’¹⁴*, including working more collaboratively with community groups, which has been fundamental to the FACE project.

The nuanced interplay between culture and faith is also exemplified within the aforementioned UK based research¹⁵. This research demonstrates how binary approaches towards understanding the role of culture and faith can result in causing unintentional harm. Conflation of the two within faith communities are also explored at each of the four levels of the web model of domestic violence and abuse, exemplifying how nuanced this manifestation can be in lived reality. By working in collaboration with victims and allowing the victim voice to lead, services are facilitated towards gaining a deeper understanding of how culture and faith play out in the individual lives of those they work with, without necessarily holding the prerequisite knowledge themselves This can help to alleviate some of the concerns service providers may hold in working with culture and faith.

¹³ Ibid. p.22

¹⁴ Ibid. p.30

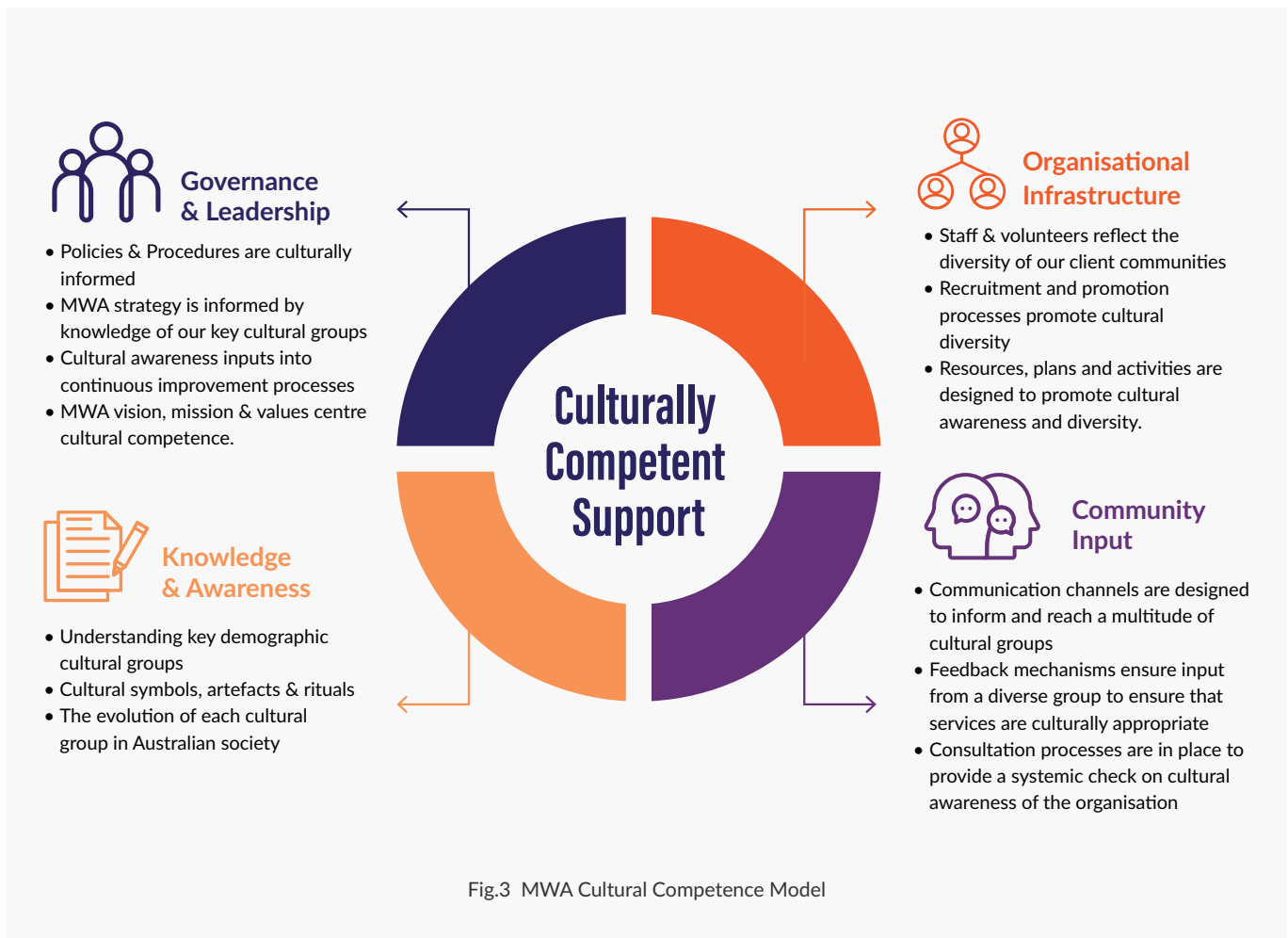
¹⁵ see 2

Engaging with Faith Communities

Below we present two models to guide mainstream sector organisations when working with minority faith communities, and in particular the Muslim community, in preventing DFSV. By applying these principles, organisations can foster respectful collaboration, cultural competence, and effective engagement with these communities. Understanding and implementing these principles can enhance the efficacy of prevention efforts and contribute to building a more inclusive and violence-free society.

Addressing domestic violence within minority faith communities requires a nuanced and culturally sensitive approach. Mainstream sector organisations should recognise the importance of working collaboratively with these communities to ensure the effectiveness of prevention efforts.

The first model, as illustrated in Figure 3 below, is the MWA Cultural Competence Model. As an organisation that serves a multicultural client base, MWA has developed this model to inform cultural competence across the whole organisation and to go beyond the basic approaches to this issue.

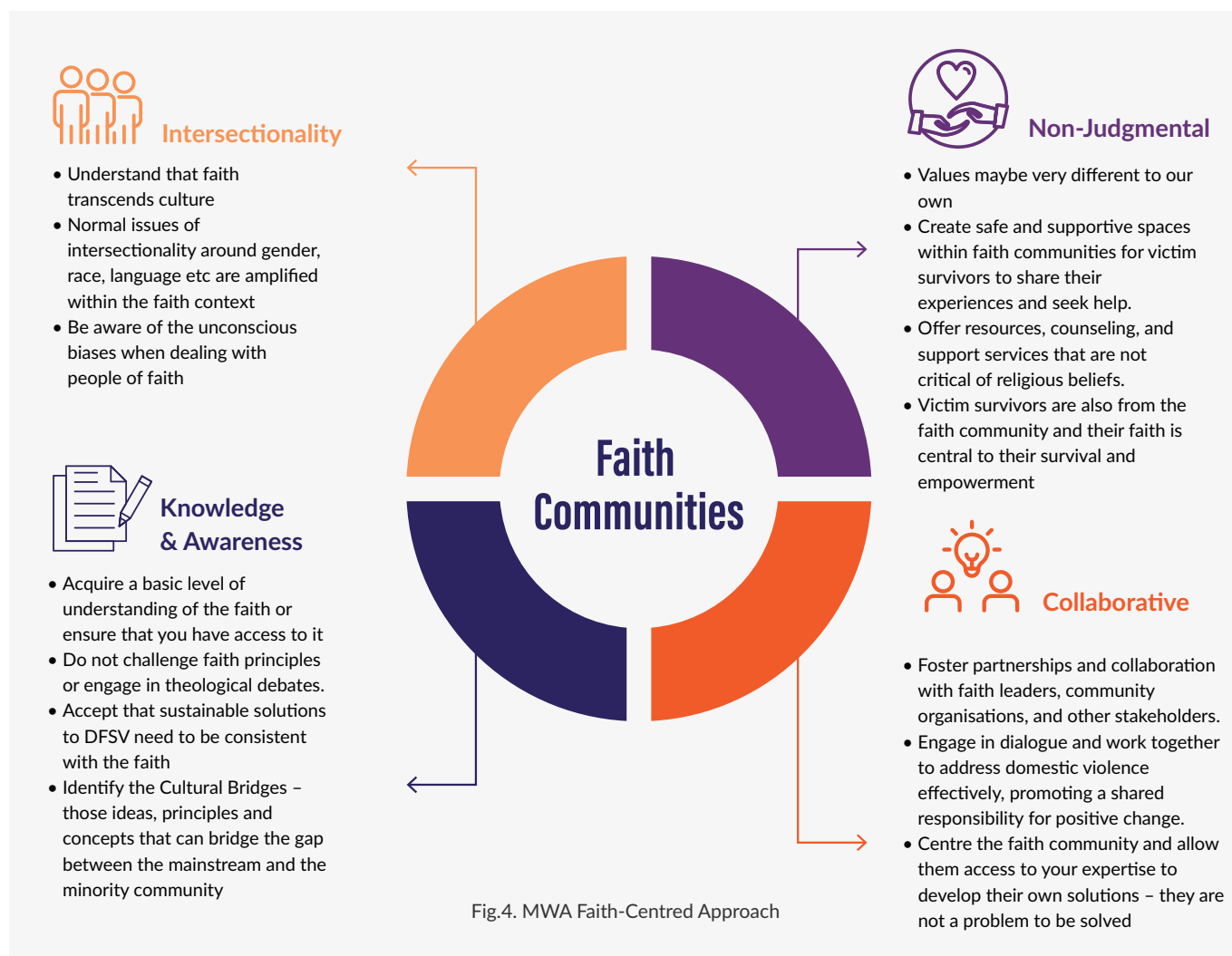


The above model encompasses several key characteristics that collectively contribute to a comprehensive approach to understanding, respecting, and integrating cultural diversity within the organisational framework. This model is designed to enhance cultural competence across various aspects of the organisation. In Part 3 of this guide, we provide more detail on each of the above factors.

Incorporating these characteristics into an organisation’s framework lays the foundation for an inclusive and culturally competent approach. By valuing diversity, integrating cultural understanding, and consistently seeking feedback, the organisation becomes better equipped to

provide services that resonate with its diverse clientele while fostering a harmonious and inclusive environment.

However, as intimated above, being culturally competent is, while necessary, insufficient when engaging with faith communities. For all the reasons we have outlined earlier, organisations need to go beyond ‘cultural competence’ and operate in a ‘faith centric’ way. To this end, MWA has developed a model illustrated in Figure 4 below – A Faith-Centred Approach.



The Faith-Centred Approach for working with faith communities is rooted in understanding, respecting, and engaging with the complexities of faith-based identities. This approach recognises the unique challenges and opportunities within the intersection of faith, culture, and diverse identities, and emphasises the importance of collaboration, non-judgmental support, and cultural awareness.

This Faith-Centred Approach respects the inherent diversity within faith communities and encourages a respectful, collaborative, and culturally aware engagement with these communities.

By recognising the significance of faith, valuing different perspectives, and building bridges of understanding, organisations can effectively address challenges like domestic violence while upholding the values and beliefs of the faith communities they work with. As with the MWA Competency Model, Part 3 of the Guide contains more detailed information on the Faith-Centred Approach.

Bridging Home & Host Cultures

As we note above, one of the key principles for working with faith communities is our ability to bridge understanding of the culture and beliefs within the faith group and that of the mainstream society. This bridging exercise is crucial from a number of perspectives.

DFSV is a pervasive issue that affects individuals across different cultures and communities, including minority faith communities. To effectively address this problem, it is crucial to bridge the gap between mainstream cultures, referred to as the host cultures, and minority community cultures, known as the home cultures. By fostering understanding and collaboration between these two spheres, we can create an environment that actively prevents DFSV within minority faith communities.

Increasing Awareness and Understanding

One of the primary reasons for bridging the gap between host and home cultures is to enhance the awareness and understanding of members within the faith community. DFSV is often influenced by cultural norms and gender dynamics that may be unique to specific minority faith communities. By facilitating dialogue and education, we can ensure that individuals within these communities have a comprehensive understanding of gendered violence and the underlying drivers of family and domestic violence (DFSV). This knowledge equips them to identify and address issues within their own communities and spheres of influence.

Through awareness programs, workshops, and community engagement, members of minority

faith communities can gain insights into the various forms of DFSV, its impact on individuals and families, and the available support services. By empowering individuals with this knowledge, they are better equipped to challenge harmful cultural practices, promote gender equality, and foster healthier relationships within their communities. Ultimately, this increased awareness and understanding contribute to a more informed and proactive approach to addressing domestic violence.

Engagement with the Mainstream Sector

Bridging the gap between host and home cultures also enables members of minority communities to engage with the mainstream sector on issues of DFSV from an informed perspective. Oftentimes, minority faith communities face barriers that prevent them from participating fully in broader societal efforts to combat DFSV. These barriers may include language barriers, cultural misunderstandings, and limited access to resources.

By facilitating communication and understanding between minority communities and the mainstream sector, we can create opportunities for collaboration and partnership. It is essential to ensure that the unique cultural and religious values of minority faith communities are respected and taken into account when designing intervention programs and support services. By involving members of minority communities in the decision-making processes and empowering them to contribute positively, we can create solutions that align with their values and are effective in preventing domestic violence.



Fig.5 Principles for Engaging Faith Communities

Principles Involved in Bridging the Gap

Several principles are integral to successfully bridging the gap between host and home cultures in the context of preventing DFSV:



Cultural Competence & Faith-Centred

Professionals and organisations working in this field must develop cultural competence and be faith-centred to understand and respect the unique characteristics, values, and needs of minority faith communities. This involves ongoing education, self-reflection, and collaboration with community leaders and organisations.



Community Engagement

Effective engagement with minority faith communities requires building trust, establishing meaningful relationships, and involving community members in the planning and implementation of prevention strategies. This approach ensures that interventions are culturally sensitive and community driven.



Cross-Cultural Education and Awareness

Providing comprehensive education and awareness programs within both minority faith communities and the mainstream sector is crucial. These programs should focus on the dynamics of domestic violence, cultural and religious contexts, and the available support services to empower individuals to take action.



Empowerment and Capacity Building

Empowering individuals within minority faith

communities to challenge harmful cultural practices, promote gender equality, and foster healthier relationships is vital. Capacity building initiatives should focus on developing leadership skills, providing training on conflict resolution and communication, and promoting gender equality within faith-based settings.



Collaboration and Partnership

Encouraging collaboration and partnership between minority faith communities, mainstream service providers, and relevant stakeholders is essential. This collaboration ensures that interventions are holistic, inclusive, and responsive to the needs of diverse communities.



Faith-Centred Policy and Advocacy

Bridging the gap between host cultures and home cultures requires advocating for policies that protect the rights and safety of individuals within minority faith communities. This includes challenging discriminatory practices, promoting gender equality, and addressing systemic barriers that perpetuate DFSV.



Supportive Resources

It is crucial to ensure that minority faith communities have access to supportive resources and services that are culturally sensitive and responsive. This includes accessible helplines, counselling services, safe spaces, and legal assistance. These resources should be available in multiple languages and delivered by professionals who understand the cultural and religious contexts.

Bridging the gap between mainstream cultures and minority community cultures is paramount in preventing DFSV within minority faith communities. By increasing awareness and understanding, facilitating engagement with the mainstream sector, and applying the above principles we can create an environment that actively prevents domestic violence.

It is essential for stakeholders, including faith leaders, community organisations, government agencies, and service providers, to work together in implementing these principles and promoting faith sensitivity and inclusivity.

By doing so, we can build stronger and more resilient minority faith communities that prioritise the safety, well-being, and equality of all individuals within them. Ultimately, bridging the gap between host cultures and home cultures will contribute to the broader goal of eradicating domestic violence in all its forms.



Part 2 – Addressing DFSV through Faith & Cultural Empowerment

Increasing Awareness & Understanding

The level of understanding of the nature of DFSV, and its main drivers, within the Muslim community is comparable to that of the broader Australian society. As such the first part of the Saving FACE program was to increase the awareness and understanding of DFSV within the Australian Muslim community. This is being done through social media campaigns and awareness sessions conducted both on-line and in person. To assist the sector in its engagement with Muslims in this space, below is a summary of the content that has formed this education effort.

What is DFSV?

Domestic, Family and Sexual Violence is a crime. Although there is not one nationally or internationally agreed definition it is important to acknowledge that these types of violence affect people of all cultures, ages and socio-economic backgrounds, but predominantly affect women and children.

DFSV sits within the broader context of violence and at the intersections of violence from a partner, violence from a family member, sexual violence and institutionalised abuse (see Figure 6).



Figure 6: Domestic, Family and Sexual Violence | Source: AIHW (2019)

DFSV, for this project, sits within the below definitions drawn from the 2022-32 National Action Plan ¹⁶:

- **Intimate partner violence**, also commonly referred to as 'domestic violence', refers to any behaviour within an intimate relationship (including current or past marriages, domestic partnerships or dates) that causes physical, sexual or psychological harm.
- **Family violence** is a broader term than domestic violence, as it refers not only to violence between intimate partners but also to violence perpetrated by parents (and guardians) against children, between other family members and in family-like settings. This includes for example elder abuse, violence perpetrated by children or young people against parents, guardians or siblings, and violence perpetrated by other family members such as parents-in-law.
- **Sexual violence** refers to sexual activity that happens where consent is not freely given or obtained, is withdrawn or the person is unable to consent due to their age or other factors. It occurs any time a person is forced, coerced or manipulated into any sexual activity.
- **'Gender-based violence'** refers to violence that is used against someone because of their gender. It describes violence rooted in gender-based power inequalities, rigid gender norms and gender-based discrimination¹⁷.

¹⁶ https://www.dss.gov.au/sites/default/files/documents/11_2022/national_plan_to_end_violence_against_women_and_children_2022-2032.pdf p.37

¹⁷ Ibid p.36

¹⁸ https://anrowsdev.wenginepowered.com/wp-content/uploads/2019/02/ANROWS_VAW-Accurate-Use-of-Key-Statistics.1.pdf

The Prevalence of Domestic, Family and Sexual Violence

Below are some statistics, by no means exhaustive, to demonstrate the prevalence of DFSV and the gendered nature of this crime.

As reported by ANROWS¹⁸:

- Approximately 30% of women experience physical or sexual violence.
- Approximately 25% of women in Australia have experienced at least one incident of violence by an intimate partner.
- Approximately 30% of women in Australia have experience physical or sexual violence by a man they know.
- On average 1 woman a week is killed by a partner or former partner in Australia.

For more quick statistics see: ourwatch.org.au/quick-facts/

Gender Inequality

Gender inequality is always influential as a driver of violence against women, but it is not experienced in the same way by every woman. The strongest predictor of aggressive and violent behaviour towards women is a man's attitudes towards women and gender equality.

Gender inequality also intersects with other forms of structural inequality and oppression including racism, classism, ableism, homophobia and colonisation. It has historical roots in laws or policies formally constraining the rights and opportunities of women. It is maintained through more informal ways. These include:

- social norms such as the belief that women are best suited to care for children.
- practices such as differences in childrearing practices for boys and girls
- structures such as pay differences between men and women.

For more information on what is gender inequality and the connection with DFSV refer to the Our Watch Change The Story framework.¹⁹

¹⁹ <https://www.ourwatch.org.au/change-the-story/>

Types of Violence

Any form of emotional, physical, psychological, sexual abuse and the improper treatment of women is prohibited and not accepted in Islam. Islam clearly disallows family violence and any form of oppression or abuse. All women and men are protected under Islamic law.

Faith can play a positive role in addressing DFSV, however where societal or cultural practices are incorporated into faith then that very same faith can, unknowingly, be used as a means in maintaining and perpetuating DFSV. It is fundamental that we men, and broader society, understand the various forms of violence and how they are interrelated.

Figure.7 below sets out the different types of violence and it should be acknowledged that often abusive tactics correspond with more than one category.

For further information on the different types of violence see the factsheets in the below link:

<https://www.dcp.wa.gov.au/CrisisAndEmergency/EDV/Pages/Whatisfamilyanddomesticviolence.aspx>



Drivers of Violence

As mentioned above gender inequality is the most influential driver of violence. The broad social context of gender inequality produces specific gendered drivers of violence against women.

These include:

Controlling

When men control decisions and resources in the home, workplace or community, they have an opportunity to abuse power with violence, while women have less power to stop it, call it out, or leave.

Rigid Gender Roles

Strict ideas about women and men's roles, identities and relationships can contribute to a culture that supports violence. When male dominance is normalised, violence can be used to 'punish' women who don't conform to expected roles.

Disrespect

When aggression and disrespect towards women are seen as natural parts of being 'one of the boys', it is more likely violence towards women will be excused by the perpetrators, their peers and the wider community.

Condoning

Attitudes, words and actions that trivialise, make light of, or justify, violence against women, allow people to think violence is acceptable or excusable.

For more information see:

ourwatch.org.au/the-issue/

Gender inequity and violence against women manifests itself in many ways in society. Here are some examples of how the drivers of violence against women impact on women within the Muslim community:

- Women being forced into becoming a second or third wife.
- Forced and early marriage.
- Marriage without knowledge that the husband has other wives.
- Denial of a marriage contract or marriage contract not being recognised.
- Denial of inheritance.
- Denial of access to mahr (dowry).
- Forcing a woman to abort unwanted children especially female fetuses.
- Female genital mutilation.

The above is not an exhaustive list but simply illustrates how some cultural norms that have become accepted within the Muslim community may be forms of violence, there are others that you may be able to think of yourselves.

Addressing the Drivers of Violence

Our Watch's 'Change the Story framework' provides five essential and five supporting actions that are required to address the factors that drive or reinforce violence against women. The five essential actions are:

1. Challenge condoning of violence against women.
2. Promote women's independence and decision-making in public life and relationships.
3. Foster positive personal identities and challenge gender stereotypes and roles.
4. Strengthen positive, equal and respectful relationships between and among women and men, girls and boys.
5. Promote and normalise gender equality in public and private life.

And the supporting actions are:

1. Challenge the normalisation of violence as an expression of masculinity or male dominance.
2. Prevent exposure to violence and support those affected to reduce its consequences.
3. Address the intersections between social norms relating to alcohol and gender.
4. Reduce backlash by engaging men and boys in gender equality, building relationships skills and social connections.
5. Promote broader social equality and address structural discrimination and disadvantage.

These actions are important and in the Saving FACE framework outlined below we demonstrate how it maps back against these.

The places where DFSV primary prevention can and should take place include:

- education and care settings for children and young people
- universities, TAFEs and other tertiary education institutions
- workplaces, corporations and employee organisations
- sports, recreation, social and leisure spaces
- the arts
- health, family and community services
- faith-based contexts
- media
- popular culture, advertising and entertainment
- public spaces, transport, infrastructure and facilities
- legal, justice and corrections contexts

Addressing DFSV should be action-based and we should all take responsibility within the different environments we live, work and socialise in.

Actions that we should focus on include:

- Focus on addressing discrimination and inequality across norms, practices and structures. Remember, the systems that drive gender inequality also drive other forms of discrimination and inequality
- Reflect on your own biases - conscious and unconscious
- Consider your assumptions about the people you intend to reach with your work
- Make sure your work is inclusive and responsive to diversity
- Learn from people who experience multiple forms of discrimination
- Build partnerships and alliances
- Support or engage in specific and intensive effort

Further information on the full content of the education and awareness sessions can be provided to organisations or practitioners who are interested.

The Saving Face Principles & Framework

Overview

While DFSV is not solely perpetrated by men, the statistical reality is that by far and away the majority of such incidents are. As such, Saving Face is a project specifically aimed at engaging with men to be the catalyst for change in their families, communities and surroundings. Additionally, men of faith, regardless of denomination, are no more likely to commit such

acts than any other group of men. Again, the statistics clearly demonstrate this – and yet the urban myth of such violence being more prevalent in faith communities persists and even more so when one considers the Muslim community.

In responding to the problem of DFSV within the Muslim community, practitioners often fall into the hazard of thinking they need to challenge the perpetrators faith itself to get any outcome. There are many problems with this, but two in particular are of note and relevant for this discussion.

Firstly, in many cases, this is based on the misconceptions of the Islamic faith that the practitioner themselves has and which are then mistakenly assumed to be the underlying cause and, secondly, by challenging the very beliefs of the individual the practitioner is immediately establishing an adversarial relationship with the perpetrator who would now feel that their whole value system is being challenged. Neither of these scenarios is going to produce a positive outcome for either the victim or the perpetrator.

The Saving FACE project, as has been stated previously, seeks to challenge this and demonstrate that the Islamic faith itself has within it the framework to respond to this societal problem and using a framework that is grounded in their very own values system, using language, phrases and symbols familiar to them, has the best chance of achieving sustainable change with men of the Islamic faith.

Islam places a great deal of importance on the family unit and the health of the community. Many of the principles within traditional Islamic teachings are concerned with the individual forgoing things at the personal level in favour of those that will benefit others, particular their family and the community. Individual satisfaction or pleasure is linked to pleasing Allah (SWT)

rather than worldly matters.

In identifying a framework within the faith that can underpin a response to DFSV these notions of key relationships become critical. In identifying what they are, establishing their religious validity and importance, and exploring the impact this then has on gender relations, what begins to emerge is a framework that is both sound in terms of the faith itself and consistent with societal norms in regard to DFSV.

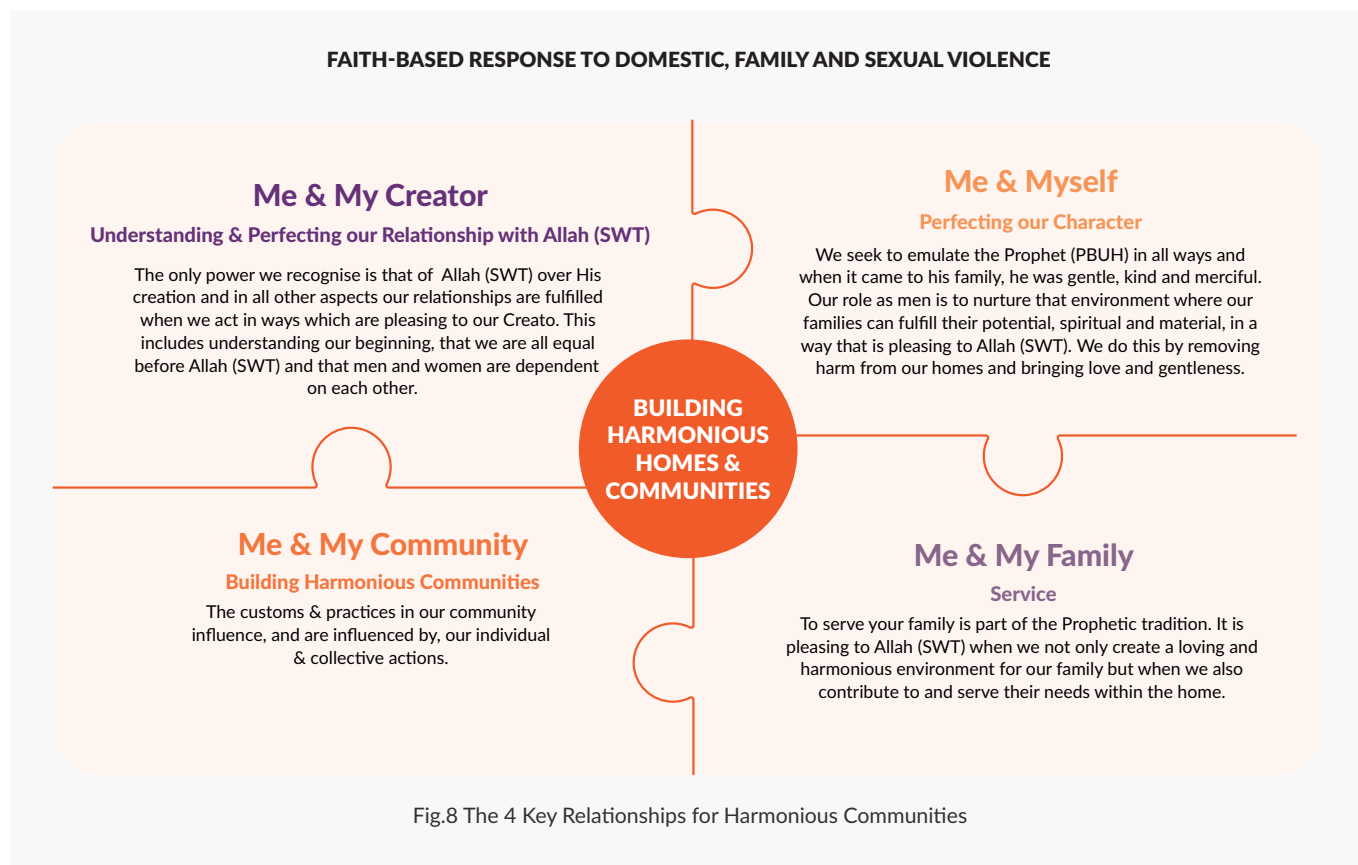
Building Harmonious Homes & Communities

At the heart of responding to family violence from an Islamic perspective lies a comprehensive understanding of human interactions, centred around four pivotal relationships as shown in Figure 8 below.

These are:

- a person's connection with Allah (SWT).
- their relationship with themselves.
- their family bonds, and
- their integration within the broader community.

Islam provides a guiding framework that interweaves these relationships, nurturing a holistic approach to addressing and preventing family violence.



Me & My Creator - Understanding & Perfecting our relationship with Allah (SWT)

The only power we recognise is that of Allah (SWT) over His creation and in all other aspects our relationships are fulfilled when we act in ways which are pleasing to our Creator. This includes understanding our beginning, that we are all equal before Allah (SWT) and that men and women are dependent on each other.

There is no question that Islam takes a different approach to gender equality than western society generally. This does not mean, however, that the religion promotes a notion of one gender being superior to another. Equality of individuals, male and female, is still a central component of the faith and our framework and principles seek to strip away the influences that have been absorbed by individuals from their own cultures.

When one understands their relationship with their Creator, Allah (SWT), and what this means not just for them personally but also for the people around them, then the notion of equality becomes a foundational part of their value system.

Me & Myself - Perfecting my own character

We seek to emulate the Prophet (PBUH) in all ways and when it came to his family, he was gentle, kind and merciful. Our role as men is to nurture that environment where our families can fulfill their potential, spiritual and material, in a way that is pleasing to Allah (SWT). We do this by removing harm from our homes and bringing love and gentleness.

As Muslims we strive to be as he was in all things and in all ways. Aisha (RA), the wife of the Prophet (PBUH), on being asked to describe the character of the Prophet said words to the effect that he was the walking Quran. By this she meant that he embodied the Quran, the Divine Decree, in all his words and actions. From this we know that if we look to his example of how to act and behave then we are fulfilling our own purpose of being pleasing to Allah (SWT).

So it becomes obligatory upon us to learn how the Prophet (PBUH) behaved with his family and acted towards them. Was he harsh or oppressive? Was there ever an occasion when he acted violently towards any of them? These are the examples we look to in understanding what Islam tells us is our obligation to our own families.

Me & My Family - Service

To serve your family is part of the Prophetic tradition. It is pleasing to Allah (SWT) when we not only create a loving and harmonious environment for our family but when we also contribute to and serve their needs within the home.

To lead in Islam is to be a humble servant. Abu Bakr (ra), the first of the Righteous Caliphs, when he first addressed the Muslims after being chosen as Caliph said:

“O people, I have been given authority over you, yet I am not the best of you. If I do well, give me your support, and if I do wrong, set me right. The weak amongst you shall be strong in my eyes, until I secure his rights, Insha’Allah; and the strong amongst you shall be weak in my eyes, until I wrest from him the rights of others....Obey me as long as I obey Allah and His messenger, and if I disobey Allah and His Messenger then you owe me no obedience.”

It is reported that Uthman bin Affan said, *“A family man’s actions are presented together with that of a Mujahid in the court of Allah”.*

Me & My Community - Building Harmonious Communities

The customs & practices in our community influence, and are influenced by, our individual & collective actions.

As Muslims we strive to be in our private lives the same as we are in our public ones. Inevitably, how we behave towards our families will be reflected in our actions within the community and vice versa. If we seek to make our homes places of harmony and goodwill then that obligation extends to all aspects of society and communal life as well. This is clearly embodied in the Quran where it is said:

“Let there arise out of you a group of people inviting to all that is good (Islam), enjoining Al-Ma’roof (i.e.all that Islam orders one to do) and forbidding Al-Munkar (all that Islam has forbidden). And it is they who are the successful”²⁰

Enjoining what is good (al-ma’roof) and forbidding what is evil (al-munkar) is one of the most important Islamic duties, indeed it is the noblest and most sublime. The Prophet (PBUH) in a is reported to have said:

“Whosoever of you sees an evil, let him change it with his hand; and if he is not able to do so, then [let him change it] with his tongue; and if he is not able to do so, then with his heart – and that is the weakest of faith.”²¹

This is a clear admonition to all of us not to stand by and allow injustice, oppression, or evil take place without responding in some way.

The Saving FACE framework underscores the inseparable connection between spirituality, individual well-being, familial harmony, and community cohesion. It delves into the ways in which these relationships can act as powerful agents of change, enabling individuals to break the cycle of violence and move towards healing, reconciliation, and growth.

By recognising that a harmonious family and community are predicated upon the strength of these foundational relationships, we can cultivate an approach that goes beyond mere mitigation and instead aims for sustainable, positive change.

20 [Quran 3:104]

21 Sahih Muslim

The Islamic Family Cycle

The above key relationships both inform, and are informed by, six themes under which the principles of the framework emerge. The themes below build on the teachings central to the above relationships, expand on them and focus more specifically on the family unit and by extension the community.

Figure 9 below shows these themes and how they are all interconnected. It is important to note that the link amongst relationships in Figure 8 above and the themes below are not linear. This is not a process that one goes through to transform themselves, progressing from one stage to another, but a continuous cycle of engaging in and across all areas with the knowledge that at different points of one's life different relationships and areas will require more or renewed focus.

FAITH-BASED RESPONSE TO FAMILY, DOMESTIC & SEXUAL VIOLENCE

Servant Leadership

To serve your family is part of the Prophetic tradition. It is pleasing to Allah (SWT) when we not only create a loving and harmonious environment for our family but when we also contribute to and serve their needs within the home.

Removing Harm

It is our duty as Muslims to remove harm where we see it in our daily lives and this is even more so within our own homes.

Enhancing Good Character

Our homes are places of love and gentleness. Our role as men is to nurture that environment where our families can fulfill their potential, spiritual and material, in a way that is pleasing to Allah (SWT)

Our Beginning

The beginning of the creation of human beings, with Adam and Eve, serves as the start of the establishment of a functional family. Eve was created from Adam, and is the mother of all human beings after her. A husband must recognise the elevated status of his wife.

We are Equal before Allah (SWT)

The only thing that distinguishes one human being from another is their piety. There is no superiority in one gender over another in the eyes of Allah (SWT).

We Need Each Other

Men and women are connected and dependent on each other to fulfill their potential. Without women, there is no man. And without men, there is no woman.



Fig.9 The Islamic Family Cycle

Our Beginning

In addition to the points in the previous section it is important to understand that the beginning of the creation of human beings, with Prophet Adam(as) and Hawa (Eve), serves as the start of the establishment of a functional family. Hawa was created from Adam and is the mother of all human beings after her. A husband must recognise the elevated status of his wife.

From the beginning men and women have been connected and are dependent on each other to fulfill their potential. The only power we recognise is that of Allah (SWT) over His creation and in all other aspects our relationships are fulfilled when we act in ways which are pleasing to our Creator.

*O humankind, be conscious of your Lord, Who created you from one soul and created from it its mate and dispersed from both of them many men and women. And be aware of Allah in whose name you ask each other for your rights, and fear the violation of the rights of the womb-relations. Surely, Allah is watchful over you.*²²

We are equal before Allah (SWT)

The only thing that distinguishes one human being from another is their piety. There is no superiority in one gender over another in the eyes of Allah (SWT). While Islam provides different roles for men and women, based on context and circumstances, this does not make one better than the other nor does it proscribe any single individual from fulfilling their personal potential.

The key to piety is perfection of our character

22 The Holy Quran, Surah Al-Nisa' (The Women), 4:1

23 Saying of the Prophet Muhammad, Sunan Ibn Majah, Book of the Orphan's rights Book 33, Hadith 22

24 Quran 49:13

and in respect to our relationships with others the Prophetic history is abundant with examples that show us to be humble and respectful of each other; to not let our emotions take the better of us and to control our anger in particular; and, importantly, that the proper treatment of our families is a moral obligation upon us that goes to the heart of our piety and our pleasing of Allah (SWT).

*"O Allah, bear witness that I have issued a warning concerning those who fail to fulfill the rights of the two weak ones: orphans and women."*²³

"Give her food when you take food, clothe her when you clothe yourself, do not revile her face, and do not beat her." (Hadith)

Allah (SWT) states in the Quran:

*"O mankind, indeed We have created you from male and female and made you peoples and tribes that you may know one another. Indeed, the most noble of you in the sight of Allah is the most righteous of you. Indeed, Allah is Knowing and Acquainted."*²⁴

Piety alone is what distinguishes people in the sight of Allah. The above are just a sample of references from the primary sources of the faith on this issue and they overwhelmingly establish the equality of the genders and that no one should consider themselves better than another merely because of the gender they were born with.

We need each other

Men and women are connected and dependent on each other to fulfill their potential. Without women, there is no man. And without men, there is no woman. Families are at the heart of Muslim

communities and our goal is to create a paradise within the family by emulating the example of the Prophet (PBUH) who was the best to his family. This includes:

- Having a good opinion of each other
- Giving our spouse and children their rights and dues
- Fulfilling our obligation to provide for the family
- Building our familial relationships around love and respect

This principle is further emphasised by the Quranic concept, “*You are a Garment to Each Other*”. The Quran states:

“They are your garment and you are a garment for them”²⁵

The metaphor of garments is used to emphasise the intimate and protective nature of the relationship between husband and wife. Just as garments cover and protect one’s body, spouses are meant to provide comfort, support, and protection to each other. It signifies the idea of closeness, intimacy, and the mutual support that should exist between a husband and wife.

The verse highlights the complementary nature of the marital relationship, emphasising the idea that spouses should be sources of comfort, trust, and concealment for each other. It suggests that husband and wife should be a source of emotional and physical support, providing each other with love, care, and protection.

Furthermore, the metaphor of garments also implies the idea of adornment and beautification. Just as garments enhance one’s physical appearance, spouses are meant to enhance each

other’s lives, bringing beauty, joy, and happiness to their relationship.

Overall, the verse conveys the importance of mutual love, respect, and support within the marital relationship. It encourages spouses to fulfill their roles as protectors, supporters, and sources of comfort for one another, creating a bond that is strong, intimate, and harmonious.

A metaphor which is clearly the antithesis of what is implied in DFSV.

Removing Harm

We seek to emulate the Prophet (PBUH) in all ways and when it came to his family, he was gentle, kind and merciful. It is our duty as Muslims to remove harm where we see it in our daily lives, and this is even more so within our own homes.

The Prophet (PBUH) is reported to have said:

“Do not harm, and do not reciprocate harm”²⁶

Never can any type of harm be justified in a marriage. Your wife, mother and daughters are a trust from Allah (swt), and you as a man will be held accountable before Allah on the Day of Judgement for any acts of oppression and injustice.

Another narration of the Prophet (PBUH) is reported as:

A man said to the Prophet, “*Advise me!*” *The Prophet said, “Do not become angry and furious.” The man asked again and again, and the Prophet said in each case, “Do not become angry and furious.”* (Hadith)

25 Quran 2:187

26 Saying of the Prophet Muhammad, Muwatta’ Imam Malik, Book 36, Hadith 1435

Enhancing Good Character

Our homes are places of love and gentleness. Our role as men is to nurture that environment where our families can fulfill their potential, spiritual and material, in a way that is pleasing to Allah (SWT).

The Prophet (PBUH) is reported to have said:

“Allah is gentle, likes gentleness, and gives for gentleness what he does not give for harshness.”²⁷

And:

“If Allah desires goodness for a household, He brings gentleness into their family. If gentleness was an object, people would not have seen anything more beautiful than it. And if harshness was an object, people would not have seen anything more ugly than it.”²⁸

Muslims are encouraged to be kind and merciful to those on Earth. In the Quran, Allah (SWT) says:

“And We have not sent you except as a mercy to the universe”²⁹

And:

“And of His signs is that He created for you from yourselves mates that you may find tranquillity in them; and He placed between you affection and mercy. Indeed in that are signs for a people who give thought.”³⁰

The Prophet (PBUH) is reported to have said:

“The merciful ones will be granted mercy from the All Merciful. Show mercy to those on Earth, and the One in the heavens will show mercy to you.” (Hadith)

27 Saying of the Prophet Muhammad, Sunan Abu Dawud, Book of Gentleness, Book 42, Hadith 4789

28 Saying of the Prophet Muhammad, Musnad al-Imam Ahmad, Sunan al-Bayhaqi

29 Quran 21:107

30 Quran 30:21

The Prophet (PBUH) is reported to have said:

“I have only been sent to complete good character.” (hadith)

And:

“I am a guarantor of a house in the highest part of Paradise for one who makes his character good.” (Hadith, Sunan Abu Dawud)

All of the above are clear directions to Muslim men as to how they should be, behave and treat their spouses and families. There is no room for DFSV in the character and life of someone who follows these principles.

Finally, on this point, the Prophet (PBUH) is reported to have said:

“Your smiling in the face of your brother is charity, commanding good and forbidding evil is charity, your giving directions to a man lost in the land is charity for you. Your seeing for a man with bad sight is a charity for you, your removal of a rock, a thorn or a bone from the road is charity for you. Your pouring what remains from your bucket into the bucket of your brother is charity for you.” (Hadith, Sunan al-Tirmidhi)

“Your feeding your wife a morsel of food in her mouth is considered an act of charity” (Hadith)

Servant Leadership

To serve your family is part of the Prophetic tradition. It is pleasing to Allah (SWT) when we not only create a loving and harmonious environment for our family but when we also contribute to and serve their needs within

the home. A measure of our piety, and what is pleasing to Allah (SWT), is the benefit we bring to others and none more so than our own dependents.

With respect to our families, the Prophet (PBUH) is reported to have said:

“All creatures are dependent on Allah. The most beloved of creatures to Allah are those who are most beneficial to His dependents.” (Hadith)

Not only are Muslims commanded to be of benefit to those who are dependent upon them but, just as importantly, they are also told to be humble in their service. Serving our families, and being of benefit to them, is not something that we should hold over them or take to place us higher or above them in some manner.

The Prophet (Pbuh) is reported to have said:

“Indeed, all I am is a servant. I sit as a servant sits, and I eat as a servant eats.” (Hadith)

And:

“Charity does not in any way decrease the wealth and the servant who forgives Allah adds to his respect, and the one who shows humility Allah elevates him.” (Hadith)

Specifically in respect to their wives, men are told very clearly that their principal role is to protect and provide. In the Quran, Allah (SWT) says:

*“Men are the protectors and maintainers of women because of what Allah has granted/imposed upon one, rather than the other, and because of what they spend to support them from their wealth.”*³¹

31 The Holy Quran, Surah Al-Nisa' (The Women), 4:34

32 Saying of the Prophet Muhammad, Sahih al-Bukhari, Book 2, Hadith 49

33 Saying of the Prophet Muhammad, peace be upon him. Sunan Ibn Majah Vol. 3, Chapter on Marriage, Book 9, Hadith 1977

And the Prophet (PBUH) has said:

*“You will be rewarded for whatever you spend for Allah’s sake even if it were a morsel of food which you put in your wife’s mouth.”*³²

Our Family is Paradise on Earth

Families are at the heart of Muslim communities and our goal is to create a paradise within the family by emulating the example of the Prophet (PBUH) who was the best to his family. This includes:

- Having a good opinion of each other
- Giving our spouse and children their rights and dues
- Fulfilling our obligation to provide for the family
- Building our familial relationships around love and respect

The Prophet (PBUH) is reported to have said:

*“The best of you are those who are best to their families, and I am the best of you to my family.”*³³

The above key themes and principles that emerge from the traditional teachings of the faith are central to the relationships within families and communities. These themes are interconnected and highlight important principles for creating harmonious and fulfilling relationships.

By embracing these themes and principles, Muslim men can strive to create nurturing, respectful, and harmonious family environments. This approach stands in stark contrast to any form of family and domestic violence, as it promotes

mutual support, respect, and the well-being of all family members.

Mapping the Saving FACE Framework

Overview

There is often a misconception about the incompatibility between religiously based positions and the mainstream when it comes to the issue of preventing DFSV.

This is even more so when we are considering what some consider to be more ‘traditional’ or ‘fundamental’ religions such as Islam. The outputs of the Saving FACE project, we believe, clearly establish that this is not the case. To further illustrate this point, and the fact that the two sets of values can in fact work harmoniously, below we present an exercise that maps the Our Watch Action Statements, previously referred to, with equivalent action statements developed by Saving FACE and which are consistent with, and grounded in, traditional Islamic teachings. Figure 10 focuses on the 5 Essential Actions identified by Our Watch and Figure 11 considers the 5 Supporting Actions.

FAITH-BASED FRAMEWORK MAPPING

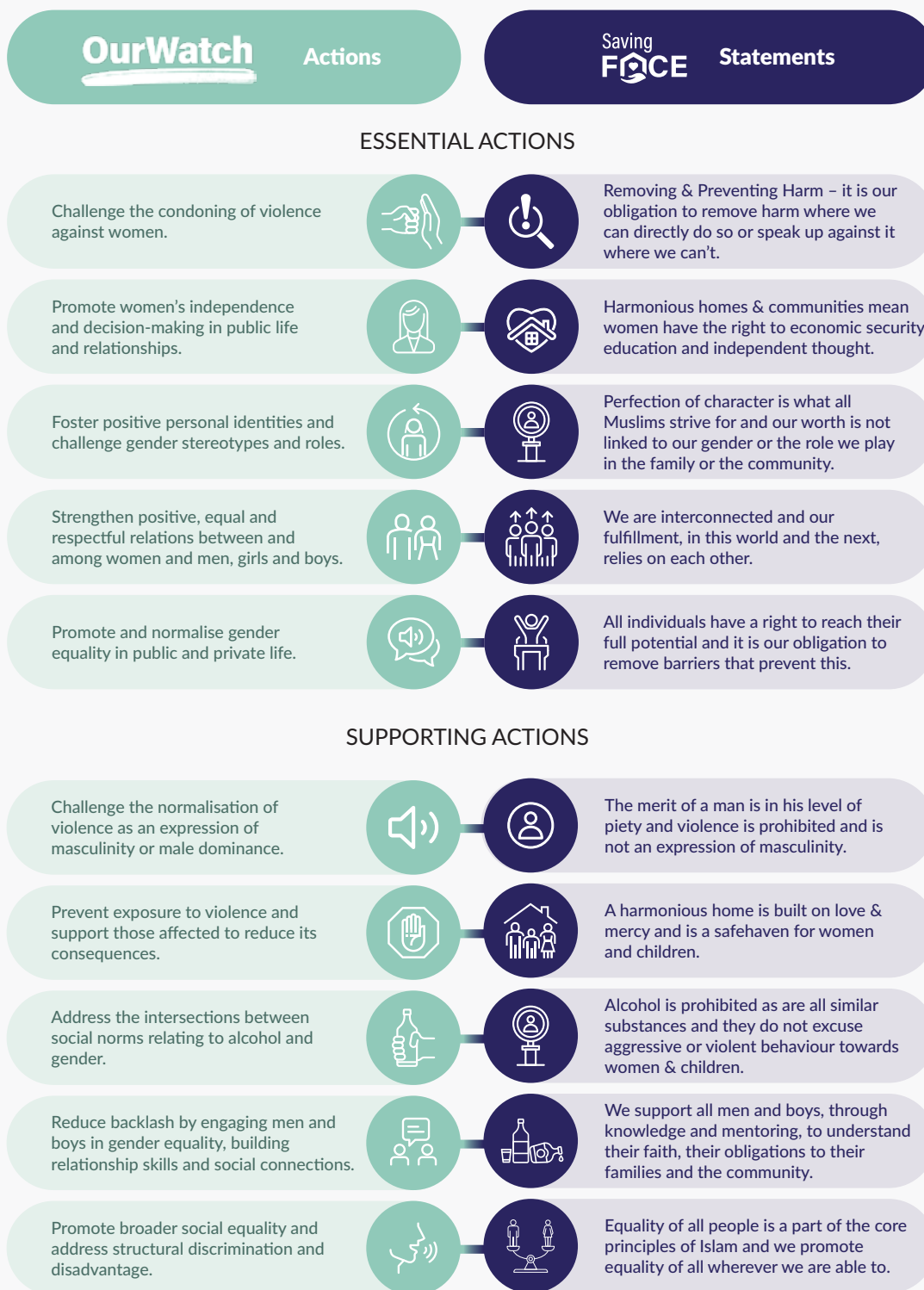


Fig.10 Mapping the 5 Essential Actions + Fig.11 Mapping the 5 Supporting Actions

As with the Our Watch Action Statements, the equivalent Saving FACE statements are intended to be the basis for generating and encouraging men within the Muslim community to take proactive steps to prevent and address the issue of DFSV within their community. These statements are grounded in their own faith values and indicate a path forward for them that maintains their religious identity and also demonstrates how that very identity itself is a counter to the problem of DFSV.

We would encourage all practitioners and organisations within the sector, who work with Muslims (survivors or perpetrators) or the community generally, to use language and statements similar to those above as a means to establish a respectful relationship and one that centres the values of the people they are engaging with rather than being seen, rightly or wrongly, to be imposing an alternative values framework on them.

Finally, on this point, we acknowledge that there are areas where the two sets of values are not aligned as closely as the rest – in terms of Gender Equity and Gender Role Stereotypes. In Part 3 of this Guide we provide detailed information on the Islamic principles relating to the issue of gender, gender equity and gender roles. In reflecting on these matters we encourage all practitioners to revisit the earlier sections of this guide on the principles of engaging with faith communities and the importance of being non-judgemental and respecting the values of those very communities.

Our shared mission is to eliminate DFSV and, as we pointed out earlier, the best chance of succeeding in this aim in a faith community is to utilise, rather than challenge, the principles of the faith itself.

A Prophetic Leadership Model

As mentioned above, a primary area of divergence between mainstream viewpoints and Islamic perspectives pertains to gender roles, and the potential implications for gender equality as a catalyst for DFSV. It becomes crucial, in this context, to delineate between norms and practices within the Muslim community that derive from religious sources and those that stem from cultural factors.

It is undeniable that gender inequality persists within the Muslim community. Nevertheless, our assertion is that such inequality largely emanates from culturally ingrained patriarchal and misogynistic influences. These influences, often remnants of Western colonialism's impact on native cultures, have contributed to the existing disparities.

As professionals engaged in the field of DFSV and working with Muslim communities, it is imperative that we embrace and uphold the values held by the individuals we aim to support. This involves recognising the potential divergence in notions of gender roles between our own perspectives and those within the community.

Within the Islamic faith, it is widely acknowledged that distinct roles are attributed to both men and women within the family unit and, while that is the case, couples and families are given the flexibility to structure their lives in ways that align with their unique circumstances. It is incumbent upon us to acknowledge these prevailing roles and abstain from imposing our personal value judgments.

In this context, it's noteworthy that men are often ascribed the roles of 'Leaders' or 'Guardians' of the family. The crux of the matter revolves around the interpretation of 'Leadership' or 'Guardianship' from a religious standpoint, in contrast to the

practices that often stem more from cultural influences than from faith itself. This distinction holds paramount importance due to the fact that the concept of 'being in charge' serves as a prominent catalyst for a substantial portion of the non-physical violence encompassed within DFSV. This is particularly significant, as numerous men, including those within the Muslim community, grapple with comprehending and reconciling this aspect.

Below we present a model of leadership from an Islamic perspective that recognises the nature of the gender roles within the faith and which also clearly lays out a blueprint for male role modelling that, when cultural influences are stripped away, not only has no room for DFSV but in fact would encourage men to be agents for change in this regard within their own families and communities.

This model is shown in Figure 12 below.

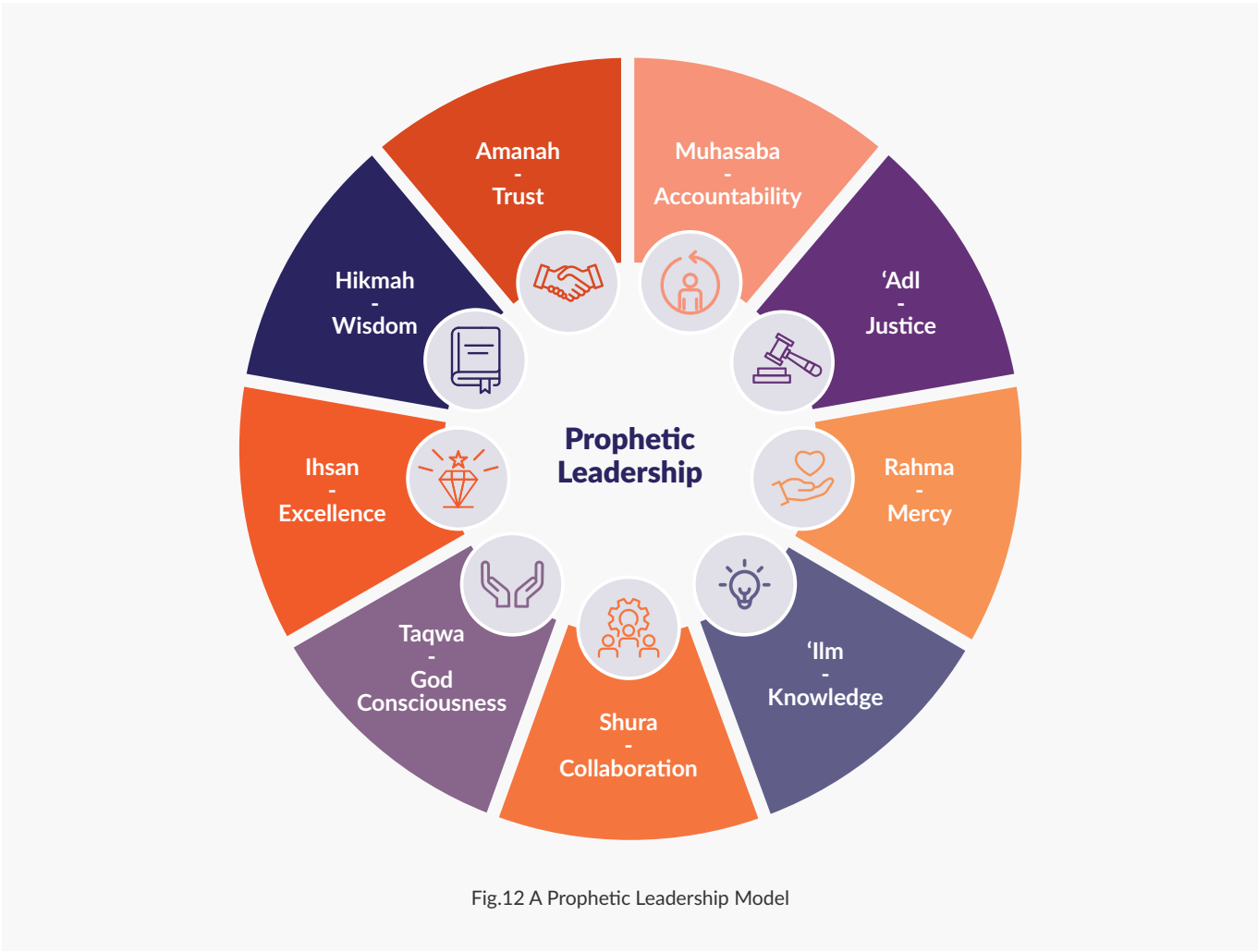
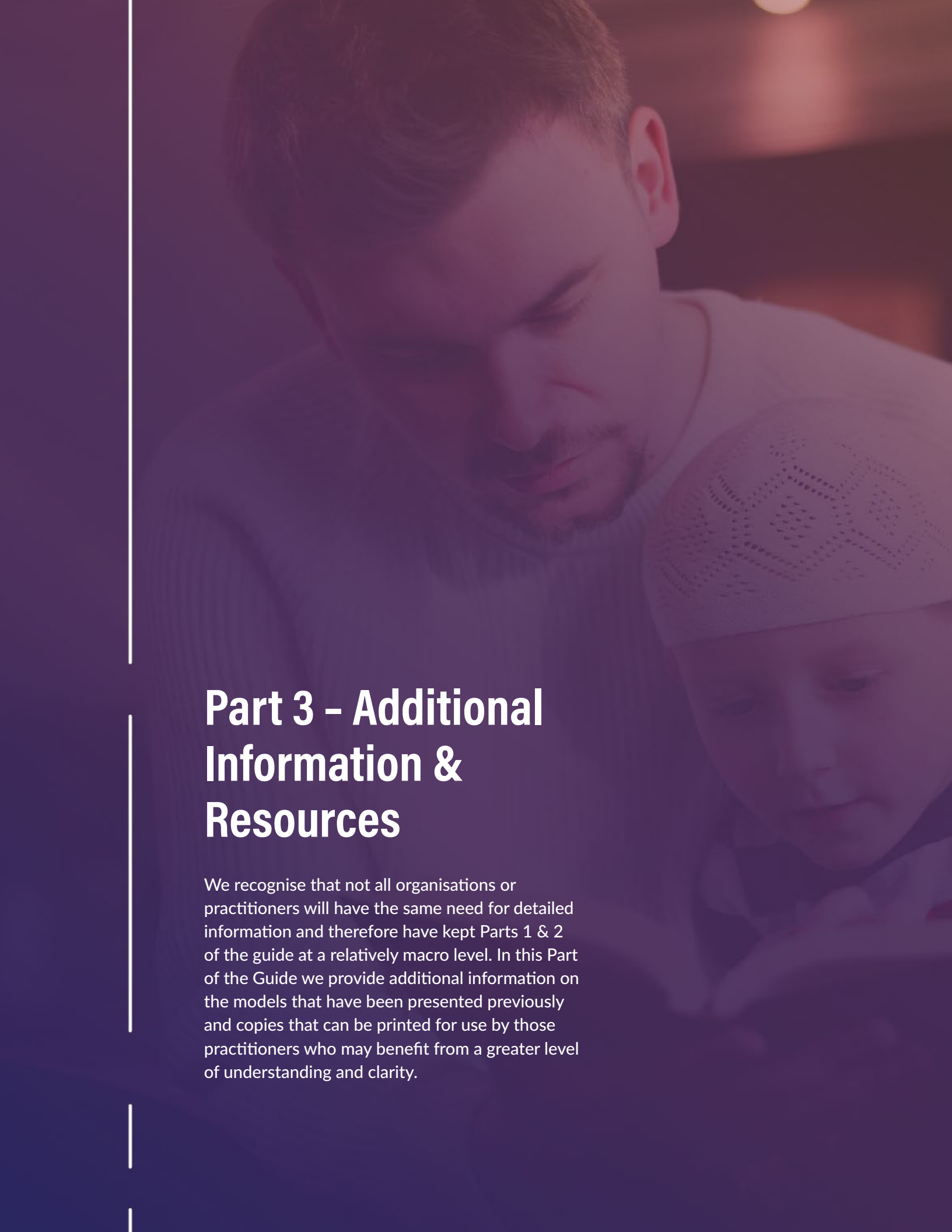


Fig.12 A Prophetic Leadership Model

A detailed explanation of this model and its elements is provided in Part 3 of this guide.

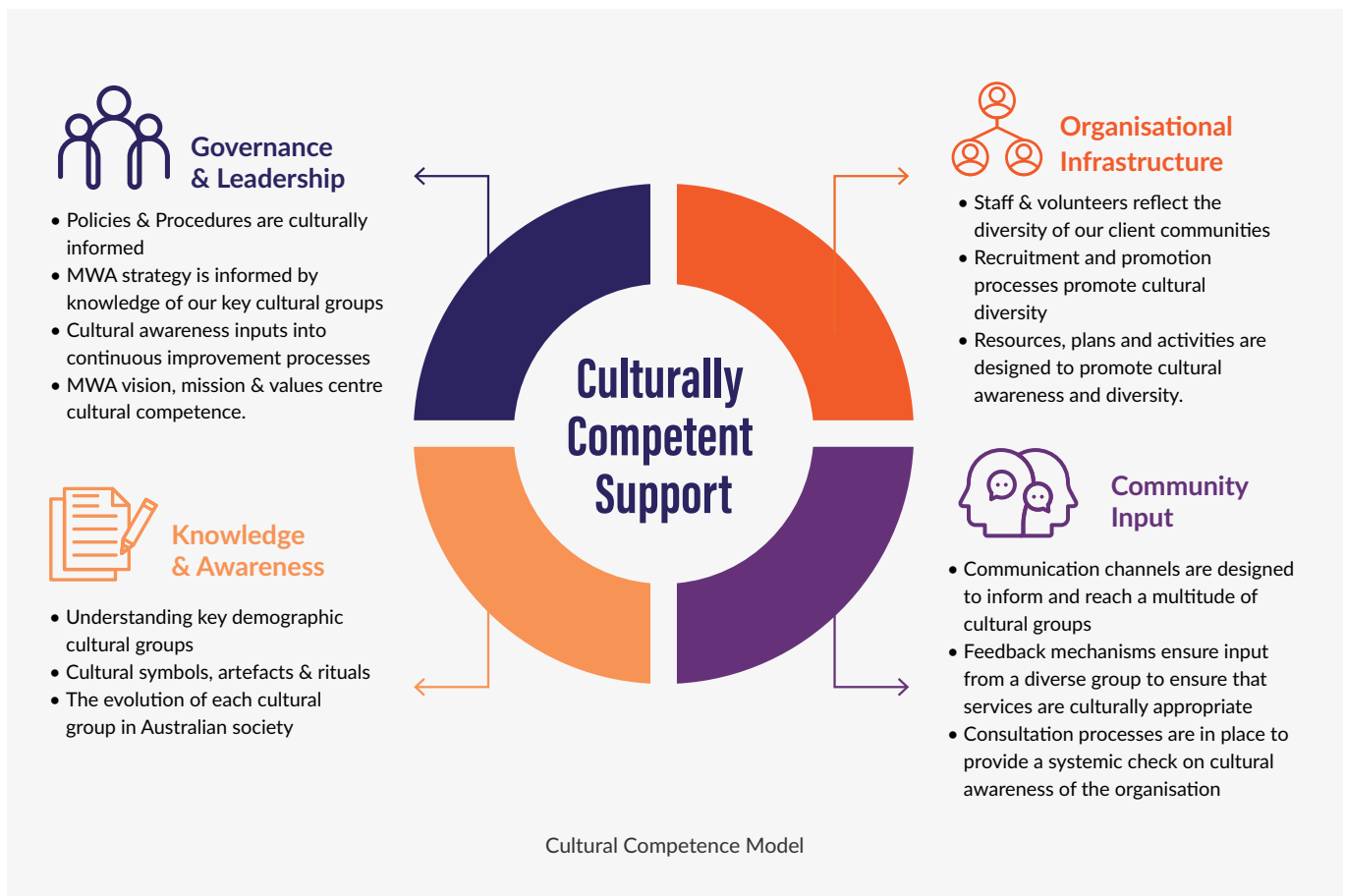


Part 3 – Additional Information & Resources

We recognise that not all organisations or practitioners will have the same need for detailed information and therefore have kept Parts 1 & 2 of the guide at a relatively macro level. In this Part of the Guide we provide additional information on the models that have been presented previously and copies that can be printed for use by those practitioners who may benefit from a greater level of understanding and clarity.

Cultural Competence

In the context of the DFSV sector cultural competence needs to move beyond language and a diversity of workforce. An organisation that lays claim to be truly culturally competent needs to align its whole structure, strategy and operational processes in a way that centres its efforts to be culturally competent. Our model of cultural competence covers 4 key areas. These are outlined below with a brief description of what each entails.



Governance & Leadership

Policies and procedures are developed with cultural considerations in mind, ensuring they are sensitive and respectful of diverse cultural values and practices. The organisation's governance and leadership actively promote and prioritise cultural competence within all operations. The organisation's strategy needs to be shaped by in-depth knowledge of significant cultural groups, allowing the organisation to tailor its approaches effectively.

Cultural awareness is then interwoven into the organisation's processes for continuous improvement, encouraging ongoing learning and adaptation. Feedback and insights from culturally diverse stakeholders drive iterative enhancements to services and practices. This means that not only does the organisation seek feedback but the methods through which it does this are culturally sensitive.

Finally, the organisation's core vision, mission, and values centre around cultural competence, reflecting a commitment to inclusivity and diversity in all its endeavours.

Organisational Infrastructure

Staff and volunteers are selected to reflect the rich diversity of the communities the organisation serves, fostering an environment of shared understanding and representation.

Recruitment and promotion procedures are designed to actively encourage and support cultural diversity within the workforce and resources, plans, and activities are carefully crafted to promote cultural awareness and diversity, aligning with the organisation's overall objectives.

Knowledge & Awareness

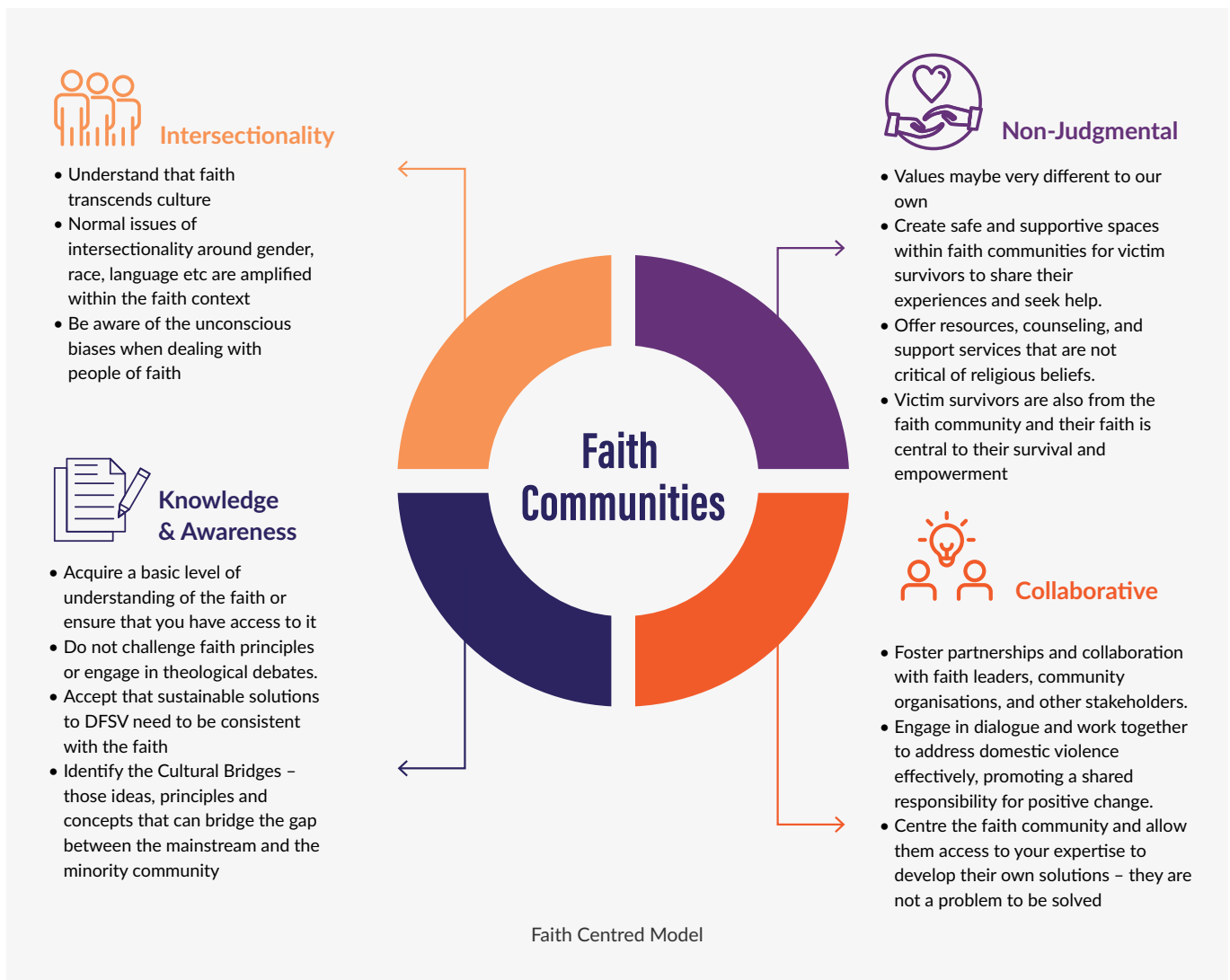
In-depth understanding of key demographic cultural groups informs the organisation's actions, ensuring a nuanced approach to engagement and service delivery. Cultural symbols, artifacts, and rituals are respected and understood, enabling meaningful interactions and avoiding unintentional cultural insensitivity. Knowledge of the evolution of each cultural group within the Australian society helps contextualise current dynamics and informs the organisation's strategies.

Community Input

Communication channels are intentionally designed to reach and inform a wide spectrum of cultural groups, fostering open dialogue and understanding. Feedback mechanisms are established to incorporate insights from a diverse range of voices, ensuring that services are culturally appropriate and responsive. Consultation processes are integrated into the organisational structure, offering systematic checks on cultural awareness and refining strategies accordingly.

Faith Centred Approach

As noted previously, being ‘culturally competent’, while a good starting point, is insufficient when engaging with faith communities. Focusing on cultural competence alone means that an organisation will be ignorant of a complex level of intersectionality that has significant impact on both the problem and potential solutions for DFSV. Below we provide more detail on the MWA Faith-Centred Approach.



Intersectionality

While faith and culture can intersect and influence each other, they remain distinct in their nature and scope. Faith pertains to beliefs about the spiritual and metaphysical realm, rooted in religious teachings, while culture encompasses the diverse practices, traditions, and behaviours that define a particular group of people. Understanding the difference between these two concepts is essential for appreciating the complexity of human identity and the factors that shape individuals and societies.

Culture evolves over time based on historical, geographical, and societal factors, shaping the way people interact, communicate, and express their identities. Faith, on the other hand and certainly within the context of Islam, forms a core set of values or beliefs that are immutable. Understanding, navigating and utilising this distinction is critical for successfully working with minority faith communities in the DFSV sector.

Faith transcends culture, and within the faith context, issues of intersectionality around gender, race, language, and more are amplified. This approach acknowledges and navigates the multi-dimensional identities that individuals within faith communities carry.

Awareness of unconscious biases is crucial when interacting with people of faith, ensuring interactions are free from unintentional prejudices.

Non-Judgmental

A non-judgmental approach is crucial when mainstream organisations, or the sector, work with faith communities because it ensures effective collaboration, religious sensitivity, and empowerment of survivors. By avoiding judgments and stereotypes, organisations create

an environment conducive to open dialogue and trust-building. This approach allows them to navigate potential challenges, such as cultural or religious misunderstandings or resistance to change, more effectively. Ultimately, a non-judgmental stance fosters a more inclusive and respectful partnership that respects the values and beliefs of faith communities while working toward the shared goal of preventing DFSV and supporting survivors.

Recognise that values within faith communities may differ significantly from your own, and approach interactions with openness and respect.

Organisations and practitioners need to create safe and supportive spaces within faith communities for victim survivors of domestic violence to share their experiences and seek help and offer resources, counselling, and support services that honour and respect religious beliefs.

Acknowledge that victim survivors from the faith community often find empowerment and strength in their faith, which can be central to their healing journey.

Collaborative

Forge robust partnerships that transcend organisational boundaries and unite faith leaders, community organisations, and invested

stakeholders. Cultivate an environment of open and constructive dialogue, where all parties share a common goal, addressing DFSV. By working collaboratively, a collective sense of duty and accountability for driving positive transformation is nurtured.

Recognise the wealth of knowledge and real-world experiences within faith communities. Extend an invitation for them to tap into your organisation's resources and expertise, enabling them to co-create solutions that resonate with their specific cultural and religious contexts. This approach not only empowers faith communities to take ownership of the solutions but also ensures that interventions are culturally sensitive and relevant.

Rather than viewing faith communities as problems demanding resolution, approach them as indispensable partners on this journey. Acknowledge their intrinsic value in confronting challenges and actively involve them in the process of devising strategies. By doing so, you bridge the gap between secular and religious perspectives, fostering a truly inclusive and effective approach to tackling DFSV.

Knowledge & Awareness

Gain a foundational comprehension of the faith traditions involved or ensure access to knowledgeable experts who can offer deep insights into the core principles and values underpinning the faith. This understanding is paramount in establishing a respectful and informed approach when collaborating with faith communities to prevent domestic violence.

Maintain sensitivity when navigating faith-related matters. Avoid instigating debates on religious doctrines or challenging faith principles that might inadvertently provoke tension. Instead, foster an atmosphere of mutual respect, focusing on shared

objectives rather than theological disagreements. By steering clear of contentious discussions, you can lay the groundwork for productive partnerships.

For lasting impact, it is imperative that strategies designed to counter DFSV within faith communities seamlessly align with their inherent principles and values. Ensuring congruence with faith teachings not only guarantees their acceptance but also maximises their efficacy. This alignment ensures that interventions resonate deeply within the faith community, making them more likely to be embraced and perpetuated.

To facilitate effective communication and mutual understanding between mainstream initiatives and faith-based approaches, identify "Cultural Bridges." These bridges encompass ideas, principles, and concepts that can bridge the gap between the majority culture and the minority faith community. They serve as conduits for meaningful dialogue, facilitating comprehension of diverse viewpoints. By identifying and leveraging these bridges, communication becomes more efficient and inclusive, enabling collaborative efforts to flourish.

Gender Equity

Overview

Islam is a religion that emphasises justice, compassion, and equality. It is a religion that values both men and women equally and provides them with equal rights and opportunities. Gender equality is a fundamental principle of Islam that promotes the idea that there is no discrimination based on gender and that women and men are equal. In Islam, gender equality is not just a theoretical concept, but it is a practical reality that can be observed in all aspects of life.

To understand the Islamic perspective on gender equality, it is important to examine the social and cultural factors that influenced the status of women in pre-Islamic Arabia. In pre-Islamic Arabia, women were treated as inferior to men and were subjected to numerous forms of oppression, including female infanticide, forced marriages, and restricted access to education and employment.

Islam brought a radical transformation in the status of women, elevating their status and promoting their rights and dignity. The Quran and the Hadith provide a comprehensive framework for gender equality, emphasising the equal worth and dignity of all human beings, regardless of gender.

The only thing that distinguishes one human being from another is their piety. There is no superiority in one gender over another in the eyes of Allah (SWT). While Islam provides different roles for men and women, based on context and circumstances, this does not make one better than the other nor does it proscribe any single individual from fulfilling their personal potential. These roles are, in effect, the default starting position for how a family unit is structured but each family is not only free to but in fact should find a version of this that is best suited to that family unit given their full circumstances, social, economic and familial.

At a personal level it is a fundamental principle within the faith that each individual is deserving of equality of dignity, respect and the opportunity to fulfill their personal potential.

What Does Islam Say About Equality

The Quranic verses that address gender issues emphasise the importance of justice and fairness in all aspects of life, including gender relations. The Quran states,

“Verily, men who surrender unto Allah, and women who surrender, and men who believe and women who believe, and men who obey and women who obey, and men who speak the truth and women who speak the truth, and men who persevere (in righteousness) and women who persevere, and men who are humble and women who are humble, and men who give alms and women who give alms, and men who fast and women who fast, and men who guard their modesty and women who guard (their modesty), and men who remember Allah much and women who remember - Allah hath prepared for them forgiveness and a vast reward.”³⁴

This verse highlights the equal worth and dignity of men and women in the eyes of Allah and emphasises that both men and women are equally responsible for their deeds and actions. Moreover, the Quran emphasises the importance of education for both men and women, stating,

“Read! In the Name of your Lord, Who has created (all that exists), has created man from a clot (a piece of thick coagulated blood). Read! And your Lord is the Most Generous, Who has taught (the writing) by the pen, has taught man that which he knew not.”³⁵

This verse emphasises that education is a fundamental right of all human beings, regardless of gender.

³⁴ Quran 33:35

³⁵ Quran 96:1-5

³⁶ Quran 30:21

³⁷ Quran 49:13

³⁸ Sunan al-Tirmidhi

In terms of marriage, the Quran emphasises the importance of mutual love and respect between husband and wife. The Quran states,

“And among His signs is this: He created for you mates from among yourselves, that ye may dwell in tranquillity with them, and He has put love and mercy between your (hearts): verily in that are signs for those who reflect.”³⁶

This verse highlights the importance of mutual love and respect between husband and wife and emphasises the equal rights and responsibilities of both partners.

The Quran emphasises the equality of all human beings, regardless of gender, race, or ethnicity. In the Quran, Allah says,

“We have created you from a single pair of male and female and made you into nations and tribes, so that you may know one another. Verily, the most honourable among you in the sight of Allah is he who is the most righteous.”³⁷

Similarly, the Hadith also emphasises the importance of gender equality and the protection of women’s rights. The Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) stated,

“The best of you are those who are best to their women.”³⁸

This Hadith highlights the importance of treating women with kindness, compassion, and respect.

In addition, the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) also promoted the education of women and encouraged them to seek knowledge.

He stated,

“Seeking knowledge is obligatory on every Muslim (male and female).”³⁹

This Hadith emphasises that seeking knowledge is a fundamental right and responsibility of all Muslims, regardless of gender. Women have the right to work and to earn their own income, and they are entitled to receive equal pay for equal work.

The Quran states:

“And they (women) have rights similar to those (of men) over them in kindness...”⁴⁰

This verse implies that men and women have equal rights in marriage, but men have additional responsibilities as the head of the household.

Gender Equality in Practice

The Islamic perspective on gender equality is not just a theoretical concept, but it is a practical reality that can be observed in all aspects of life. In Islamic societies, women have played significant roles in the fields of education, politics, economics, and social affairs.

For example, in the early Islamic period, women played important roles in education and scholarship. Aisha (ra), the wife of the Prophet Muhammad (PBUH), was a renowned scholar and jurist who transmitted numerous Hadiths and provided valuable insights on Islamic jurisprudence.

Similarly, in the field of politics, Islamic history provides examples of women who held significant political power and influence. For example, Shajar al-Durr, a queen in medieval Egypt, played a pivotal role in defending her kingdom against invading forces and is regarded as a symbol of women’s empowerment in Islamic history.

In addition, Islamic societies have also recognised the important role of women in the economic sphere. Women have played significant roles as entrepreneurs, traders, and workers in various sectors of the economy.

³⁹ Sunan Ibn Majah

⁴⁰ Quran 2:228

Challenges and Misconceptions

Despite the Islamic emphasis on gender equality, there are still challenges and misconceptions that hinder the realisation of true gender equality in Islamic societies. One of the challenges is the persistence of cultural and social norms that limit women's access to education, employment, and political participation.

Moreover, there are also misconceptions about Islamic teachings regarding women's rights and status, which are often based on misinterpretations of Quranic verses and Hadiths. For example, the concept of hijab, which is often misinterpreted as a symbol of oppression, is actually a symbol of modesty and protection for women.

Gender equality is a fundamental principle of Islam that promotes the idea that there is no discrimination based on gender and that women and men are equal. The Quran and the Hadith provide a comprehensive framework for gender equality, emphasising the equal worth and dignity of all human beings, regardless of gender. Islam has never ascribed or linked the value or dignity of an individual to their gender. Gender, in Islam, is a biological factor that has been determined by Allah (SWT) and while Islam has default roles and duties based on gender these in no way elevate one gender over another.

Despite the challenges and misconceptions that hinder the realisation of true gender equality in Islamic societies, the Islamic perspective on gender equality remains a powerful and inspiring vision that can guide us towards a more just and equitable world for all.

Leadership & Control

As we have alluded to earlier, one of the fundamental tensions between the mainstream and Islamic perspectives is in relation to gender roles and the impact this may have on gender equality as a driver of DFSV. In this regard it is important to distinguish what norms and practices exhibited within the Muslim community are in fact based in religion and what are cultural influences. There is no question that gender inequality exists within the Muslim community, we assert, however, that this is because of the patriarchal and misogynistic cultural influences that have come into play many of which are a remnant of western colonialism influences on the home cultures.

In this section we present a model of leadership from an Islamic perspective that recognises the nature of the gender roles within the faith and which also clearly lays out a blueprint for male role modelling that, when cultural influences are stripped away, not only has no room for DFSV but in fact would encourage men to be agents for change in this regard within their own families and communities.

Before outlining the Leadership model itself there are two issues that we wish to address in more detail that have a direct impact on the way in which men, in their roles as 'leaders' of the household conduct themselves.

The value of interdependence rather than independence

In western society independence is highly valued, however we are actually all interdependent. One of the themes of the Saving FACE Framework was:

"We need each other - Men and women are connected and dependent on each other to fulfill their potential. Without women, there is no man. And without men, there is no woman."

Social interdependence is where people share the same geographic or physical space and are embedded within a social structure where personal actions have consequences for others, therefore demonstrating the linkages between us as social animals. By viewing our actions as interdependent we are better able to determine how we engage with each other to reach shared goals. The following African proverb sums up the power of interdependence:

"It takes a village to raise a child"

Independence, on the other hand, is where one person is not influenced or controlled by others in matters of opinion, conduct, thinking and acting for oneself. Independence means not relying on the aid or support of others and refusing to be obligated by, or to, others.

In reality, we cannot function in society by being independent all the time and we limit ourselves in what we achieve if we do not value the input of others. It requires an acknowledgement that there is a level of expertise which may differ to our own and may challenge our own ideas, but by bringing the different experiences and expertise together we become stronger.

Research shows that there is great difference between the genders in terms of who is more likely to demonstrate independent traits compared to interdependent ones. Although other factors are relevant, gender is the most significant. This is important to consider when addressing gender inequality as men are more likely to be independent, while women are more likely to be interdependent.

- Independence values uniqueness, self-direction, self-promotion, standing out from the crowd and influencing others, autonomous, self-assertive.
- Interdependence values relationships, collaboration, conscientiousness and adjusting themselves to fit into the surroundings. Relationships are integral to the part of the person.⁴¹

Interdependent Leaders will:

- Create goals that need to be achieved through collaboration not independence.
- Work together to solve shared problems. They will take responsibility for things that happen upstream as well (e.g., gender inequality and generational change)
- Declare goals before they have a plan. They will ask questions such as - What is our goal? And invite co-creation for solutions.
- Allow everyone to speak and be heard - Everybody has a voice and everybody's opinions and views matter.
- They will encourage questions and innovative ideas.
- Be open, transparent and vulnerable

The Saving FACE framework takes, and encourages, an 'interdependent leadership' approach which is consistent with the core teachings of the faith.

Consultation vs. Collaboration

This distinction between 'Consultation' and 'Collaboration' is an important one when we are seeking to achieve a shift in how leadership is seen and practiced generally and specifically within the Muslim context. There is an Islamic principle referred to as "Shura" which is normally translated as 'Consultation' but, as with many other terms, translations between Arabic and English are imperfect and inherently include a component of judgement which clearly influences how the translated concept is then understood.

As our understanding of leadership has evolved so should the language we utilise to interpret or translate these concepts. Below we outline the distinction between 'Consultation' and 'Collaboration' presenting our basis for why the latter is the preferred term to use in the Saving FACE leadership model.

Consultation and collaboration are both important processes in decision-making and problem-solving, but they differ in their nature and level of involvement.

Consultation

In theory, consultation involves seeking advice, opinions, and expertise from others before making a decision. It is a process of gathering input and perspectives from relevant stakeholders. In consultation, the decision-making power ultimately rests with the person or entity responsible for making the final decision. The consultee provides recommendations,

41 Guimond, S., Chatard, A., Martinot, D., Crisp, R. J., & Redersdorff, S. (2006). Social comparison, self-stereotyping, and gender differences in self-construals. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 90, 221-242. doi:10.1037/0022-3514.90.2.221.

suggestions, or feedback, but the decision-making authority remains with the person in charge. Consultation allows for diverse viewpoints to be considered, fostering inclusivity and collective wisdom in decision-making. It is often used to gather information, gather insights, and obtain consensus on important matters.

In practice, unfortunately however, the lived experience of the Muslim community has been that whenever they have been 'consulted' it is usually with someone who has set their agenda already, i.e. a preferred course of action has already been determined, and for those who are being consulted there is often the view that it is extractive and there is no assured process that the advice will actually be incorporated into the final decision or interpreted correctly.

Consultation is often seen as a 'box-ticking' exercise rather than a genuine desire to seek the input of the person being consulted.

Collaboration

Collaboration, on the other hand, goes beyond consultation as it involves active participation and joint effort from multiple parties to achieve a shared goal. Collaboration is a cooperative process where individuals or groups work together to collectively create, implement, and evaluate ideas and solutions. It involves shared decision-making, shared responsibilities, and a high level of engagement from all participants. Collaboration requires open communication, trust, and the willingness to work towards a common objective. It fosters a sense of ownership and empowerment among all collaborators, promoting synergy and creativity in problem-solving.

Collaboration begins with a very different

premise to consultation, in that it views the participants as equals. The aim is to create a relational space where ideas are valued and are tested to see if they have been interpreted correctly. A key difference between the two are the power dynamics. A consultative process is very hierarchical where the final decision is clearly made by the one conducting the consultation, while collaboration includes a final decision by consensus.

Some key differences are:

- Collaboration includes the people impacted by the decision while consultation does not include these people in the initial thought processes.
- Collaboration takes more time and is more nuanced.
- Consultation is often based on a formula which has been used previously.
- Consultation is about appearance and includes control and rule setting.
- Collaboration means giving up space and privilege and not playing the hero.

For collaborative to be successful there is a need to create relationships with participants first and build trust. A collaborative process requires asking questions where the people who are to be most impacted are always centred.

The notion of 'collaboration' is more in tune with the Prophetic approach to personal leadership, particularly at the family unit level, where the Prophet (PBUH) fostered an environment within his home that was empowering, authentic and shared responsibility within the home.

A Prophetic Leadership Model

This guide aims to provide valuable insights into leadership from an Islamic perspective. As practitioners in the DFSV space working with Muslims we need to accept and respect the values of those individuals we seek to engage with, and this includes notions of gender roles that may differ to our own. It is an accepted position within the Islamic faith that men and women have roles to play in the family unit and there is scope for couples and families to structure their lives in ways that are best suited to their situation. We cannot deny the default positions or impose our own value judgements on them.

In this regard we note that one of the roles assigned to men is as 'Leaders' or 'Guardians' of the family. The critical issue is what does it mean to be a 'Leader' or 'Guardian' in this context from a religious perspective as opposed to what may occur in practice which is more often driven by culture than faith. This is important because this notion, of being 'in charge', is a key driver for much of the non-physical violence encapsulated in DFSV and is an area that many men, including within the Muslim community, struggle to understand and come to terms with.

By understanding the foundations of Islamic leadership, practitioners can expand their knowledge and incorporate valuable insights into their own practices. This will enable you to be more aware of what may be underlying contributors to what is driving DFSV within the Muslim context and being able to distinguish cultural factors from the religious. In being able to respect and acknowledge an individual's core religious beliefs and values the practitioner will be able to establish that relationship of mutual trust that is critical for any work that seeks to influence cultural practices that are outside the religious norms.

Cultural practices are a function of many factors. The important point being that culture is evolutionary and open to change. Given the Divine origin, particularly in the Islamic context, of an individual's core religious beliefs, these are not open to change from lay people within the faith let alone those from outside the faith.

Below we explore the principles that underpin Islamic leadership in the family context, and which can, and should, form the basis for how men engage with their families and a basis for which primary prevention work in the DFSV space can be built on.

The Prophetic Leadership Model



Trust (*Amanah*)

At the heart of Islamic leadership lies the principle of Trust (*Amanah*). Our families do not ‘belong’ to us nor are men assigned the role of leaders or guardians because they have some inherent rights over those they are to guard and protect. Allah (SWT) has entrusted the family to the male as a trust, to be cared for and to fulfill the purpose for which each member of that family was created. Men are answerable to Allah (SWT) for how this trust is cared for.

Islamic leaders are entrusted with the responsibility of safeguarding the interests of their followers, which demands unwavering trustworthiness, transparency, and integrity in their actions and decision-making processes. By prioritising trust, professionals can cultivate strong relationships built on credibility and reliability.

As with all things entrusted to us, we are obligated to return that trust, in this case our families, to the person who entrusted us with them, Allah (SWT), in a better state than when we were given the responsibility for them.

Accountability (*Muhasaba*)

Islamic leadership emphasises the significance of Accountability (*Muhasaba*) in guiding the growth of the leader and how they are fulfilling their trust. Leaders are urged to engage in self-reflection, continuously evaluate their actions, and hold themselves accountable to a higher moral standard. By adopting a proactive approach to self-assessment and personal development, men can enhance their leadership capabilities and ensure ethical conduct.

When coupled with the notion of Trust we see that this accountability is in fact to Allah (SWT).

Men need to continually be aware that Allah (SWT) is aware of what they are doing and that they will be held to account for how they are fulfilling this role that their Creator has chosen them for.

Justice ('Adl)

The principle of Justice ('Adl) plays a pivotal role in Islamic leadership. Leaders are tasked with upholding fairness, impartiality, and equality in their interactions and decision-making processes. By embracing justice, men can foster an inclusive and harmonious home environment, promoting equity and inspiring trust among their family members.

This notion of Justice is critical in addressing issues of coercive control within Muslim families where control is characterised by being arbitrary and authority enforced purely for the demonstration of power than for any real leadership or valid purpose. Exercise of leadership in this way has no basis in Islam.

Mercy (Rahma)

Islam encourages leaders to embody Mercy (Rahma) in their interactions with others. By cultivating compassion, empathy, and understanding, leaders can nurture a supportive environment where individuals feel valued and cared for. Incorporating mercy into leadership practices contributes to a positive and harmonious home environment.

Allah (swt) is the ultimate leader of Muslims and He has chosen his Divine attribute of Mercy to be the one by which Muslims call upon him more often than any other in their daily lives and prayers. Further, Allah (SWT) told the Prophet (PBUH) that he was sent as a Mercy to all Mankind. From this we understand that the notion of Mercy is an integral part of the

relationship between all of Allah's (swt) creation for Islam teaches Muslims that if they wish to benefit from the Mercy of the Creator then they need to show Mercy to the Creation.

Knowledge ('Ilm)

The pursuit of Knowledge ('Ilm) is highly regarded in Islamic leadership. Leaders are encouraged to seek wisdom, acquire relevant expertise, and engage in continuous learning. By expanding their knowledge base, professionals can make informed decisions, inspire their team members, and contribute to their personal and professional growth. Just as importantly, however, is that Islamic principles of leadership recognise that leaders do not, and cannot, have expertise in all matters that they have leadership over.

Leaders in Islam should be humble enough to recognise that there will be times and issues when others have a greater level of expertise than they and that they should always be open to the input of others. The Prophetic tradition is replete with examples where the Prophet (PBUH), in matters outside the realm of divine revelation, either sought the input of those around him directly or was open to them pro-actively offering their advice and views. He had created an environment where his followers felt comfortable and safe enough to question and contribute. This is the environment that men should be seeking to create in their own households.

Collaboration (Shura)

Islamic leadership promotes Collaboration (Shura) as a vital aspect of decision-making. Leaders are advised to seek counsel, actively involve their team members, and create an inclusive environment where diverse perspectives are valued. By embracing collaboration, leaders can leverage collective wisdom, foster teamwork, and enhance the quality of their decisions.

God Consciousness (*Taqwa*)

Being God Conscious is to be aware of your Creator in all things you do and say and to seek to only do those things which would be pleasing to Him and avoid that which would be displeasing to Him. Leadership in Islam is deeply rooted in God Consciousness (*Taqwa*). Leaders are encouraged to maintain a strong connection with their faith, integrating moral values and ethical conduct into their leadership practices. By nurturing spiritual awareness and upholding divine principles, men can lead with integrity and authenticity.

Excellence (*Ihsan*)

The principle of Excellence (*Ihsan*) sets a high standard for Islamic leadership. Leaders are called upon to strive for excellence in all aspects of their work, going above and beyond expectations. By setting ambitious goals, continuously improving their skills, and fostering a culture of excellence, leaders can inspire those around them. A key part of *Ihsan* in the family context is to see the role of leader as being one that is a continuous journey of improvement and deserving of at least, if not more, attention than what we demonstrate in our professional and community roles. Leadership of the family should neither be taken for granted or treated as a burden of something less worthy than other leadership roles. It requires our full attention, our best endeavours and should be judged by how much those we lead benefit from, and are improved by, our leadership.

Wisdom (*Hikmah*)

Wisdom (*Hikmah*) serves as a guiding light for Islamic leadership. Men are encouraged to seek wisdom from the Quran and the Prophetic traditions, cultivating discernment and sound judgment. By harnessing wisdom, leaders can navigate complex challenges, make wise decisions, and inspire confidence among their

team members.

In the family context there will always be choices open to the leader even after proper collaboration and input from their partners and families. Wisdom is required to balance all the competing interests as well as to ensure that personal interests do not overcome what would be in the greater good for the whole family. Having knowledge and authority as a leader is one thing but the wisdom of knowing what knowledge to apply, and the manner in which authority should be exercised, requires wisdom.

Incorporating Islamic principles of leadership, such as Trust, Accountability, Justice, Mercy, Knowledge, Collaboration, God Consciousness, Excellence, and Wisdom, can greatly enhance the growth of individuals in leadership positions. By embracing these principles, men can create a positive family environment, foster strong relationships, and inspire their family members to achieve collective success. The rich teachings of Islam provide a comprehensive framework for leadership, offering valuable insights and guidance for men striving to excel in their roles.

We can see clearly that where a man lives their life, day-to-day, embodying these principles that there simply cannot be room in their attitudes and behaviours which would lead to DFSV. In fact, if they were true to these teachings, they would do everything in their power to create an environment within their homes, and then by extension their communities, where DFSV would not be condoned or tolerated. As we continue our journey as leaders, let us draw upon the wisdom of Islamic principles and strive to embody the true spirit of leadership within an Islamic context.

Glossary of Islamic Terms and Phrases

Islam	Islam is monotheistic religion considered as one of the 3 Abrahamic faiths. Its followers are referred to as Muslims and the Oneness of Allah (God), Most High and the Prophethood of Mohammed, (PBUH) are at its core.
Islamic Law	The term “Islamic Law” or “Shariah” is a broad concept that has no direct literal translation into English. It is best described as the complete set of Divine rules, prophetic traditions and scholarly positions that govern every aspect of how Muslims live their lives.
Religious Values	Those principles, concepts and behavioural traits that have a foundation and basis in the religious tenets of the Islamic faith.
Spirituality	In the Islamic context Spirituality describes the wholistic relationship or connection a Muslim has with Allah (SWT). It plays out through the daily observance of religious practices and rituals, the perfection of the human character and the embodiment of all traits that are pleasing to Allah (SWT).
Faith	Faith, in this context, is the belief in the Divine and specifically in the Divine as articulated in accordance with the Islamic religion.
Faith Principles	The principles developed as part of this project which are grounded in traditional Islamic theology.
Allah (swt)	Allah is the Arabic word which translates to God in English. The Arabic word is used by both Muslims and Christians to refer to God. Muslims always right the letters ‘swt’ after the name of Allah (SWT) which translate as The Most Exalted or The Most Majestic.
Hadith	This is another term that denotes the Prophetic Traditions
Prophet (PBUH)	This label refers specifically to the Prophet Mohammed who according to Islamic belief is the last of a chain of prophetic messengers that is traced all the way back to Adam and includes Ibrahim (Abraham), Moussa (Moses), and Issa (Jesus). The letters ‘PBUH’ translate as Peace and Blessings Be Upon Him.
Prophetic Tradition	This term describes the sayings and actions of the Prophet (PBUH) which have been collated according to the Islamic sciences and graded as true and as such form part of the overall rules and guidelines of Islam.
Servant Leadership	A modern term that also encapsulates a philosophy of leadership within the Islamic tradition whereby a leader puts the needs and welfare of the follower ahead of his or her own.
Piety	A term used to describe the strength of the connection between a Muslim and Allah (SWT). This is a combination of the level of religiosity as well as spirituality.



Governance & Leadership

- Policies & Procedures are culturally informed
- MWA strategy is informed by knowledge of our key cultural groups
- Cultural awareness inputs into continuous improvement processes
- MWA vision, mission & values centre cultural competence.



Knowledge & Awareness

- Understanding key demographic cultural groups
- Cultural symbols, artefacts & rituals
- The evolution of each cultural group in Australian society



Culturally Competent Support



Organisational Infrastructure

- Staff & volunteers reflect the diversity of our client communities
- Recruitment and promotion processes promote cultural diversity
- Resources, plans and activities are designed to promote cultural awareness and diversity.



Community Input

- Communication channels are designed to inform and reach a multitude of cultural groups
- Feedback mechanisms ensure input from a diverse group to ensure that services are culturally appropriate
- Consultation processes are in place to provide a systemic check on cultural awareness of the organisation



Intersectionality

- Understand that faith transcends culture
- Normal issues of intersectionality around gender, race, language etc are amplified within the faith context
- Be aware of the unconscious biases when dealing with people of faith



Knowledge & Awareness

- Acquire a basic level of understanding of the faith or ensure that you have access to it
- Do not challenge faith principles or engage in theological debates.
- Accept that sustainable solutions to DFSV need to be consistent with the faith
- Identify the Cultural Bridges – those ideas, principles and concepts that can bridge the gap between the mainstream and the minority community



Non-Judgmental

- Values may be very different to our own
- Create safe and supportive spaces within faith communities for victim survivors to share their experiences and seek help.
- Offer resources, counseling, and support services that are not critical of religious beliefs.
- Victim survivors are also from the faith community and their faith is central to their survival and empowerment



Collaborative

- Foster partnerships and collaboration with faith leaders, community organisations, and other stakeholders.
- Engage in dialogue and work together to address domestic violence effectively, promoting a shared responsibility for positive change.
- Centre the faith community and allow them access to your expertise to develop their own solutions – they are not a problem to be solved

BRIDGING THE GAP
Connecting Host & home Cultures
Principles for Engaging Faith Communities



FAITH-BASED RESPONSE TO DOMESTIC, FAMILY AND SEXUAL VIOLENCE

Me & My Creator

Understanding & Perfecting our Relationship with Allah (SWT)

The only power we recognise is that of Allah (SWT) over His creation and in all other aspects our relationships are fulfilled when we act in ways which are pleasing to our Creator. This includes understanding our beginning, that we are all equal before Allah (SWT) and that men and women are dependent on each other.

Me & Myself

Perfecting our Character

We seek to emulate the Prophet (PBUH) in all ways and when it came to his family, he was gentle, kind and merciful. Our role as men is to nurture that environment where our families can fulfill their potential, spiritual and material, in a way that is pleasing to Allah (SWT). We do this by removing harm from our homes and bringing love and gentleness.

BUILDING HARMONIOUS HOMES & COMMUNITIES

Me & My Community

Building Harmonious Communities

The customs & practices in our community influence, and are influenced by, our individual & collective actions.

Me & My Family

Service

To serve your family is part of the Prophetic tradition. It is pleasing to Allah (SWT) when we not only create a loving and harmonious environment for our family but when we also contribute to and serve their needs within the home.

FAITH-BASED RESPONSE TO FAMILY, DOMESTIC & SEXUAL VIOLENCE

Servant Leadership

To serve your family is part of the Prophetic tradition. It is pleasing to Allah (SWT) when we not only create a loving and harmonious environment for our family but when we also contribute to and serve their needs within the home.

Removing Harm

It is our duty as Muslims to remove harm where we see it in our daily lives and this is even more so within our own homes.

Enhancing Good Character

Our homes are places of love and gentleness. Our role as men is to nurture that environment where our families can fulfill their potential, spiritual and material, in a way that is pleasing to Allah (SWT)



Our Beginning

The beginning of the creation of human beings, with Adam and Eve, serves as the start of the establishment of a functional family. Eve was created from Adam, and is the mother of all human beings after her. A husband must recognise the elevated status of his wife.

We are Equal before Allah (SWT)

The only thing that distinguishes one human being from another is their piety. There is no superiority in one gender over another in the eyes of Allah (SWT).

We Need Each Other

Men and women are connected and dependent on each other to fulfill their potential. Without women, there is no man. And without men, there is no woman.

OurWatch Actions

Saving **FACE** Statements

ESSENTIAL ACTIONS

Challenge the condoning of violence against women.			Removing & Preventing Harm – it is our obligation to remove harm where we can directly do so or speak up against it where we can't.
Promote women's independence and decision-making in public life and relationships.			Harmonious homes & communities mean women have the right to economic security, education and independent thought.
Foster positive personal identities and challenge gender stereotypes and roles.			Perfection of character is what all Muslims strive for and our worth is not linked to our gender or the role we play in the family or the community.
Strengthen positive, equal and respectful relations between and among women and men, girls and boys.			We are interconnected and our fulfillment, in this world and the next, relies on each other.
Promote and normalise gender equality in public and private life.			All individuals have a right to reach their full potential and it is our obligation to remove barriers that prevent this.

SUPPORTING ACTIONS

Challenge the normalisation of violence as an expression of masculinity or male dominance.			The merit of a man is in his level of piety and violence is prohibited and is not an expression of masculinity.
Prevent exposure to violence and support those affected to reduce its consequences.			A harmonious home is built on love & mercy and is a safehaven for women and children.
Address the intersections between social norms relating to alcohol and gender.			Alcohol is prohibited as are all similar substances and they do not excuse aggressive or violent behaviour towards women & children.
Reduce backlash by engaging men and boys in gender equality, building relationship skills and social connections.			We support all men and boys, through knowledge and mentoring, to understand their faith, their obligations to their families and the community.
Promote broader social equality and address structural discrimination and disadvantage.			Equality of all people is a part of the core principles of Islam and we promote equality of all wherever we are able to.



Saving FACE

Saving FACE is an initiative undertaken by Muslim Women Australia (MWA) to develop and deliver key prevention activities to encourage men in preventing violence against women and children.

Muslim Women Australia is a representative body for Muslim women working to enrich humanity, advocating for equality and the rights of all women, through authentic leadership based on our Islamic principles.

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AN INITIATIVE OF
MUSLIM WOMEN
AUSTRALIA

