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<b>RESOURCE</b> Culturally Competent Practice With Muslim Clients	<b>TIMEFRAME</b> One class period of 2.5 hours, or two class periods of 75 minutes
<b>BRIEF DESCRIPTION</b>	
<p>This curriculum module focuses on teaching culturally competent practice with Muslim clients and is designed to take up one class period lasting 2.5 hours or two class periods lasting 75 minutes each. Prior to this module, the instructor should devote considerable class time to allow students to discuss their personal values, professional values, and differences related to work with diverse populations. The module begins with students completing three readings before class and composing a brief reflection paper on these readings. Students will discuss their reflections in the beginning of class in small groups. After summarizing these discussions, the instructor will provide a brief lecture on the demographics of Muslims in the United States, core tenets of Islam, and the history of Islam. Then, the class as a whole will discuss this material in relation to social work practice. After the entire class discussion, students will complete a role-play activity in pairs using the knowledge they have gained. The class will end with a discussion and debriefing of the role-play activity. Instructors will provide subsequent feedback to students on their reflection papers. After completion of this course module, students will: (a) be able to identify the core tenets of Islam, (b) be able to discuss the contemporary issues faced by Muslims living in the United States, (c) aim to incorporate spirituality and religion into assessments with Muslim clients as demonstrated through a role-play exercise, and (d) strive to provide culturally competent treatment plans for Muslim clients as demonstrated through a role-play exercise.</p>	
<b>TOPIC ADDRESSED</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Muslims</li><li>• Islam</li><li>• Cultural Competence</li><li>• Religious Competence</li></ul>	
<b>SUGGESTIONS FOR PREPARATION FOR THE FACULTY MEMBER</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Review assigned readings and course materials</li><li>• Prepare to lecture and disseminate a handout on the demographics of Muslims in the United States, core tenets of Islam, and the history of Islam (see Appendix for information)</li><li>• Make copies of the case study to hand out to students</li></ul>	
<b>CONNECTION TO COMPETENCIES/EPAS</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• 2.1.4: Engage diversity and difference in practice</li><li>• 2.1.10(a)-(d): Engage, assess, intervene, and evaluate with individuals, families, groups,</li></ul>	

organizations, and communities

#### ASSESSMENT MEASURES

- Review of students' reflection papers
- Observation of students' discussions of material
- Observation of students' role-play demonstrations

#### RELIGIOUS/SPIRITUAL TRADITIONS or PERSPECTIVES

- Islam

#### HOW TO APPLY IN DIFFERENT SETTINGS

- Assessment course: Focus the role-play solely on assessment and include all areas of assessment in this role-play demonstration
- Family Therapy course: Focus the role-play on a family rather than an individual and incorporate theories related to family therapy
- Communities and Organizations course: Instead of a role-play, have students develop a plan to create a community center designed to support Muslims in the area
- Rural settings: Focus the role-play on needs specific to rural areas, such as the increased need for community supports and outreach

#### READINGS AND OTHER LEARNING MATERIALS

- Reading 1: Carolan, M. T., Bagherinia, G., Juhari, R., Himelright, J., & Mouton-Sanders, M. (2000). Contemporary Muslim families: Research and practice. *Contemporary Family Therapy*, 22, 67–79.
- Reading 2: Haque, A. (2004). Religion and mental health: The case of American Muslims. *Journal of Religion and Health*, 43, 45–58.
- Reading 3: Hodge, D. R. (2005). Social work and the house of Islam: Orienting practitioners to the beliefs and values of Muslims in the United States. *Social Work*, 50, 162–173.
- Case study for role-play: Hamdan, A. (2007). A case study of a Muslim client: Incorporating religious beliefs and practices. *Journal of Multicultural Counseling and Development*, 35, 92–100.
- Additional resources: Islamic Social Services Association. Retrieved from <http://www.issaservices.com>

#### SPECIFIC CONTENT AREAS

- Diversity and cultural competence
- Assessment

- Practice with families

#### RELEVANCE FOR PRACTICE

- Provides basic information about Islam and Muslims in the United States
- Focuses on culturally competent practice with Muslim clients
- Incorporates critical thinking, attends to ethics, and includes a role-play or demonstration of skills

This curriculum module focuses on teaching culturally competent practice with Muslim clients and is designed to take up one class period lasting 2.5 hours or two class periods lasting 75 minutes each. The module begins with students completing three readings before class and composing a two-page reflection paper. In this paper students will provide an analysis and critical examination of each reading. They will also synthesize the material and include at least two questions for discussion at the end of the reflection paper. Rather than clarifying material, the questions for discussion will focus on the application of the material in social work practice.

Requiring students to reflect on the readings before class will ensure that they are prepared for the application and discussion of the material. At the beginning of the class, the instructor should divide the students into groups and give them time (about 15–20 minutes) to discuss the questions they identified in their papers. The instructor should monitor the group dialogue and end this discussion by summarizing the small discussions for the entire class (for about 5 minutes). Additionally, the instructor should collect, read, grade, and provide comments on each of the papers. Grades will depend on how well students demonstrate understanding of the material, critically examine the material, incorporate all three articles into their papers, and provide questions that apply the material to social work practice.

After the small group discussion and summary, the instructor will review (for about 15–20 minutes) and hand out information detailing: (a) demographics of Muslims in the United States, (b) core tenets of Islam, and (c) a brief history of Islam (see Appendix). Afterwards, the

entire class will discuss contemporary issues faced by Muslims living in the United States, including experiences of individual and institutional racism (for about 30 minutes). The instructor can use the following questions to generate discussion:

1. How will you know if an individual identifies as a Muslim?
2. How might one's Muslim identity intersect with other aspects of identity such as race, gender, age, sexual orientation, ability, and so forth?
3. What are some examples of stereotypes about Muslims?
4. How has the perception of Muslims in the United States changed since 9/11?
5. What are some examples of discrimination faced by Muslims living in the United States today?
6. What should social workers consider when working with Muslim clients?

The instructor should ensure that all of the students participate in the class discussion and also provide time for students to identify and discuss any concerns they have about working with Muslim clients.

The subsequent activities will occur after a break or during the second class period, depending on the course setup. Students will role-play a case with a Muslim client. Students will be in pairs for this activity and will begin by reading and making notes on the provided case study from the Hamdan (2007) article (for about 5 minutes). During the first part of the role-play, the identified social worker will complete the spiritual and/or religious component of a social work assessment (for about 20 minutes). The second part of the role-play will include a switch in the social worker and will focus on completing a treatment plan with the client, including creating goals and measurable objectives (for about 20 minutes). This role-play will allow for all of the students to participate in the social worker's decision-making process through the use of "time out." Either student can call a "time out" to discuss what to do in a given situation.

Moreover, the client can stop the role-play to ask the social worker questions about certain choices or to point out his or her observations of the situation. After each group is finished, the instructor should lead the class in a discussion and debriefing of this role-play (for about 30 minutes). The discussion should focus on: (a) students' ease in completing the role-play, (b) what worked and did not work in the role play, (c) what they learned from the role-play, (d) how their experiences fit in with the class readings or handouts, and (e) what they would do differently in future practice with Muslim clients. Because this module includes observation of role-plays, smaller classes will allow the instructor to more effectively evaluate the students. However, for larger classes, professors can evaluate students over time using similar role-plays focused on other populations.

Instructors may want to vary this course module to fit specific groups or courses.

Alternatives to this module are outlined below. One alternative to this module is to have students post their questions and comments on an electronic bulletin board rather than completing reflective papers. This option facilitates increased interaction prior to class, and allows for the instructor to draw from the existing communications between students for class discussions.

A second alternative is for the students to discuss their reflective papers as an entire class. Small groups may be preferable to give each student sufficient time to talk with their classmates. However, an entire group discussion allows exposure of more diverse views.

A third alternative is to allow students to discuss their concerns about working with Muslim clients in their small groups rather than with the entire class. Some students may be hesitant discuss their own apprehensions in the large class setting. Additionally, giving students time to think about and write out specific worries before discussing them may promote a more reflective discussion. The instructor can also address or ease concerns when necessary.

A fourth alternative is to have two students complete the role-play in front of the class. This would allow the instructor to better monitor and provide feedback during the role-play exercise. Additionally, the instructor can stop the role-play when necessary to allow the other students to provide feedback and ideas or to switch students. Instructors who use this alternative should consider possible anxiety or stress experienced by those who act out the role-play in front of the class.

Certainly this module can be modified for other courses or settings. For example, in an assessment course, the role-play can focus solely on the assessment. Rather than just role-playing the spiritual and/or religious part of the assessment, the students can go through the entire assessment. If this module is used in a family therapy course, the focus can be on family interactions and culture. For example, the students can incorporate family theory and techniques into a role-play with an entire Muslim family. A course on communities and organizations should emphasize macro tasks such as completing a needs-assessment, coordinating with religious leaders, or creating a community center. Finally, instructors may want to modify this module based on the university setting (faith-based versus secular programs, rural versus urban settings).

## References

- Appleby, R. S. (2002). History in the fundamentalist imagination. *The Journal of American History*, 89(2), 498–511.
- Carolan, M. T., Bagherinia, G., Juhari, R., Himmelright, J., & Mouton-Sanders, M. (2000). Contemporary Muslim families: Research and practice. *Contemporary Family Therapy*, 22, 67–79.
- Hodge, D. R. (2005). Social work and the house of Islam: Orienting practitioners to the beliefs and values of Muslims in the United States. *Social Work*, 50, 162–173.
- Nadir, A., & Dziegielewska, S. F. (2001). Islam. In M. Van Hook, B. Hugen, & M. Aguilar (Eds.), *Spirituality within religious traditions in social work practice* (pp. 146–166). Pacific Grove, CA: Brooks Cole.
- The Pew Research Center. (2007, May 22). *Muslim Americans: Middle class and mostly mainstream*. Retrieved from <http://people-press.org/report/329/muslim-americans-middle-class-and-mostly-mainstream>.

## Appendix

### Handout Information

This summary of Islam includes three sections: demographics for Muslims in the United States, the core tenets of Islam, and a brief history of Islam.

#### *Demographics for Muslims in the United States*

Some scholars estimate that there are 4 to 6 million Muslims in the United States (Carolan, Bagherinia, Juhari, Himelright, & Mouton-Sanders, 2000) while others put the number at just over 2 million (The Pew Research Center, 2007). According to the Pew Research Center (2007), 65% of Muslims currently living in the United States were born in another country with the majority being from the Arab region. Of the 35% of Muslims who were born in the United States, 60% converted to Islam rather than being born into the faith and about half are African American (The Pew Research Center, 2007). Finally, Muslims worldwide tend to be divided into two groups, Sunni and Shiite. Sunnis make up about 90% of Muslims in the world and 80% of Muslims in the United States (Hodge, 2005).

#### *Core Tenets of Islam*

*Islam*, a word that means submission to Allah, is “more than a religion; it actually provides a framework for human living and development” (Nadir & Dziegielewski, 2001, p. 149). There are two main sources that guide Islam: (a) the Qur’an, God’s revelation to Muhammad, and (b) the Hadith, a compilation of the teachings and traditions of Muhammad (Nadir & Dziegielewski, 2001). Based on these texts, Muslims believe that they should submit to Allah, live a righteous moral life, turn away from evil, and seek eternal life in paradise. Additionally, the Five Pillars of Islam are duties or obligations for all practicing Muslims (Hodge, 2005; Nadir & Dziegielewski, 2001). These are: the Declaration of Faith (*shahadah*),

praying five times each day (*salat*), charity (*zakat*), fasting during Ramadan (*sawm*), and pilgrimage to Makkah (*hajj*). Finally, it is important to note that Muslims traditionally do not eat pork, do not drink alcohol or use drugs, and believe in modesty. To this end, women will traditionally cover everything but their face, hands, and feet when outside the company of close family members, and men will cover themselves from the navel to the knees (Nadir & Dziegielewski, 2001).

### *A Brief History of Islam*

The Prophet Muhammad is the founder of Islam and his teachings have influenced millions over the past 14 centuries (Nadir & Dziegielewski, 2001). A descendent of Abraham, Muhammad was born in Makkah in 570 CE (Nadir & Dziegielewski). At the age of 40, Muhammad reported being visited by the angel Gabriel who instructed him to bring God's message to all people.

Today Muslims typically identify as Sunni or Shiite. Sunni Muslims, who currently make up 90% of Muslims worldwide, recognize all of the first four *caliphs* or leaders who succeeded Muhammad (Appleby, 2002). This Sunni structure of authority began to crumble when the Ottoman Empire was defeated in World War I (Appleby). Currently residing mainly in Iran, Iraq, and Lebanon, Shiite Muslims believe that leadership should have passed directly to Muhammad's relatives when he died and were devastated when their leader, the Twelfth Imam, disappeared in 931 CE (Appleby). Shiites have had no leadership structure in place from 931 until 1978 when Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini became the Shiite authority (Appleby). Today the split between Sunni and Shiite Muslims continues.