



University of
South Australia

Centre for Islamic
Thought & Education

6th Annual Australian
**Islamic Schooling
Conference**

A Focus on Wellbeing Afiyah

Saturday, 19 Aug 2023 - Sunday, 20 Aug 2023
Minaret College | 36-38 Lewis Street, Springvale, VIC 3171



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 **ISAA**
Islamic Schools Association of Australia



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FITRAH**
MENTORING ACADEMY

 **AMUST**
AUSTRALASIAN MUSLIM TIMES



Acknowledgement

Afiyah is an all encompassing term referring to overall wellbeing. This includes mind, body and soul. It also includes wellbeing in this world and the Hereafter.

In this spirit, and with the intention of acknowledging the proper place of things, the Centre for Islamic Thought and Education (CITE) acknowledges Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples as the first peoples of Australia; as the traditional custodians of the land and recognise their continuing connection to land, water and community.

The CITE acknowledges the Kurna people as the traditional custodians of the lands on which our university is located and where we conduct our business. The CITE further acknowledges that on the occasion of this 6th Annual Australian Islamic Schooling Conference (AAISC6) we meet on the nations of Wurundjeri, Bunurong and Boon Wurrung.

CITE pays respect to Elders past, present and emerging. We recognise their enduring stewardship of this country and honour the ongoing contribution of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples to the environmental, social, cultural, political and economic fabric of our Society.

Centre for Islamic Thought and Education, 2023



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Assalamu Alaikum and peace be upon you all,

Welcome to the 6th Islamic Schooling Conference at Minaret College, Melbourne! We are delighted to have you all here as we gather under the theme of “A focus on wellbeing: ‘Afiya.”

At this conference, we aim to explore the holistic approach to education, emphasising the importance of ‘Afiya. As educators and scholars committed to Islamic education, we recognize that nurturing the well-being of our students is crucial for their growth and success.

Throughout history, Islamic education has been a beacon of empowerment and compassion. Let us celebrate this noble tradition and collectively discover ways to integrate Islamic principles that promote well-being into our educational practices.

During the days of the conference, we will engage in stimulating discussions, exchange profound insights, and collaborate to explore best practices in nurturing the well-being of our students. Esteemed scholars and educators from Australian and around the globe have graciously joined us, enriching our conversations with their expertise and diverse perspectives.

Let us seize this opportunity to expand our horizons and commit ourselves to renewal in Islamic education. By doing so, we will pave the way for our students to flourish not only academically but also as compassionate and responsible individuals.

Thank you for being part of this momentous gathering. May the knowledge we gain, the connections we make, and the bonds we form have a lasting impact on our communities and the world at large.

May Allah’s peace and blessings be upon you all.



Centre for Islamic
Thought & Education

Professor Mohamad Abdalla AM
Director, Centre for Islamic Thought & Education



Professor Abdalla worked in the field of Islamic Studies for over 25 years and played a leading role in establishing Islamic Studies across few Australian universities. In 2020, he was appointed a Member of the Order of Australia (AM), the highest recognition for outstanding achievement and service, for his significant service to education in the field of Islamic studies.

He established and led the Griffith University Islamic Research Unit (GIRU), at Griffith University in Brisbane (2006-2008); the National Centre of Excellence for Islamic Studies (NCEIS), a dynamic collaboration between the University of Melbourne, Griffith University and the University of Western Sydney (2008-2016), and currently is the Founding Director the Centre for Islamic Thought and Education (CITE).

Professor Abdalla has attracted more than \$15 Million in national and international funding. He attained numerous civic awards including Community Leadership Award; Islamic Council of Queensland Community Service Award; Crescents of Brisbane Special Achievement Award; Australian Muslim Man of the year; Ambassador for Peace Award; and Pride of Australia Medal (Finalist). His authored and co-authored books include Curriculum renewal for Islamic education: Critical perspectives on teaching Islam in primary and secondary schools (Routledge); Islamic schooling in the West: Pathways to Renewal (Palgrave MacMillan), Leadership in Islam: Processes and Solutions in Australian Organizations (Palgrave MacMillan), Islam and the Australian News Media (Melbourne University Press); and Islamic Science: The Myth of the Decline Theory (VDM Verlag).

It is both my honour and a privilege to be hosting the annual CITE conference at Minaret College once again.

The annual CITE Conference is a premier event for educators in Islamic schools.

I would like to extend our appreciation to the entire CITE team led by Professor Abdalla, Dr. Nadeem Memon and Dylan Chown for persevering each year and presenting the opportunity for high calibre educators to come together, share ideas and learn together to improve our professional practice.

A few quick words about Minaret College:

We are a 3-campus school that started with 22 students in 1992. Today we have a little over 2800 students, 350 staff and proudly serving the community in South-eastern Melbourne. Our Islamic identity and Islamic values are at the core of everything we do, followed by student and staff wellbeing as our second pillar of strength and academic achievement as our third pillar.

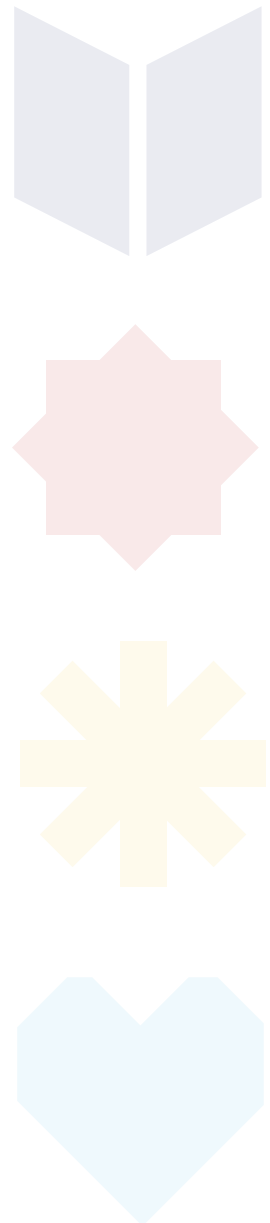
Once again, congratulations to CITE for getting so many educators together and I look forward to the next 2 exciting days of sharing and learning.



**MINARET
COLLEGE**

Mohammed Taksim
Executive Principal, Minaret College

Mohammed Taksim is the Executive Principal of Minaret College- a 3 campus Primary and Secondary College serving the community in South east of Melbourne. Mohammed commenced his teaching career in Fiji in 1991, teaching Secondary school Economics and Business studies before venturing into Banking and Finance. After migrating to Australia in the late 90's he continued his career in Banking and Finance until his desire to do something more meaningful led him to change careers, up skill his qualification at University of New South Wales and joined the teaching profession once again in 2013. He has held multiple leadership roles in Islamic Schools and has served on Boards of Islamic schools in Sydney.



Islamic Schools Association of Australia (ISAA) represents over 38 Islamic schools across Australia, committed to providing quality education while nurturing Islamic values. ISAA advocates on behalf of Islamic schools and facilitates collaboration and communication among schools.

The partnership between ISAA and CITE has been crucial in enhancing Islamic education through professional development, research, and support. CITE's research, grounded in the Islamic worldview and pedagogical approaches, informs educational strategies in Islamic schools.

This conference provides a platform for sharing knowledge and best practices to foster collaboration and continuous learning. Research and professional development are vital in an ever-changing educational landscape. I am confident that the conference will enrich participants' experiences and contribute to creating nurturing educational environments that foster academic excellence and spiritual growth.

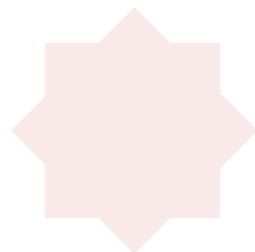
I am grateful to CITE for their commitment to enhancing the quality of Islamic education in Australia. Together, they strive for excellence to prepare students for a global society while preserving their Islamic identity.



Abdullah Khan OAM FACEL
Executive Principal & CEO - ISAA

Abdullah joined Australian Islamic College (Perth) Inc as Executive Principal & CEO in 2011. He brought a wealth of experience to this role gained from both public and independent school sectors including Principal of Al-Hidayah Islamic School in Perth for five years and consultant in Qatar for five British & IB schools.

His commitment and contribution to education is vast and includes successfully leading four Islamic schools achieving significant improvements in academic results, financial capacity and integration of Islamic values across all areas of the curriculum. He was instrumental in rescuing a liquidated Islamic school in South Australia in 2017 which is now flourishing under his leadership and guidance. His dedication to assist Muslims is demonstrated by his government and private community sector involvement which includes appointment to the Minister for Citizenship and Multicultural Interests' Advisory Group (MAG) in 2018; his ongoing Membership of the WA Police Muslim Advisory Group since its inception; President of ISAA (Islamic Schools Association of Australia) since 2012



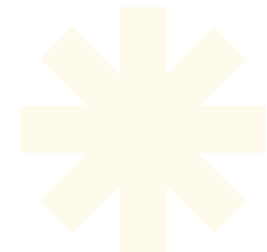
Adel Salman will speak about the work that the ICV is doing with Islamic Schools to address the challenges they are facing to maintain and uphold their religious ethos due to changing laws and regulatory requirements. Creating an authentic Islamic educational environment where Islamic values and pedagogy underpin and permeate the entire curriculum must be a strategic priority.



Adel Salman
President – Islamic Council of Victoria

Adel is the current President of the Islamic Council of Victoria (ICV) which is the peak representative body for Victoria's diverse Muslim community. He leads the advocacy and public policy portfolio and is the media spokesperson for the ICV. Adel is a Board member of the Australian Muslim Advocacy Network (AMAN), a specialist independent advocacy body created to champion the cause of human and civil rights of Muslims. Adel is founder of Arkan Toledo, a Muslim NFP that provides Islamic education services in the education sector and is a current Board Director of Arkana Islamic School.

Adel is a passionate believer that the core function of the ICV, being a peak representative body, is to advocate for the interests of the Muslim community with the many stakeholder groups including government. Adel has led the ICV's strong focus on addressing Islamophobia and the marginalisation of the Muslim community, which are serious issues that require a community-wide response. More recently, Adel has led the ICV's advocacy for protection of religious freedom and raising awareness about the challenges to Muslim identity. To this end, the ICV has worked extensively with Islamic Schools providing advice aimed at supporting their ability to uphold their religious ethos.





ISAA

Peak Body Representing Islamic Schools in Australia

- ✓ Advocates on behalf of Islamic schools in Australia on all policy matters
- ✓ Participates in various State and Commonwealth forums to represent Islamic schools
- ✓ 36 Islamic member schools and growing.
- ✓ March 2023 held Inaugural Executive Leadership Retreat, with the aim of strengthening networking, promoting collaboration, and improving leadership capabilities.

BECOME A MEMBER SCHOOL

All Islamic schools in Australia are invited to become members of the Islamic Schools Association of Australia
Together - Our voice will be stronger

MEMBERSHIP FEE FOR SCHOOLS

- Only \$500.00 per school per year.
- Membership valid from 1 July to 30 June each year.

MEMBERSHIP FORM

- To become an ISAA member, please use the following link:

<https://isaahome.org.au/membership/>

Conference Program | Day 1

Saturday 19th August 2023

7:15	Bus pickup of attendees to Conference venue from Novotel Glen Waverly
8-8:30	Conference Registration

DAY 1 PROGRAM			
Time	Details	Venue	Facilitator
8:30 – 8:45	Quran Recitation: Mr. Owais Rahman, Year 12 student, Springvale Campus Minaret College. Welcome to country: Uncle Andrew Gardiner (Wurundjeri clansman of the Woi-wurrung people and an Aboriginal Muslim Australian).	Main Hall	Sr Jamilah Giousoh
8:45 – 9:15	Conference Welcome & Introduction 1. Mr. Mohammed Taksim: Executive Principal, Minaret College. 2. Mr. Abdullah Khan OAM: President, Islamic Schools Association of Australia (ISAA). 3. Mr. Adel Salman: President, Islamic Council of Victoria. 4. Professor Mohamad Abdalla AM, Director, CITE, UniSA.	Main Hall	Sr Jamilah Giousoh
9:15 – 10:00	Keynote address Setting the scene: 'Afiya and wellbeing in the Islamic worldview Sheikh Ibrahim Abdullah Newman - Resident Imam and Scholar at the Mareeba Islamic Society, Queensland.	Main Hall	Dr. Zachariah Matthews
10:00 – 10:25 Morning Tea			
Concurrent sessions 1			
10:30 – 11:30	Wellbeing in Islam: Theory & Practice 1. Mr. Abraham Al-Zubeidi - Journeying to Simurgh: Character and wellbeing in the Islamic tradition. Contemporary praxis shaped by traditional discourse: A Case Study. 2. Dr. Aminah Mah - Towards Ultimate Wellbeing: A Definition and Model from an Islamic Perspective.	Room A	Ms. Kathryn Jones
	Digital Resilience & Teachers' perceptions of Wellbeing 1. Dr. Marini Kasim and Mohammad Aizat Mohammad Akram - Teachers' Digital Resilience: The Role of Protective Factors towards Teachers' Psychological Wellbeing. 2. Syed Ali Imran - Muslim Teachers' Perceptions of Tarbiyah and its Implications on 'Āfiyah	Room B	Mr. Ali Kadri

10:30 - 11:30	Student Engagement & Wellbeing <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Ms. Hena Jawaid - The role of community engagement in enhancing wellbeing through restoring meaning in faith amongst teenage Muslims. Dr. Ahmad Al-Zaareer - The effects of volunteering on students' wellbeing: Evidence-based outcomes. 	Room C	Dr. Ibrahima Diallo
	Wellbeing in the Classroom <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Imam Farhan Khalil - Enhancing Teacher Wellbeing through Wellbeing Interviews: A Case Study at AIA Kellyville. Mr. Mohammed Azim - 'The well in wellbeing' – how we do it in our classes at exit point? 	Room D	Dr. Jan Ali
	Financial Literacy & Wellbeing <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Ms. Roset Khair - No, money does not make you happier, but financial literacy does: Why financial literacy is essential for life-long wellbeing. Mr. Fehraz Fallil - How robust financial management frameworks help directors sleep well at night. 	Room E	Ms. Silma Ihram
11:30 – 11:40 Proceed back to Main Hall			
11:40 – 12:20	Keynote address An integrated approach to sustainable Islamic School Leadership: Conversations and possibilities Dr. Paul Kidson - Senior Lecturer in Educational Leadership at the Australian Catholic University.	Main Hall	Mr. Mohammed Taksim
12:20 – 13:20 Lunch and Salah			
13:20 – 13:40	Launch of Stimulus paper: Dr Nadeem Memon & Mr Dylan Chown	Main Hall	
Concurrent sessions 2			
13:45 – 14:45	Medical Health & Wellbeing <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Associate Prof. Dr. Habib Bhurawala - Developmental and Learning Problems in School Children: Understanding Impacts on Well-being in the Context of Islamic Schooling. Mr. Ziyad Serhan - Suicide prevention and building resilience in Islamic schools- a case study. 	Room A	Ms. Racha Makki
	Leadership & Wellbeing <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Dr. Ayda Succarie - 'Hidden Truths' about Boards and Barriers in the Boardroom: School Climate and Community Wellbeing. Mr. Fazeel Arain - Leadership strategies to maintain wellbeing – lessons from the life of our Prophet (pbuh). 	Room B	Mr. Sam Halbouni

13:45 – 14:45	Sexualised Behaviour, Racism & Wellbeing 1. Ms. Toltu Tufa - Addressing Sexualized Behaviours in Muslim School Settings: Practical Strategies for an effective response. 2. Assist. Prof. Shyla Gonzalez-Dogan - When nowhere is safe: Experiences of anti-Blackness in Islamic institutions.	Room C	Dr. Ibrahima Diallo
	Culture & Wellbeing 1. Mr. Waseem Hassoneh and Ms. Susan Scott – Thriving Together: Cultivating a Culture of Wellbeing. 2. Ms. Mariam Bernard & Ms. Zaynab Salim - Thriving together: Cultivating Holistic Wellbeing in Learners, Educators and Communities.	Room D	Mr. Dylan Chown
13:45 – 15:15	Islamic Art workshop Ms. Nazneen Wajid - Art for Afiya: A Hands-On Workshop on Islamic Art to Foster Well-Being	Art Room	Ms. Nazneen Wajid
14:45 – 15:45 Asr salah and afternoon tea			
15:45 – 16:15	Burn-out, slowing down and key takeaways with Kathryn Jones	Main Hall	Sr Jamilah Giousoh
16:15 – 16:30 Day 1 – Delegate Wrap up and Close			
18:30 – 23:00	Crescent Wealth Dinner & Awards Ceremony Alencia, 39 Princes Hwy, Dandenong South VIC 3175, Australia		

Conference Program | Day 2

Sunday 20th August 2023

7:15	Bus pickup of attendees to Conference venue from Novotel Glen Waverly
8-8:30	Conference Registration

DAY 2 PROGRAM			
Time	Details	Venue	Facilitator
8:30 – 9:00	<p>Quran Recitation: Mr. Mahad Ahmad, Year 10a, Officer campus, Minaret College.</p> <p>Re-cap of 1st day presentations: Table discussion with 1 person from each table highlighting 1 key takeaway from Day 1.</p>	Main Hall	Sr Nisveta Sehavdic
9:00 – 9:40	<p>Keynote address</p> <p>Nurturing Flourishing Communities: Enhancing Wellbeing in Islamic Schools</p> <p>Ms. Hanan Dover - Clinical and Forensic psychologist and Clinical Director at Psychcentral</p>	Main Hall	Ms. Aynur Simsirel
9:45 – 10:05 Morning Tea			
10:10 – 11:15	<p>Plenary presentations</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Prof. Stephen Dobson – Towards Islamic and other definitions of wellbeing-ness as experiences of inclusion, belonging and voice in a digital (post-Covid) world of global change? 2. Ms. Rochelle Mutton – Wellbeing and development through the lens of occupational therapy. 	Main Hall	Prof. Mohamad Abdalla
Concurrent sessions 3			
11:15 – 12:15	<p>Renewed Thinking of Wellbeing</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Ms. Raazia Rashid - Secular Individualism as an Antithesis to Authentic Learning and Being: Critiquing Individualism in Education Through a Conversation between Islamic and Indigenous Perspectives 2. Dr. Cam McDonald – Mental Wellbeing Support for Educators: A 30-Day Personal Health Program Case Study. 	Room A	Ms. Leyla Mohamoud
	<p>Holistic Wellbeing in Islamic Schools</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Mr. Mohammed Taksim - The importance of wellbeing as a whole of school approach to nurture students, support staff, leadership and meet organisational goals - The Minaret experience. 2. Imam Mahmoud Alazhari - Fostering Holistic Wellbeing in Islamic Schools in Australia: A Comprehensive Study 	Room B	

11:15 – 12:15	Coaching & Wellbeing <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Ms. Esra Boz and Ms. Evla Han - A Coaching Approach to Professional Learning & Leadership. Ms. Silma Ihram - Practical Workshop on Staff Wellbeing Initiatives based on Tarbiyya and Tafakkur. 	Room C	Ms. Tulin Bragg
	Social Connections, Health & Wellbeing <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Mr. Ali Faraj & Mr Ziyad Serhan - Old People's Homes for Teens: The Role of Social Connection in promoting wellbeing of young people. Dr. Jan Ali - A Pursuit of Human Wellbeing: An Islamic Perspective. 	Room D	Mr. Ali Arabaci
	Behaviour Policies, Wellness & Story Telling <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Ms. Thamina Kassar, Mr. Billal Khoder and Ms. Samara Jalloul - Refining Behaviour Policies and Embracing Islamic Pedagogy: Fostering Islamic Wellbeing in a Caring and Inclusive School Environment Ms. Gulhan Yoldas - Islamic Storytime - Wellness Through Connection. 	Room E	Ms. Samah Taki
12:15 – 13:15 Lunch and Salah			
13:30 – 14:45	Panel Discussion Way forward for enhancing wellbeing in Islamic schools <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Mr. Sam Halbouni - Principal of Senior School, Unity Grammar, NSW. Mr. Fazeel Arain - Principal, Al Siraat College, VIC. Mr. Abdullah Khan OAM - President, Islamic Schools Association Australia. Ms. Hanan Dover, Clinical and Forensic psychologist and Clinical Director at Psychcentral, NSW. Ms. Rochelle Mutton, Director and Senior OT, Motivate Kids, SA Dr. Ayda Succarie, International Academic Lead, Middle East and Gulf, Western Sydney Uni. 	Main Hall	Dr. Nadeem Memon
14:45 – 15:00	Vote of thanks and End	Main Hall	Prof. Mohamad Abdalla



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KEYNOTE ADDRESS

Setting the scene: 'Afiya and wellbeing in the Islamic worldview.



Sheikh Ibrahim Abdullah Newman - Resident Imam and Scholar at the Mareeba Islamic Society, Queensland.

Sheikh Ibrahim Abdullah Newman was born and raised in Sydney, Australia. He is an alumnus of Dar Al-Mustafa, a traditional Muslim seminary in Tarim, Yemen, where he studied the Islamic Sciences for a duration of ten years from 2003 to 2013. He specialised in the areas of Jurisprudence, Hadith Sciences, and Islamic Ethics. He has been involved in Islamic education for almost a decade, holding various senior leadership positions within independent schools. He is a qualified counsellor and a chaplain for the Islamic schooling sector. Throughout the last ten years since his return from Yemen, he has taught at several Islamic Institutions and is involved with various community projects with the goal of promoting pathways to prophetic models of learning and praxis.

Ibrahim's interests include Islamic pedagogical approaches to learning, focusing on student engagement and well-being based on prophetic principles.

He is honoured to serve on the board of various community organisations and is the current resident Imam and Scholar at the Mareeba Islamic Society in Far North Queensland. Ibrahim endeavours through his work to promote the values of faith, belonging and service among young people in the Muslim and wider Australian community.

Day 1 | 19 August

9:15 - 10:00

MAIN HALL

45 mins presentation
with Q&A

Facilitator:

Dr Zachariah Matthews

Concurrent Sessions 1



Mr. Abraham Al-Zubeidi



Dr. Aminah Mah



Dr. Marini Kasim



**Mohammad Aizat
Mohammad Akram**



Mr. Syed Ali Imran



Ms. Hena Jawaid



Dr. Ahmad Al-Zaareer



**Imam Farhan
Khalil**



**Mr. Mohammed
Azim**



Ms. Roset Khair



Mr. Fehraz Fallil

Wellbeing in Islam: Theory & Practice

PRESENTATION 1

Journeying to Simurgh: Character and wellbeing in the Islamic tradition. Contemporary praxis shaped by traditional discourse: A Case Study.

“Journeying to Simurgh: Character and wellbeing in the Islamic Tradition. Contemporary Praxis shaped by Traditional Discourse: A Case Study” is an interactive workshop that seeks to explore a renewed attempt at a wellbeing and character development in an Islamic School in Adelaide, Australia. Participants will be invited to witness the contemplation and action that birthed the Journey to Simurgh program, a God centric approach to character development and wellbeing. The workshop will analyse different systems of thought and language and juxtapose them as either human centric or God centric and the effect that each of these centricities and orientations have on the human experience. We will explore the impetus for renewing wellbeing and character development by tapping into the Islamic tradition to realign our praxis with a God centric model to human development vis-à-vis Attars’ poem “Mantiq At-Tayr”. The workshop aims to inspire reflection and renewal by looking at the practical implications of this program, inviting participants to consider their own contexts reflecting on what they are currently doing, how they can draw on the Islamic tradition and what courses of action they may be able to take as they aspire to renew their approach to character and wellbeing.



Mr. Abraham Al-Zubeidi

Abraham Al-zubeidi is a teacher, writer and lecturer where he leads the religious studies and faith department as head of Illumination at an Islamic school, Playford College, in Adelaide, Australia. He currently holds a BEng and BBus from Swinburne University of Technology in Melbourne and a Masters in Teaching with areas of focus in Islamic pedagogy and science education from the University of South Australia. Abraham is pursuing studies in Islamic sciences holding a diploma in Islamic theology and is currently studying a bachelor in Islamic sciences majoring in analytical jurisprudence and Quranic exegesis. Alongside his role at the college, he works with various communities where he lectures, runs workshops and discussion circles that address contemporary issues regarding faith.

20 mins presentation and 10 mins Q&A each | Facilitator: Ms. Kathryn Jones

Wellbeing in Islam: Theory & Practice

PRESENTATION 2

Towards Ultimate Wellbeing: A Definition and Model from an Islamic Perspective.

Abstract:

Research on wellbeing using scientific methods has never attracted as much interest as in the recent decades. There is general agreement in line with World Health Organisation's description that wellbeing includes one's ability to realise their potential, to manage normal stresses in life, strive for productivity and contribute to the community. However, to date there is no consensus on one definition of wellbeing. Muslims' spiritual aspect of wellbeing is central to their life choices in this world and to strive for eternal success in the hereafter. This paper, informed by the author's book *Watering the Roots: A 1-2-3 Parent Wellbeing Guide (a Muslim Perspective)* presents a definition and a wellbeing model from an Islamic Perspective. The book is a cumulation of Aminah's higher degree research, studies in positive psychology, her professional experience as a teacher, and over three decades working with Muslim communities in Australia. Aminah defines wellbeing as 'a state of serenity, attained through a conscious alignment of one's fluctuating heart with divine guidance'. This paper explains her simple to remember 1-2-3 wellbeing model, which is believed to be applicable to individuals, leaders of schools and community organisations, who choose to lead a productive God-centred life with the aim of attaining ultimate wellbeing in the hereafter. In this model, one stands for One-way Journey Home, two stands for Two-fold Double-selection, and three consists of Three-way Connection: Inward, Vertical and External. Considering at least a fifth of the world's population adopts this worldview, it is essential to construct a definition of wellbeing and an easily accessible model rooted in Islamic Tradition within the discourse of positive psychology and education.



Dr. Aminah Mah

Dr Aminah Mah, author of *Watering the Roots: A 1-2-3 Parent Wellbeing Guide (a Muslim Perspective)*, was born in Taiwan, schooled in Malaysia, furthered her studies in Australia where she later settled with her family. Aminah's diversified experiences as a mother, a nurse and teacher, and years of engagement with migrant and Muslim communities in Sydney and Perth extended her academic interests in parenting and wellbeing research. This had earned her Masters and PhD degrees in Education from the University of Western Australia. Upon completing her PhD thesis entitled *Wellbeing and Counselling Services in Australian Islamic Schools* in 2015, Aminah began to write a book on wellbeing that is accessible to the non-academics. While working on the book, Aminah gained her Diploma in Positive Psychology and Wellbeing. *Dewtiful* was established in 2021, through which Aminah works to enhance the wellbeing of youth and parents as a freelance wellbeing consultant. Aminah's passion lies in educating and supporting young people to thrive from the grassroots level, i.e., developing parents' wellbeing, as an indispensable part of a whole-school approach in Positive Education.

20 mins presentation and 10 mins Q&A each | Facilitator: Ms. Kathryn Jones

Digital Resilience & Teachers' perceptions of Wellbeing

PRESENTATION 1

Teachers' Digital Resilience: The Role of Protective Factors towards Teachers' Psychological Wellbeing.

Abstract:

Industrial Revolution 4.0 has brought an innovative colossal change towards the wellbeing in human life. The Malaysian Education Blueprint (2013-2025) which listed eleven strategic plans highlighted that the seventh plan focuses on utilising information and communication technology (ICT) in effort to improve the quality of 21st century teaching and learning in Malaysia. This is directed to the urgency of teachers to be digital resilience to face the technology in education. One of the factors that could contribute to the enhancement of digital resilience is protective factors. Protective factors are a set of dimensions of peer, management, facility, training, and community that help individuals enhance their wellbeing through resilience towards any challenges as well as reduce the risk of negative outcomes. The main challenge for the teachers is the ability to use and utilise various technological aids in a teaching context as it becomes a vital essential skill for teachers to embrace IR 4.0. However, teachers' efforts to adapt to the challenges were disrupted by a few problems, such as limited access, low level of readiness and a lack of technology-based education training. Therefore, the purpose of this study is to identify the role of protective factors in teachers' psychological wellbeing from the perspective of teachers' digital resilience. The data was obtained through questionnaires (536 participants) and interviews (47 participants) secondary school teachers in the northern regions of Malaysia: Kedah, Perlis, and Pulau Pinang. The result of this study could be an indicator for the teachers to be more resilient in behalf of their psychological wellbeing to confront the advancement of technology in education.



Dr. Marini Kasim and Mohammad Aizat Mohammad Akram

Dr. Marini Kasim is a senior lecturer at School of Education, College of Arts and Science, Universiti Utara Malaysia. She is currently the Coordinator of Postgraduate Programmes. Previously she had an experience as a General Manager and a trainer of a company. Besides that, she also had experience in the educational sector as she had been a school teacher for 10 years. Her interests include but not limited to research on management and psychological factors that supports learning.



Aizat Akram is a master (by research) student who works as a research assistant under Dr. Marini Kasim supervision in School of Education, College of Arts and Science, Universiti Utara Malaysia. Previously he worked as a substitute English teacher in Kedah. Currently, he is doing research on Psychological Capital and teachers' digital competence.

20 mins presentation and 10 mins Q&A each | Facilitator: Mr. Ali Kadri

Digital Resilience & Teachers' perceptions of Wellbeing

PRESENTATION 2

Muslim Teachers' Perceptions of Tarbiyah and its Implications on 'Āfīyah.

Abstract:

In recent times, there has been an increasing call for teachers to embrace a comprehensive and holistic approach to education, one that not only imparts knowledge but also fosters the transformation and well-being of students. Muslim teachers have been at the forefront of this movement, citing the Islamic concept of tarbiyah as a guiding principle to meet this demand. However, a coherent and consistent understanding of tarbiyah's essence and its practical application across diverse regions, cultures, and ethnic backgrounds remains elusive. This research delves into the perceptions of tarbiyah among Muslim educators in various regions, including Britain, Zanzibar, Pakistan, and Malaysia, demonstrating how professional working contexts intertwine with teachers' subjective educational theories and produce a range of understandings on tarbiyah. In addition, we explore the impact of these differing teacher perceptions on the concept of 'āfīyah (well-being) and its relationship with related notions like sihha (healthy), salāmah (intactness), najāt (safety), and tahārah (purification) in the greater context of schools and classrooms.



Mr. Syed Ali Imran

Syed Ali Imran is the principal of Al Haadi School, a private faith-based school in Toronto, Canada. He obtained a BCom in Marketing from York University, Toronto in 2010 and pursued traditional Islamic studies in the seminary of Qom, Iran between 2012 to 2021. He further obtained a M.A in Islamic Studies from The Islamic College of London in the summer of 2018 and is currently pursuing a MEd in Curriculum & Pedagogy at OISE (University of Toronto). He is also a part time instructor at the Mizan Institute and a BA instructor at the Mufid Seminary.

20 mins presentation and 10 mins Q&A each | Facilitator: Mr. Ali Kadri

Student Engagement & Wellbeing

PRESENTATION 1

The role of community engagement in enhancing wellbeing through restoring meaning in faith amongst teenage Muslims.

Abstract:

Community engagement is a recognized way to give back to society for enhancing the developing sense of meaning and purpose in faith amongst teenagers. The contribution at community level also reports to enhance one's wellbeing at physical, emotional and spiritual levels. Using community engagement as a tool to inculcate a sense of meaning and purpose in faith amongst group of Muslim students in high school. In the current era, Muslim teenagers are losing the sense of meaning in their faith pertaining to rigorous social, economic, technological, and political instabilities. These factors are adversely affecting the existence and significance of religion and spirituality in everyday life. From previous studies, one can observe that community engagement has been quite effective means in preventing antisocial behaviour and enhancing wellbeing of an individual by offering them an experience of responsibility through volunteering.



Ms. Hena Jawaid

Hena Jawaid originates from Pakistan. Her studies and training were in Pakistan and the US, completing 5 years of medicine and then 4 years training in psychiatry. As a mental health professional, she has contributed to international and national newspapers, and scientific journals to raise mental health awareness and reduce the stigma related to psychic illnesses. Currently, she is working as a student counsellor in a faith-based school.

She is completing her master's in social work in order to address mental health issues, inequality, prejudice, and oppression in developing societies. Hena is a staunch advocate of woman's leadership. To this end, she has written journals and articles about mental health, highlighting the significance of emotional wellbeing, and healthy relationships in life. She has spent hours volunteering in NGOs, hospitals, teaching centers and orphanages in Pakistan.

She is a fervent reader of history, theology, psychology, and spirituality. She is a spiritual person and inspired by Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) life. She says, "My aim in life is to become a better human being and the best role model for my son. But above all, to fathom the essence of life and universe."

20 mins presentation and 10 mins Q&A each | Facilitator: Dr. Ibrahima Diallo

Student Engagement & Wellbeing

PRESENTATION 2

The effects of volunteering on students' wellbeing: Evidence-based outcomes.

Abstract:

This presentation draws its findings from recent phenomenological research that has examined volunteering among high school students (HSS) in selected Australian Islamic schools (AIS). The research explored the motivational and challenging factors for volunteering, and recommendations to improve it in Islamic schools. The research revealed that participants are motivated to volunteer for various reasons, including religious/spiritual, improving social inclusion, knowledge-enhancement, psychological and personal development, employability and strengthening sense of belonging and citizenship. However, their volunteering experiences are often challenged by institutional practices, individual and societal factors. Despite these challenges, this presentation will demonstrate why volunteering has a positive impact on the wellbeing of young Muslims. Specifically, the presentation will demonstrate that volunteering helps enhance self-worth, self-confidence and self-esteem which fosters positivity and optimism. Further, volunteering can improve social wellbeing, life satisfaction, sense of belonging and mental health. Importantly, it can help alleviate some of the negative consequences of Islamophobia and racism, provide a sense of purpose and fulfillment, increase social connections and reduces stress levels. The presentation will argue that integrating volunteering programs into the curriculum of Islamic schools can improve students' wellbeing through engagement with communities and enhance their identity and self-worth. It will also argue that the inclusion of students' voices and perspectives can potentially lead to improvements in volunteering policies and practices which can lead to better students' wellbeing.



Dr. Ahmad Alzaareer

Bachelor of Education degree, a Master of Education (Special Education) from the University of Sydney, a Diploma of Interpreting/Translation from TAFE SA and was recently awarded a Doctor of Philosophy in Education from the University of South Australia (UniSA).

His PhD research focuses on volunteering experiences of Australian Islamic schools' high school students in Australian Islamic schools. He has worked in the education sector for over thirteen years having taught in all levels including primary, secondary schools and higher education. He has worked as a Special Education, LOTE (Arabic) and Islamic Studies teacher at different Islamic schools in New South Australia and South Australia.

20 mins presentation and 10 mins Q&A each | Facilitator: Dr. Ibrahima Diallo

Wellbeing in the Classroom

PRESENTATION 1

Enhancing Teacher Wellbeing through Wellbeing Interviews: A Case Study at AIA Kellyville.

Abstract:

Teacher wellbeing is a critical aspect of creating a positive and productive educational environment. This abstract presents a case study conducted at AIA Kellyville, where a practice called “Teacher Wellbeing Interviews” was introduced with remarkable success. This abstract will focus on the practical aspects of these interviews, including their nature, purpose, impact measurement, and implementation details. The Teacher Wellbeing Interviews were introduced at AIA Kellyville in response to a growing concern about teacher burnout and the need for proactive measures to support their wellbeing. These interviews were designed as a dedicated space for teachers to discuss their challenges, concerns, and overall wellbeing in a confidential and supportive environment. A significant number of interviews have been conducted since the implementation of the Teacher Wellbeing Interviews. The frequency of interviews varied based on individual teacher availability, ensuring flexibility and personalized support. Interviews were conducted by School Head of Religious Affairs who has expertise in teacher wellbeing and counselling. The interviews began with 3 simple questions, i) What is that you always wanted to learn, ii) What is that you know really well, and iii) What are people usually surprised to find out you. The interviews usually started with an informal conversation about the childhood photo every teacher had to display. A range of topics were discussed, including work-related stressors, personal challenges, strategies for self-care, and professional development aspirations. The interviews provided the teachers to discuss their personal life and celebrate it. The preliminary findings indicate that the Teacher Wellbeing Interviews have had a positive impact on the overall wellbeing of teachers at AIA Kellyville. Survey data showed improvements in various wellbeing indicators. Teachers expressed gratitude for the support provided and reported feeling more valued, understood, and motivated in their roles.



Imam Farhan Khalil

Imam Farhan Khalil - is currently working as the Imam and Head of Faith at Australian International Academy Kellyville. He is also a Marriage Celebrant and works closely with families and youth as a counsellor. He is full registered Imam with Australian National Imam Council (ANIC) he worked with NSW Corrections, NSW Juvenile Justice Cobham Centre, where he continues to work with the staff on advise them on religious affairs. He is a regular Khateeb at Hills District Muslim Society, Sydney North West Muslim Community. He was also been Finalist in 2020 for the Muslim Man of the Year Awards. He has Master's Degree in both Islamic Studies and Teaching.

20 mins presentation and 10 mins Q&A each | Facilitator: Dr. Jan Ali

Wellbeing in the Classroom

PRESENTATION 2

The well in wellbeing' – How we do it in our classes at exit point?

Abstract:

This session showcases a classroom experience of an initiative undertaken by a teacher and his students to address the wellbeing issues in a classroom context. The initiative offers a practical way to merge the spiritual, emotional, physical, mental and social aspects of student well-being by using the Australian Student Wellbeing Framework as a reference point. A five-tiered approach of the framework seamlessly applied to the pilot well-being program in class connected students to each other in an effective way and enabled teachers, parents, student leaders to act as necessary support to strengthen the relationship which was entirely based on care and faith. This Year 12 classroom trial program puts students at the centre and makes them proactive in the areas of leadership, voice, partnership, inclusion and support. The teacher becomes the enabler in the process of 'well-being in action' with others coming in as 'arms of support'. The principles of Islamic pedagogy are also employed by the teachers in the delivery of their part of the well-being program and its effect is being felt trickling down to students. The outcomes of this explorative initiative so far look promising as it is delivering in terms of involving oneself in supportive relationships, (re)connecting to Allah, feeling a sense of control of one's emotions, succeeding in personal, social and academic areas and showing resilience and confidence to deal better with one's life and challenges. The 'Well in Wellbeing' program is slowly connecting the dots of everything that used to be done in 'silos' as it is bringing things together by putting well-being at the top and using a learning/wellbeing scale as a gauge to monitor individual progress and continuous growth in terms of the balance in life.



Mr. Mohammed Azim

Mohammed Azim is an experienced teacher with 36 years of teaching service. He has taught in various schools and universities and is passionate in the areas of educational leadership, curriculum development, Islamic Pedagogy, Teacher Coaching and English teaching, learning & assessments.

He is a graduate from Deakin University and Monash University. He is currently the Head of English/Teacher Coach and Mentor for Secondary School Teachers at Al Siraat College. He is also an experienced NAPLAN, GAT and VCE English Assessor. Recently, he was selected by The Education View – Centre of Excellence in US in its ranking of the 'Top 20 Thought Leaders to Follow in 2022' globally. Apart from this, Mohammed Azim is the only Muslim educator from an Islamic School around Australia who has made it to the prestigious list of the 'Top 50 of Australian Educators' back in 2017. He is also one of the first Muslim teachers to be awarded the 'National Teacher Award' in 2011 by National Excellence in Teaching Awards Foundation. Mohammed Azim has also been recognised by AITSL in its Commendation for Teacher Leadership Award. He is also the recipient of the Global Educational Influencer Award in 2020.

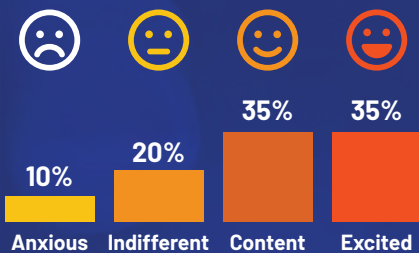
20 mins presentation and 10 mins Q&A each | Facilitator: Dr. Jan Ali

SNAPSHOT

Wellness in Muslim Schools

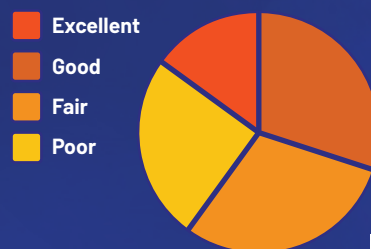
► Student Wellbeing

A survey of childrens' feelings towards attending school each day, as reported by parents



► Bullying

How do parents rate the school's handling of bullying or conflicts between students?



7 in 10 parents don't feel heard

They don't feel that the school effectively considers their feedback or provides sufficient channels to express thoughts and concerns



Enjoyed this Snapshot? We're compiling a report with more data and insights to explore. Scan the QR code & receive a copy by email when it's ready!



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*User Experience
& Web*



*Content Creation
& Writing*



Financial Literacy & Wellbeing

PRESENTATION 1

No, money does not make you happier, but financial literacy does: Why financial literacy is essential for life-long wellbeing.

Abstract:

Students ask, “Does money make you happier?” My response: “no it doesn’t, but it does stop you from being unhappy if you manage it well.” Financial literacy and the freedom to make wise decisions about money has a considerable impact on overall wellbeing. This stance is shared by Zulfiqar et.al (2016), “financial literacy is significantly and positively related to financial wellbeing”. After a lifetime seeing the impact of poor financial practices, I drew the conclusion that having the freedom to make sound financial decisions impacted on happiness and overall wellbeing, not just having money. While we are taught as Muslims not to worship money, having access to financial resources can enhance relationships. Our beloved Prophet (ﷺ) said, “The upper hand is better than the lower one (i.e., the spending hand is better than the receiving hand) [Al-Bukhari, Riyad as-Salihin, 296]. Money allows you to make charitable donations, buy medicine, provide a safe place for your family, and food and drink. Ultimately, financial literacy is about making daily decisions about money, leading to an enhancement of relationships which leads to well-being. Money has the power to either create stress or minimise stress, depending on the decision-making capacity and financial literacy of the person. There is no well-being without financial literacy. Curriculum and pedagogy around financial literacy is severely lacking. Add the complexity of Islamic practice, we need to better cater to our community’s needs. How do we teach financial literacy to our Muslim youth in a way that is relevant, authentic, and innovative enough to capture their attention and embed it in their daily practices?



Ms. Roset Khair

Roset Khair is the Head of Teaching and Learning at Unity Grammar and has been an educator for over 11 years. Previously, Roset worked in the legal field and in corporate banking for over 12 years. She is passionate about project-based learning, financial literacy, and entrepreneurship and hopes to inspire educators and students to achieve their potential by creating and assisting other educators to create learning that is engaging and skill based, with relevance to its real-life application. Her work extends beyond her school, where she has been a Director of Economics and Business Educators NSW for over 5 years, the professional association that looks after all teachers in NSW for the subjects of Business Studies, Legal Studies, Economics and Commerce. In her role as Director, she provides consultancy on curriculum to various government departments, advocating on behalf of all teachers. She has also convened and presented many courses for the subjects of Commerce & Business Studies around assessment, literacy, creativity, and project-based learning. She is also the NSW Representative affiliate to Business Educators Australasia.

20 mins presentation and 10 mins Q&A each | Facilitator: Ms. Silma Ihram

Financial Literacy & Wellbeing

PRESENTATION 2

How robust financial management frameworks help directors sleep well at night.

Abstract:

The eco system: ensuring Islamic schools operate within Australia's regulatory framework.

Director wellbeing: How robust financial management frameworks help directors sleep well at night.

Staff wellbeing: Building a sustainable budget with realistic targets.

Parents wellbeing: Managing expectation on fees.

Aligning to our Islamic ethos: How do we manage finances in line with our Islamic beliefs & values?



Mr. Fehraz Fallil

Fehraz Fallil is the Head of Finance and Strategy for the Crescent group and a board member/former chair of the finance committee of Malek Fahd Islamic School. He has previously held several senior finance positions at ASX listed companies and government agencies (including NSW Treasury).

20 mins presentation and 10 mins Q&A each | Facilitator: Ms. Silma Ihram

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KEYNOTE ADDRESS

An integrated approach to sustainable Islamic School Leadership: Conversations and possibilities.

Abstract:

The work of contemporary Islamic School leaders is complex. Religious, political, and social demands impact school leaders' physical and mental health, with multiple research projects highlighting both the seriousness and urgency of the situation. Solutions require personal and system governance response. This presentation, based on findings from the most recent Australian Occupational Health and Wellbeing Survey and related studies, identifies interrelated priorities and strategies for school governors and leaders.

Dr. Paul Kidson - Senior Lecturer in Educational Leadership at the Australian Catholic University.

Dr. Paul Kidson is a diverse educational career includes teaching English and Drama both in low socio-economic multicultural schools in Sydney's western suburbs and socio-educationally advantaged inner metropolitan schools, curriculum leadership in regional NSW and Victorian schools, 11 years' as a school principal, and as an Educational Leadership academic since 2017.

His Master of Education (Honours) degree in philosophy of education, for which he was awarded a university medal, was completed at the University of New England, and his doctoral research in principal leadership, school culture, and leading in complex social environments was completed at the University of Sydney in 2018.

His teaching and research adopts a holistic and interdisciplinary approach, drawing on a range of academic disciplines and insights. Through this, he explores how school leaders work within, and critically transform, their complex professional lives. This encompasses broader systems and policies that govern their work and school communities, as well as how they develop and sustain their personal leadership story. He is deeply committed to developing emerging and aspiring leaders, and to date, six of his former staff have been appointed to school principalship, and a further nine to deputy principalship or head of campus leadership roles.

Day 1 | 19 August

11:40 – 12:20

MAIN HALL

40 mins
presentation
with Q&A

Facilitator:

Mr. Mohammed
Taksim



Concurrent Sessions 2



Associate Prof.
Habib Bhurawala



Mr. Ziyad Serhan



Dr. Ayda Succarie



Mr. Fazeel Arain



Ms. Toltu Tufa



Ms. Shyla
Gonzalez-Dogan



Mr. Waseem
Hassoneh



Ms. Susan Scott



Ms. Mariam
Bernard



Ms. Zaynab Salim



Ms. Nazneen
Wajid

Medical Health & Wellbeing

PRESENTATION 1

Developmental and Learning Problems in School Children: Understanding Impacts on Well-being in the Context of Islamic Schooling.

Abstract:

This presentation will shed light on the diagnosis, management, and therapy landscape for developmental and learning problems, with a particular emphasis on conditions such as Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) and Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD). The presentation aims to highlight the relevance of these topics for school teachers, leaders, and the wider community.



Associate Prof. Dr Habib Bhurawala

Habib Bhurawala is a Clinical Associate Professor and an experienced General Paediatrician with expertise in various leadership, medical education, and clinical roles. He is the National Vice-President of the Australian Islamic Medical Association (AIMA). He holds the position of Head of Department and Senior Staff Specialist in Paediatrics at Nepean Hospital in Kingswood, NSW. A/Prof Dr Bhurawala is a Clinical Associate Professor in Paediatrics affiliated with the School of Medicine, University of Notre Dame Australia and the University of Sydney. He has published over 30 peer-reviewed publications, written two book chapters in Paediatric textbooks and led many research projects on paediatric health and medical education. With a strong commitment to teaching and supervision, A/Prof Bhurawala plays an active role in training and mentoring medical students, junior doctors, and paediatric trainees. He is a Fellow of The Royal Australasian College of Physicians (RACP) and an associate fellow of The Royal Australasian College of Medical Administrators (RACMA).

20 mins presentation and 10 mins Q&A each | Facilitator: Ms. Racha Makki

PRESENTATION 2

Suicide prevention and building resilience in Islamic schools- a case study.

Abstract:

The social stigma attached to mental illness and people who have thoughts of suicide causes further alienation and harm to people who need the necessary support and help to recover, particularly in faith schools and communities. In Australia at any given time, 1 in 20 people can have thoughts of suicide ranging from a fleeting thought to certainty. Suicide is also the leading cause of death for young people aged 16-24 years old. The constant battle with mental illness and continuous life stressors can result in thoughts of suicide, and worse, people dying from suicide, including in Islamic schools and communities. As such, the impacts results in loss of life as well as long lasting effect on schools, families and communities. It is often assumed that avoidance and ignoring the signs is the solution, and this is believed to stem from stigmatising attitudes, as well as a lack of skills and knowledge around suicide intervention and prevention. Having the knowledge around suicide intervention skills are important for health professionals, parents, faith leaders, community leaders, friends and family. Awareness, education and statistics are important in understanding and destigmatizing the topic of suicide, however skills training is what is required in our communities and learning to complete an intervention is crucial. The presentation will delve in to a case study highlighting Educaid Australia's working in partnership with Living Works, world leaders in suicide intervention in building resilient and suicide safer Islamic school communities. As well, explore the importance of a religiously and culturally sensitive, evidence-based approach to suicide prevention in Islamic schools and communities. These approaches seek to empower and equip school leaders and communities with skills, knowledge and frameworks in developing suicide-safer Islamic schools.



Mr. Ziyad Serhan

Ziyad Serhan, with a strong background in education and an active member of his local community, Ziyad is passionate about working with Culturally Linguistically Diverse (CALD) and faith communities. His experience includes being a high school teacher in a South-West Sydney High school, as well as co-founding Educaid Australia which focuses on delivering mental health education and suicide intervention training amongst CALD and faith communities. He is currently an accredited suicide intervention trainer and a Master Instructor in the mental health first aid course, delivering over fifty courses to school, community and workplace settings in the last few years. Ziyad currently works as a Senior Mental Health Consultant with Australia's largest youth mental health organisation across schools in Western Sydney. He works with leaders across school communities to improve their approach to whole-school mental health and wellbeing, as well as provide suicide postvention support using an evidence based-approach. He is currently undertaking a second postgraduate studies in Masters of Counselling at Torrens University.

20 mins presentation and 10 mins Q&A each | Facilitator: Ms. Racha Makki

Leadership & Wellbeing

PRESENTATION 1

‘Hidden Truths’ about Boards and Barriers in the Boardroom: School Climate and Community Wellbeing.

Abstract:

In organisational research, hidden truths are often described as ‘hidden cultures’ or ‘hidden realities’ exposing elements of behaviour that may lead to corruption, power and control (Arewa & Farrell 2015). In the context of Islamic schooling, this can influence a school climate that impacts the wellbeing of whole school communities. Unlike culture, climate is created by individual and group behaviours, social surroundings and organisational culture (Van Houtte & Van Maele 2011). Using an identity framework, a study exploring the connection between the professional identity of directors and governance of Islamic schools found that disparities between the board and school communities were influenced by directors’ motives to either establish a school or join the school board. Concurrently, directors’ concerns of power dynamics, perceived conflicts of interest and control underlined how interactional inequities created barriers in the boardroom. This led to an understanding that school climate and community wellbeing in Islamic schools were influenced by the behaviours of directors on school boards. Notwithstanding, that the role of directors on Islamic school boards is oversight to ensure compliance for registration and funding continuity, as found in the study, directors are responsible to the school community who sought safety and involvement when they became part of an Islamic school institution. While transitioning from one element of governance to the next requires skill, expertise, knowledge and experience, when dealing with more human elements of governance, directors’ behaviours took precedence over their professional roles. This paper argues that school climate and community wellbeing depend on directors’ interactions in the boardroom, steered by behaviours. It suggests that the hidden truths in Islamic schools underline the courage and determination of school communities who believe in the vision of Islamic education. Essentially, this paper provides scope to consider the constraints of boardroom behaviour when designing governance frameworks for Islamic schooling.



Dr. Ayda Succarie

Dr. Ayda Succarie is a Lecturer in Human Resources and Management, Academic Program Advisor and an International Academic Lead at the School of Business, Western Sydney University (WSU). She holds a Doctor of Philosophy, Master of Business Administration, and a Graduate Certificate in Research Studies from WSU. Ayda specialises in governance, identity studies, management, social entrepreneurship, organisational behaviour, Islamic studies, and education systems. Her doctoral research examined the connection between professional identity and governance in Islamic schools and she is currently conducting research on the effectiveness of faith-based governance frameworks and governance renewal in Islamic school boards. Ayda’s research extends to student retention in higher education and social entrepreneurship, where she is the project lead for ‘Mateship Australia’. She has presented at several conferences and is writing publications on governance, student retention and social entrepreneurship. Ayda is a member of the Global Association of Islamic Schools (GAIS) and is the co-chair of the GAIS 2025 conference planning committee. She is also

working with colleagues at the Centre of Islamic Thought (CITE), University of South Australia, exploring a project titled: 'The implications of the Graduate Certificate in Islamic Education on the Professional Identity of teachers and leaders in Islamic schools'. Ayda has sat on and consulted to several Islamic school boards, both nationally and internationally, and actively engages with Muslim community organisations advising on organisational development, strategic planning and community wellbeing.

PRESENTATION 2

Leadership strategies to maintain wellbeing – lessons from the life of our Prophet (pbuh).

Abstract:

In our tradition we believe that Rasulullah (saw) was the best of all leaders. At the same time, we know that he was put through the most difficulties. He told his beloved wife Khadija (ra) when he became a prophet: 'There is no rest for me after today'. He had a huge agenda, and was always in constant worry and concern, to the point where Allah consoles him on at least two occasions in the Quran, noting that 'perhaps you will perish through this grief'. We learn that Rasulullah (saw) did not shy away from hardships and challenge. Rather than making promises of prosperity, he inspired his followers to make sacrifices, face hardships and confront challenges by inculcating a deep sense of motivation, contentment and satisfaction through striving for a greater purpose. By reflecting on how he handled key pressure situations, such as his journey to Taif and the Battle of Khandak, we can extract lessons of how we can motivate ourselves and our teams in light of an overwhelming and difficult agenda. These lessons include knowing that all conditions are from Allah, so why get upset at people and the apparent 'condition makers' when we are placed in challenging situations. From suffering losses in the Battle of Uhud to seeing mistakes from a young assistant (Anas), the Prophet's has taught us avoid getting upset at others. Rather than blaming the 'condition makers', we learn to focus on our own actions and seek the help of Allah through salaah, du'a and zikr. These are real examples of 'being centred' and mindfulness, which are key qualities taught to contemporary leaders to maintain wellbeing. The Prophet (saw) also taught his Sahabah to maintain a clean heart and have good expectations of each other. These are particularly important advices for school leaders in maintaining positive relationships, building trust and fostering wellbeing.



Mr. Fazeel Arain

Fazeel Arain comes from a varied background that has seen him work in a multitude of roles across the accounting, technology and educational sectors. His experience in these roles combined with a strong interest in ensuring that the Islamic Community makes a positive contribution to Australia and the society at large has seen him initiate a large-scale project to establish Al Siraat College. The College is Foundation to Year 12 Islamic school with about 1,300 students and 1670 staff.

20 mins presentation and 10 mins Q&A each | Facilitator: Mr. Sam Halbouni

Sexualised Behaviour, Racism & Wellbeing

PRESENTATION 1

Addressing Sexualized Behaviours in Muslim School Settings: Practical Strategies for an effective response.

Abstract:

The challenges posed by sexualized behaviours by students within Muslim school settings require proactive and practical approaches. This conference presentation aims to explore these issues from the perspective of a psychologist with expertise in developing sexual assault prevention programs for high school students, providing professional consultation for Islamic schools, and facilitating assessments and treatments for both victim/survivors and perpetrators convicted of sexual offences. It is important to clarify that this presentation will focus on sexualized behaviours that occur and is not aimed to specifically address LGBTIQ+ issues. The goal is to provide practical strategies for schools to respond effectively to students who present with sexualised behaviours in ways that align with Islamic values while nurturing a safe and inclusive environment that promotes wellbeing. The session will delve into the underlying factors contributing to the occurrence of sexualised behaviours across the development span of children and adolescents. By examining the interplay between Islamic teachings, cultural influences, and societal pressures, attendees will gain a comprehensive understanding of the complexities involved. The session intends to equip schools with considerations for practical strategies to addressing sexualized behaviours in Muslim school settings. Drawing upon the presenter's experience in program development, professional consultation, and assessment and treatment facilitation, the session will offer tangible approaches that school communities, including staff, families and communities can implement while considering the complexities of trauma-informed care. The aim is to create a safe and inclusive educational environment that prioritizes the well-being of students while upholding Islamic principles.



Ms. Toltu Tufa

Toltu Tufa, an Australian-based Muslim psychologist, operates multiple clinics in Melbourne, specializing in professional consultation and specialist psychological treatment. Her expertise spans various fields, including aiding victim/survivors of sexual assault and assessing/treating individuals convicted of sex offences.

Passionate about education, Toltu is also an acclaimed TED speaker and educator. She has designed impactful and award winning sexual assault prevention programs for state and private high schools across Victoria. Additionally, she offers culturally sensitive consultation to Islamic schools, providing guidance on sex education and addressing sexualized behaviours from a holistic and faith-based perspective.

20 mins presentation and 10 mins Q&A each | Facilitator: Dr. Ibrahima Diallo

Sexualised Behaviour, Racism & Wellbeing

PRESENTATION 2

When nowhere is safe: Experiences of anti-Blackness in Islamic institutions.

Abstract:

This work examines the ways in which anti-Blackness manifests in U.S. Islamic institutions. During this ethnographic project, 22 participants who identified as part of the Islamic community in one city in the southwestern portion of the United States were interviewed; semi-structured interviews and snowball sampling were used to obtain data. The findings in this paper are based on 22 attendees of two mosques and one private Islamic school whose interviews brought up the topic of colorism and discrimination as part of their experiences in the community. Research participants were parents of children in the Islamic school or weekend school program, former students, and former or current leaders in the community. Findings demonstrate that anti-Blackness in Islamic community spaces often manifests through the targeting of Black children for perceived misbehavior in educational spaces and through practices of exclusion toward Black community members in social spaces.



Assist. Prof. Shyla Gonzalez-Dogan

Shyla González-Doğan is an assistant professor in the Division of Educational Leadership and Innovation at Mary Lou Fulton Teachers College at Arizona State University. Her educational training is in anthropology, education, and Middle Eastern studies from the University of Arizona and Teachers College, Columbia University.

Dr. González-Doğan is a community-based scholar who believes that the remedy for most social issues can be found in community-based organizing. She feels that sustainable change that leads to equal opportunities for growth and development is most effective when it is developed through community-based efforts. Community members must be included in the process of social change for both sustainability and buy-in. Prior to joining MLFTC, she taught at the University of Arizona and Pima Community College. She also has experience teaching in the K-12 school system and was the principal of a private K-5

20 mins presentation and 10 mins Q&A each | Facilitator: Dr. Ibrahima Diallo

Culture & Wellbeing

PRESENTATION 1

Thriving Together: Cultivating a Culture of Wellbeing.

Abstract:

Due to the deep-rooted challenges and residual impact of the pandemic, our philosophical change to be a more inclusive community and the selective based entrance exams, our students are more diverse in their needs and a new vulnerability and intensity for support and wellness is required. The Islamic College of Brisbane has recognised immediate action is imperative. A Hub, a place of belonging and inclusiveness, was established four years ago. Initially the staff of two focused on intervention predominately, reacting and responding to student needs. Clearly this was not enough to make a difference in students' lives, nor was it necessary accompanying structural renewal that would enable a whole-school approach to wellbeing. Today, the Wellbeing Hub draws upon the expertise of five counsellors and social workers, the specialist expertise of our nurse, in addition to collaborating with the Diverse Learning and Behavioural Teams. It is anticipated that this multi-pronged approach will enable a culture of care for our students and indeed our educators and families to move from reactive to intervention to more strength-based proactive, preventative and health promoting approaches.

Mr. Waseem Hassoneh & Ms. Susan Scott



Waseem Hassoneh - As a lifelong learner myself, and an emerging social worker, I transitioned in 2022 to the Islamic College of Brisbane as the Youth Guidance Officer at the 'Wellbeing Hub'. I am responsible for leading a dynamic team of multidisciplinary professionals within our shared vision towards a central educational commitment of our college. I entered this role on the back of twenty years' experience in youth work, mentoring, and chaplaincy, across sites of education and often-intersecting hubs and efforts in community, including for Islamic Council of Queensland (ICQ), Holland Park Mosque, and Southside Academy. I have extensive experience working with young people (and their families) in crisis, at-risk, or disengaged, in community, educational, and correctional settings (current Muslim chaplain for correctional facilities across Queensland).

I am passionate about the theme of 'Āfiyah or wellbeing and my philosophy for my practice is focused on guiding, mentoring, and nurturing; drawing out that innate goodness within, enabling young people to develop holistically. I am committed to working with my team in service to our young people to facilitate their personal, social, emotional, physical, spiritual, and educational development; and to enable them to develop their voice, connect with their purpose, and to reach their full potential so they can please God and benefit others.



Susan Scott - Career educator who continues to seek opportunities to grow both personally and professionally. With over thirty years of experience and leadership roles such as: Chief Learning Officer at the Islamic College of Brisbane (current), Head of Middle School, Deputy Principal, Head of Curriculum, Literate Futures Facilitator, Mathematics Project Officer, First Steps Facilitator, Grammar Mentor, Professional Standards for Teachers' Facilitator, and Teacher, I have developed exceptional communication skills by collaborating with individuals from diverse backgrounds.

I am passionate about education and understand its importance in instigating change. With a wealth of completed leadership courses, expertise in curriculum development, and a newly completed Graduate Certificate Course in Islamic Education, I am committed to the aspirations in the Mparntwe Declaration of 'promoting excellence and equity' and I am driven to making the necessary changes required to educate our children to become confident and creative individuals, strong in their voice and identity, successful lifelong learners and leaders of tomorrow.

PRESENTATION 2

Thriving together: Cultivating Holistic Wellbeing in Learners, Educators and Communities.

Abstract:

With the focus of all current wellbeing programs focusing on learner wellbeing, it is important to explore the relevance of these programs to the community in which it aims to serve. With the diversity of most schools, it is imperative that programs are targeted and supportive of the learner body within the school. As such independent and learner focused initiatives have been considered when compiling strategic learner-centered programs.

Ms. Mariam Bernard & Ms. Zaynab Salim



Mariam Bernard, Deputy Principal of Unity Grammar, with 20 years' teaching experience, has developed and fostered growth opportunities for all staff and learners. Mariam started her career as a Scientific Officer in Pathology at Liverpool hospital where she trained and supported new staff in process practice. This led her to undertake her postgraduate Bachelor of Teaching, for which she accepted a scholarship and was appointed at Mount Annan High School. Mariam had established a clear wellbeing path including but not limited to building community relationships, coordinating PlanIt Youth Mentoring Program and supporting new scheme educators. This led her to experiences and opportunities in independent schools and found that she enjoyed working with and supporting the Muslim youth.

Mariam found a specific need when Covid had impacted on closure of school, this led her to lead educator wellbeing sessions with the educators upon their return to school which also led her to understand the necessity of such programs within the school context.

Mariam then pursued a Masters in Education focusing on wellbeing and leadership to increase and foster a sound program within her school environment and identified the importance of all three factors being Educator wellbeing, community understanding of wellbeing and learners' wellbeing as interlinked and in need of each other.



Zaynab Salim - The Early Practitioner Induction Course Coach at Unity Grammar, and a staff member for 13 years. Having graduated with a Master of Teaching (Secondary) in 2010, she joined Unity Grammar, a new Islamic school, with the aim to improve the learning and development of her learners through structured and well-planned lessons, a strong grasp on pedagogy, and implementation to suit, one learner at a time. Over the years, she completed countless Professional Learning sessions, with a notable mention to an Experienced Educator Accreditation, being the first Senior School staff member at Unity Grammar to be recognised at that level.

In addition to her time at Unity Grammar, Zaynab was promoted to the Head of English in 2019, with a strong focus on educator empowerment, through a nurturing approach, what

she later learned to be the 'Coaching Way of Being'.

After stepping away from her role for a short period of time in 2022, Zaynab reflected on and transformed her skill into something that will be impactful for educators and learners and researched how this is offered in Islamic Schools, pioneering coaching in our context. It is here that she knew WHY she was more effective as a Coach, to enhance the quality of education at Unity Grammar, one staff member at a time.

20 mins presentation and 10 mins Q&A each | Facilitator: Mr. Dylan Chown



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Islamic Art workshop

Art for Afiya: A Hands-On Workshop on Islamic Art to Foster Well-Being.

Abstract:

For Muslim learners, studying Islamic art can be a form of self-healing through artistic principles of Oneness and wholeness rooted in the Islamic tradition. Islamic art can serve as a means of spiritual reflection and meditation, as well as a source of inspiration and creativity. In this sense, the word “Afiya” can be seen as embodying the goals of art therapy and other creative interventions that seek to improve the mental and emotional health of individuals. By engaging in artistic activities that promote a sense of “Afiya,” individuals can cultivate a greater sense of self-awareness. The goal of this workshop is to provide educators with an opportunity to explore how artmaking can be used as a tool for promoting self-care and wellbeing, both for themselves and their students. Participants will engage in a practical, hands-on workshop where they learn about the heritage of Islamic art and its role in fostering well-being. Participants will create an individual abstract calligraphy art piece of their own and leave with a lesson plan on facilitating a similar art workshop on their own.



Ms. Nazneen Wajid

Nazneen Wajid is a visual arts educator at Playford College in Adelaide, South Australia. At Playford, she has developed a particular focus drawing on Islam’s rich heritage of arts to connect with Muslim learner identities. Nazneen holds a B.Ed with a Specialist in Visual Arts from the University of Toronto (Canada). She is also an entrepreneur, managing her company Explore Islamic Arts, which facilitates art workshops for adults and children.

The goal of this workshop is to provide educators with an opportunity to explore how artmaking can be used as a tool for promoting self-care and wellbeing, both for themselves and their students. Participants will engage in a practical, hands-on workshop where they learn about the heritage of Islamic art and its role in fostering well-being. Participants will create an individual abstract calligraphy art piece of their own and leave with a lesson plan on facilitating a similar art workshop on their own.

Burn-out, slowing down and key takeaways.

Abstract:

Teacher burnout has become a pervasive issue, leading to increased attrition rates, reduced effectiveness, and diminished student outcomes. While various strategies have been proposed to address burnout, the role of spirituality in mitigating this phenomenon remains understudied. This talk aims to explore the spiritual solution to teacher burnout by synthesizing evidence-based practices with Islamic principles and teachings. Recent research has highlighted the positive impact of spirituality on individuals' well-being, resilience, and sense of purpose. Studies have demonstrated that teachers who cultivate a strong spiritual foundation experience lower level of burnout, greater job satisfaction, and higher levels of motivation. Integrating spirituality into the educational context can foster a sense of transcendence, meaning, and connection to a higher purpose, which in turn promotes resilience and prevents burnout. This talk aims to provide insights for educators, administrators, and policymakers about how embracing spirituality in education not only contributes to the well-being and effectiveness of teachers but also enhances the overall learning environment and student outcomes. Ultimately, this holistic approach can lead to a more fulfilling and spiritually grounded educational experience for teachers, paving the way for sustained passion and dedication in the noble profession of teaching.

Day 1 | 19 August

15:45 – 16:15

MAIN HALL

30 mins presentation

Facilitator:

Sr Jamilah Giousoh

Ms. Kathryn Jones

Kathryn Jones is an esteemed education professional with over a decade of experience in the field. With a strong foundation in the IT industry spanning 13 years, she transitioned into the realm of education in 2009. As the CEO and Founder of the Back To The Fitrah Mentoring Academy, she is committed to empowering Muslim adults and children to unlock their full potential by delving into their innate resilience and mental well-being. Kathryn's approach is rooted in a framework based on Taqwa (consciousness of Allah), Tarbiyyah (nurturing souls towards Allah), and Tawakkul (trusting in Allah).

Notably, Kathryn has developed a highly acclaimed online certification program, now in its 5th year, which trains Muslims worldwide to educate, mentor, and coach the Muslim Ummah, enabling them to develop emotional and spiritual resilience. With participants from 16 countries, this program stands as a testament to Kathryn's dedication to empowering individuals globally.

A visionary leader, Kathryn founded the renowned annual We R all OK Conference, which effectively reaches over 70 countries. This influential conference addresses pressing issues faced by Muslims today, providing a platform for critical discussions and meaningful solutions.





Day 2



KEYNOTE ADDRESS

Nurturing Flourishing Communities: Enhancing Wellbeing in Islamic Schools.

Abstract:

The wellbeing of students has become an increasing area of interest amongst the Islamic school communities, and strategies to enhance and promote the wellbeing among students, staff, and parents within Islamic educational settings. Islamic schools face unique challenges in addressing the wellbeing of their students, staff, and parents. The current presentation will identify the specific challenges, such as the impact of trauma, Islamophobia, racism, a lack of belonging, social media, and identity crises experienced by young Muslims. A practical approach to promoting wellbeing in Islamic schools will be presented. It will encompass the integration of Islamic spiritual teachings, Islamic psychological practices, and mental health support within the educational framework. The role of community involvement, mentorship programs, and extracurricular activities in fostering a sense of belonging and cultural affirmation will also be emphasised considering a holistic and nurturing environment is an essential ingredient to empowering school communities. Drawing upon practical-professional experiences, the presentation will conclude by summarising the key takeaways and highlighting the significance of prioritising wellbeing in Islamic schools, emphasise the transformative potential of adopting holistic approaches, fostering resilience, and empowering young Muslims to flourish and thrive academically, emotionally, and socially.

Day 2 | 20 August

9:15 - 10:00

MAIN HALL

40 mins presentation
with Q&A

Facilitator:

Ms. Aynur Simsirel

Ms. Hanan Dover - Clinical and Forensic psychologist and Clinical Director at Psychcentral

Hanan Dover has over 20 years of experience and is the Vice President of the International Association of Muslim Psychologists (IAMP).

She has completed four degrees in psychology from the Western Sydney University (WSU) and is the Islamic Psychology Lecturer at ISRA/Charles Sturt University.

Hanan is the Founder of Mission of Hope, a charity that centres mental health and community development of the Australian Muslim community.

Hanan is also the Project Director of Hayat House and Hayat Line. Hanan is a founding member and current executive member of the Islamic Perspectives of Psychology Interest Group of the Australian Psychological Society and is the Convenor of the Muslim Mental Health Professionals Network (Sydney).



Plenary presentations

Day 2 | 20 August | 10:10 - 11:10

60 mins presentation with Q&A | **Facilitator:** Prof. Mohamad Abdalla

PRESENTATION 1

Towards Islamic and other definitions of wellbeing-ness as experiences of inclusion, belonging and voice in a digital (post-Covid) world of global change?

Abstract:

This chapter considers Islamic and other definitions of wellbeing in terms of what it means to learn and create personal and shared experiences of wellbeing-ness, where inclusion, belonging and finding a voice are defining moments. The challenge is twofold: firstly, how to conceptualise and practice wellbeing-ness in a more digitally informed COVID world, where the resources of digital storytelling may play an important educational role and, secondly, how to assess and put a value on it and, in so doing, show how a taxonomy of the emotions can support an understanding wellbeing and inclusion from Islamic and other world views.



Prof. Stephen Dobson

Professor Stephen Dobson is Dean of Education and the Arts at Central Queensland University, Australia. His interests include all forms of assessment and evaluation (viva, feedback processes, assessment for learning), educational theory and policy, learning inclusion in a digital world and disadvantaged groups. Stephen has published poetry and will soon commence an Adjunct Professorship at the Islamic University of Jakarta. Additionally, he is a guest professor at the Centre for Lifelong Learning at Inland Norway University. Stephen was integral in the establishment of the Centre of Excellence – Educating for the Future in 2020 with members from the Centre of Islamic Thought and Education (University of South Australia), Islamic University of Jakarta, State University of Jakarta, Victoria University of NZ and Central Queensland University (currently negotiating membership).

20 mins presentation and 10 mins Q&A each | Facilitator: Prof. Mohamad Abdalla

Plenary presentations

PRESENTATION 2

Wellbeing and development through the lens of occupational therapy.

Abstract:

Viewing child wellbeing and development through the lens of occupational therapy provides a clear framework to tailor support to meet each student's unique regulation and learning needs. Self-regulation is the ability to manage one's own energy states, emotions, behaviours and attention, in ways that are socially acceptable and help to achieve a positive goal, such as maintaining good relationships, engaging confidently in learning and maintaining wellbeing. This presentation will highlight how a collaborative and proactive solutions (CPS) and strength-based approach will help to support each student's capacity for growth and wellbeing. It will demystify that behaviour and reward centred approaches do not support a sense of wellbeing or skill building; instead, only promote short term compliance and long-term negative effects on the students' sense of self and identity. We will explore that many behaviours represent the body's response to stress and are not intentional misbehaviour. When you see a behaviour that is problematic or confusing, you will now ask 'what is this behaviour telling me about the student?' rather than 'how do I get rid of this behaviour?'. It is through this simple reframing of behaviour and the use of a brain-based approach that teachers and support staff will be equipped with practical tools that can be implemented on an individual, small group or classroom level. The ultimate goal through this occupational therapy lens is to regulate the student's nervous system first, as this is the foundation for all physical, emotional, intellectual, and spiritual wellbeing to be built upon.



Ms. Rochelle Mutton

Rochelle Mutton is a paediatric occupational therapist who has worked and completed advanced training in California, London, and Adelaide. Owner and director of Motivate Kids, Rochelle leads a team of 20 therapists who provide studio-based therapy to children with a range of diagnosis' including Autism, Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder and Trauma.

Motivate Kids have pioneered tailored partnerships with private, public, and catholic education schools to work collaboratively with teachers and support staff to better understand how to enhance their student's wellbeing and academic success.

As a convert to Islam, Rochelle recognises how the foundations of faith aligns with what we have come to learn about to raise children with a thoughtful mind, healthy body and tranquil soul.

Rochelle is passionate about challenging society's current view of child behaviour and how it is through connection and regulation that we can improve the developmental and wellbeing trajectory of today's children who will be leaders of tomorrow.

20 mins presentation and 10 mins Q&A each | Facilitator: Prof. Mohamad Abdalla

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Ms. Esra Boz



Ms. Evla Han



Ms. Silma Ihram



Mr. Ali Faraj



Mr. Ziyad Serhan



Dr. Jan Ali



Ms. Thamina Kassar, Mr. Billal Khoder
and Ms. Samara Jalloul



Ms. Gulhan Yoldas

Renewed Thinking of Wellbeing

PRESENTATION 1

Secular Individualism as an Antithesis to Authentic Learning and Being: Critiquing Individualism in Education Through a Conversation between Islamic and Indigenous Perspectives.

Abstract:

This paper presents a critique of individualism and its prevalence in modern western education through Indigenous and Islamic pedagogies as alternative frameworks for authentic learning and education. In doing so, it positions Indigenous and Islamic epistemologies as frameworks that inherently account for the importance of learning and education as an integrated part of questions surrounding the purpose of existence, dichotomized with secular individualist frameworks, which delegitimize the identity of the human by stripping it of its context, community, and ontological reality. As such, this paper assesses and deconstructs the epistemological foundations of the ideology of individualism and its associated theories, and their prevalence in modern, western education. It then assesses critiques that have already been made about individualism in the west, as well as where they fall short. Here, it places Islamic and Indigenous epistemologies as frameworks that inherently account for these gaps and more, as well as possible benefits and challenges to implementing these frameworks to education in the modern world. This paper thus functions as an ultimate analysis of how Indigenous and Islamic notions of wellbeing, which are rooted in prioritizations of sacralities, differ from mainstream definitions that prioritize the individual.



Ms. Raazia Rashid

Raazia Rashid is an educator, writer, and learner. She is currently teaching middle school English and Humanities at Playford College in Adelaide, South Australia. She is passionate about integrating Islamic perspectives and approaches in her practice as an asset in the development of critical thinking, creativity, and God-centric character in her students, in a way that is contemporary and meaningful. She takes pride in being a young educator who strives to always stay in tune with the culture and thought process of her students in order to connect, engage, and best serve their needs.

She holds a B.A in English and History from York University in Toronto, Canada, a Master of Teaching from the University of Toronto, and is completing a Master of Arts in Islamic Studies from Middlesex University in London, U.K. In the past, she has also loved holding writing workshops, organizing programs and volunteering in the Muslim community, and writing and performing spoken word poetry.

20 mins presentation and 10 mins Q&A each | Facilitator: Ms. Leyla Mohamoud

PRESENTATION 2

Mental Wellbeing Support for Educators: A 30-Day Personal Health Program Case Study.

Abstract:

The education profession can be demanding and stressful with various factors contributing to the prevalence of mental health issues such as workload and responsibilities; high expectations and accountability; challenging interpersonal dynamics; constant change and uncertainty; and management of lean resources and support. It is important for educators and their institutions to recognise the potential mental health challenges they face and provide support systems, resources, and training to promote wellbeing. Implementing strategies such as professional development on personal health literacy, stress management, creating a positive work culture, and fostering open communication can help mitigate the impact of anxiety and depression among educators. Method: In this case study, 93 educators from Playford Islamic College and St Aidan's Anglican Girls School participated in a 30 day personal health program delivering physical, mental, emotional, social, cognitive, and environmental health insights via an ai-driven app technology and live weekly webinars. Anxiety and depression risk was assessed at the start and end via the validated DASS-21 assessment tool. Results: After 30 days, 83% of participants experienced a reduction in risk for anxiety, and 74% experienced a reduction in risk for depression. At baseline, 69.44% of educators were categorised with "moderate" or greater risk of anxiety, which reduced to 53.2% after 30 days; depression: 45.3% to 38.24% respectively. 99.7% of educators whose risk of anxiety or depression was categorised as 'extremely severe' at baseline, experienced an improvement. Conclusion: The implementation of an ai-driven personal health program significantly improved the mental wellbeing of educators after only 30 days of use. Moreso, this demonstrates an improvement in mental wellbeing can be achieved for educators without a change to workload, but with exposure to hyper-personalised strategies to better support their personal health literacy and empowerment in their personal wellbeing management.



Dr. Cam McDonald

Dr. Cam McDonald is an international leader in hyper-personalisation, precision health, epigenetics and its application to learning, health and wellness. He currently works with a variety of institutions, including early learning through to tertiary educational organisations, health research, and corporate wellness, with a focus on individuals and families in education.

For the last decade he has partnered with world leaders in the field of precision health sciences, working across many fields to instigate positive change for our wellness at work, school and home.

Dr. McDonald blends his background as an Accredited Practising Dietitian and Exercise Physiologist, with his long-standing personal interest in health, and his passion for understanding the latest research in genetics and environmental influence on health. He is a Fellow of the Australasian Society of Lifestyle Medicine and completed his PhD in the application of nutrition and exercise in preventing chronic disease.

He currently has a focus in applying the science of personalisation and biological individuality to support schools, educators and students in better understanding optimal learning environments, student health and staff wellness. His work in this area focuses on fostering the best learning experiences to develop lifelong learners and thriving educational environments.

20 mins presentation and 10 mins Q&A each | Facilitator: Ms. Leyla Mohamoud

Holistic Wellbeing in Islamic Schools

PRESENTATION 1

The importance of wellbeing as a whole of school approach to nurture students, support staff, leadership and meet organisational goals -The Minaret experience.

Abstract:

Student wellbeing at Minaret College ranks second out of 10 key objectives that were developed in consultation with all staff in 2017. Only our Islamic identity and values ranks higher. Recognising and addressing wellbeing matters helps develop a strong sense of belonging amongst all stake holders. This presentation will showcase the holistic practices at Minaret College to address Afyah and the 4 key dimensions of Afyah at Minaret College as follows:

- Student wellbeing
- Staff and Leadership wellbeing
- Community wellbeing
- Organisational wellbeing

The presentation will rely on available data to illustrate the impact of some of the practices.

Mr. Mohammed Taksim



Mohammed Taksim is the Executive Principal of Minaret College- a 3 campus Primary and Secondary College serving the community in South east of Melbourne. Mohammed commenced his teaching career in Fiji in 1991, teaching Secondary school Economics and Business studies before venturing into Banking and Finance. After migrating to Australia in the late 90's he continued his career in Banking and Finance until his desire to do something more meaningful led him to change careers, up skill his qualification at University of New South Wales and joined the teaching profession once again in 2013. He has held multiple leadership roles in Islamic Schools and has served on Boards of Islamic schools in Sydney.

20 mins presentation and 10 mins Q&A each | Facilitator: Dr. Ibrahima Diallo

Holistic Wellbeing in Islamic Schools

PRESENTATION 2

Fostering Holistic Wellbeing in Islamic Schools in Australia: A Comprehensive Study.

Abstract:

The paramount significance lies in ensuring holistic wellbeing for both students and staff within educational environments, including Islamic schools. In order to devise efficacious strategies that foster holistic wellbeing within these educational contexts, it is imperative to possess a comprehensive understanding of their distinctive intricacies. This academic study aims to explore the meticulous planning required to cultivate student and staff wellbeing in Islamic schools. The objectives of the study include an examination of key dimensions of wellbeing, which encompass spiritual, physical, emotional, intellectual, and social aspects within the context of Islamic schools. This examination incorporates educational theory, Islamic teachings, and empirical evidence to highlight strategic approaches, including curriculum integration, professional development, community engagement, and tailored support services specifically designed for Islamic schools. Through a methodology involving a thorough review and analysis of relevant literature, policy documents, and best practices concerning student wellbeing in Islamic schools, this study has identified several pivotal findings. It underscores the importance of cultivating positive relationships, fostering a sense of belonging, and promoting self-care practices as fundamental factors in enhancing holistic wellbeing within Islamic schools. Furthermore, it accentuates the necessity of aligning institutional policies with Islamic principles to establish a congruent and supportive environment. Overall, this study carries implications for both education and wellbeing domains. By integrating educational theory, Islamic teachings, and empirical evidence, this study offers comprehensive planning strategies aimed at promoting holistic wellbeing for students and staff within Islamic schools. The evidence-based recommendations presented in this study have the potential to inform and influence policies and interventions in various educational settings, thereby making a substantial contribution to the field of education and wellbeing.



Imam Mahmoud Alazhari

Drawing upon my diverse background in religious leadership, community engagement, and youth development, alongside my experience of teaching Islamic Studies and Arabic within Islamic schools, I have cultivated an unwavering commitment to fostering the holistic welfare of students and staff within Islamic educational settings, particularly Islamic schools. In my capacity as a religious leader, former teacher of Islamic Studies and Arabic, Founder & President of the Rahilah organisation, Executive Committee Member at The Australian National Imams Council (NSW), and Scout Group leader, I have acquired invaluable insights into the intricate nexus between education and wellbeing. These experiences have provided me the privilege of directly witnessing the distinct challenges confronted by individuals operating within the Islamic schooling sector. Through active immersion within the milieu of Islamic schools, forging fruitful collaborations with key stakeholders, and formulating effective strategies, I have developed a comprehensive understanding of the multifaceted dynamics involved in cultivating a nurturing and supportive environment that facilitates optimal well-being.

20 mins presentation and 10 mins Q&A each | Facilitator: Dr. Ibrahima Diallo

Coaching & Wellbeing

PRESENTATION 1

A Coaching Approach to Professional Learning & Leadership.

Abstract

The exponential growth of mentoring and coaching in industries such as elite sports, health and business has been central and widely accepted as a means of investment in personal and professional development. This momentum has also created a surge in coaching in educational organisations as a form of job-embedded professional learning, as opposed to the traditional one-shot approaches. Ultimately, the purpose of any coaching model is to support the potential and the wellbeing of all learners (Aguilar, 2013). One critical aspect in the process is exploring our beliefs and cultivating authentic relationships to enable the educators' essence and spirit to emerge. In this session, we will actively lead participants to explore three elements to creating a coaching culture: principles, essential skills and a coaching 'way of being' when considering approaches to staff professional learning. The facilitators will begin by unpacking what coaching is (and isn't) and the boundaries that exist. Then to attach to our existing schema we enhance our metaphorical thinking to establish connections and personal experiences. You will have the opportunity to witness a live coaching demonstration and partake in triads to be more coach-like as a teacher or leader. There will be time for reflecting on the application process as a coach and coachee.



Ms. Esra Boz & Ms. Evla Han

Esra Boz and Evla Han are an educator and leader that form part of the Teacher Development Team at Al Siraat College in Melbourne. Both are curious and passionate about relational professional learning, critical leadership and coffee!



20 mins presentation and 10 mins Q&A | Facilitator: Ms. Tulin Bragg

PRESENTATION 2

Practical Workshop on Staff Wellbeing Initiatives based on Tarbiyya and Tafakkur.

Abstract

There has been a focus on student wellbeing in classrooms in recent years, embedded in the concept of Tarbiyya or nurturing, the 'bringing out rather than pouring in' of learning to students. However equally important is the welfare of teachers who are either not completing their teacher education or increasingly leaving the workforce – whether recent teachers or experienced teachers. Teachers are the backbone of education, but a focus on measurement and externally driven and ranked outcomes has substantially increased pressure on teachers against their understanding of what is in the best interests of their students. This workshop is intended to introduce some practical examples for current or aspiring leaders on how to support the wellbeing of teachers. Such strategies include: methods of collaborative feedback; the education leader utilising facilitation – amongst other strategies – rather than direction to increase teacher agency; timetabling to allow collaboration between teachers; the difference between coaching and mentoring; Tafakkur or reflection and personal analysis techniques; methods of giving feedback using different feedback models e.g. the CRC model and the Prophetic model; and using readily available technology for collaboration. The workshop will include a brief presentation outlining key strategies in improving teacher/ staff wellbeing related to the concept of Tarbiyya and Tafakkur as applied to teachers, the importance of a positive social and physical environment with suggestions and a range of initiatives to support teacher wellbeing. Participants will then do a quick survey of what has and has not worked in their schools, then collaboratively work on at least two of the suggested initiatives in how that might look in their own school setting.



Ms. Silma Ihram

Silma Ihram has a long history in education and educational initiatives. Establishing one of the first two Muslim schools in Australia in 1983 and a second K-12 school with additional child-care in 1996, Silma has worked as Principal in 4 schools and as Director of a VET College in between. During her tenure as a School Principal Silma has led staff through significant changes – specifically evident in supporting staff through the reestablishment of Noor al Houda Islamic College after its forced move to alternative premises in 2002.

Silma is passionate about education and the welfare of students with a consultative approach to management which focuses on facilitating and mentoring staff development, student wellbeing, continuous improvement and embracing of new ideas and technologies.

Having a background in research and Islamic Studies, Silma brings extensive experience, management skills and a drive for the future of education in the Muslim community to Islamic Education in Australia.

20 mins presentation and 10 mins Q&A | Facilitator: Ms. Tulin Bragg

Social Connections, Health & Wellbeing

PRESENTATION 1

Old People's Homes for Teens: The Role of Social Connection in promoting wellbeing of young people.

Abstract

Building communities where people feel connected and supported can help promote mental well-being. This is particularly relevant in the context of the ABC show "Old Peoples Homes for Teenagers", which aimed to bridge the gap between generations by bringing together elderly people and young adults who are struggling with loneliness, depression, and other mental health challenges. The show demonstrates the power of social connection and intergenerational relationships in reducing feelings of loneliness and social isolation, which are significant risk factors for mental ill-health. During the presentation, we will use the show as a case study to explore strategies for building resilient schools and communities, including the importance of social and wellbeing initiatives in Islamic schools. In addition, the presentation will highlight work being demonstrated in school communities, and exploring ways to reduce stigma around wellbeing and promoting social connection through sports and wellbeing programs. By working together to build strong, supportive school communities, Islamic schools can play major roles in promoting connection and preventing loneliness, and promoting mental well-being for all.



Mr. Ali Faraj & Mr. Ziyad Serhan

Ali Faraj is one of Australia's most respected young Muslim leaders. As the Director of Community with AFL club, the Greater Western Sydney (GWS) Giants, Ali plays a central role in uniting one of the most diverse regions in the world, Western Sydney. Ali recently featured as an adolescent expert on the hit ABC's Old People's Home For Teenagers, a show that brings generations together to combat loneliness, anxiety and depression. Ali has devoted his life towards improving the opportunities afforded to both Muslim and non-Muslim youths alike. He has spent the past decade engaging schools and teenagers in Western Sydney through a range of community outreach programs focused on social cohesion, education, employment, and leadership development. He is a qualified teacher and has been engaged by various Government and community working groups to help with social cohesion among young people right across NSW. Ali was an academic tutor at Western Sydney University guiding and mentoring future teachers and was named 'Case Worker of the Year' by the Migration Council Australia in 2015. Ali was born and raised in a Lebanese family in Western Sydney, and is a devoted husband and father of four.



20 mins presentation and 10 mins Q&A | Facilitator: Mr. Ali Arabaci

PRESENTATION 2

A Pursuit of Human Wellbeing: An Islamic Perspective.

Abstract

Wellbeing also called wellness or quality of life can be understood in a variety of ways with numerous constituent elements. Many theoretical constructs and definitions of wellbeing exist in the literature. On a general level, however, it denotes more than a mere absence of illness or disease and refers to that which is intrinsically valuable relative to someone in a complex combination of an individual's social, psychological – mental and emotional, and physical health features. Wellbeing is firmly connected to happiness and the state of being content and, therefore, is the sum of the positive strategies initiated to achieve life satisfaction. In Islam worshipping and serving Allah as the ultimate function and purpose of life on earth is known as “good life”, a life of ultimate wellbeing. All human actions and interactions in the pattern of everyday practice are organized around the service of Allah and submitting to His Will and sovereignty. These actions and interactions are learnt from the Qur'an and hadiths that ultimately leads to one's wellbeing. Focusing on Ibn Khaldun's conceptualisation of Islam as a complete way of life, this paper examines his understanding of human happiness as wellbeing. The paper seeks to demonstrate that Khaludian wellbeing is the “good life” that is achievable through human actions and interactions only in a communal setting where the Qur'an and hadiths are the ultimate arbiters and not human ego and exclusive rationality.



Dr. Jan Ali

Dr. Jan A. Ali is Senior Lecturer in Islam and Modernity in the School of Humanities and Communication Arts at Western Sydney University, Australia. He was the Convenor of Islamic Studies in the School of Humanities and Communication Arts and Community and Research Analyst in the Religion and Society Research Centre at the Western Sydney University. Dr. Jan is the Founding Convenor of the WSU Postgraduate Islamic Studies Network. He is a religious sociologist who specialises in Islam. His main sociological focus is the study of existential Islam. His published books are Organ Transplantation in Islam: Perspectives and Challenges (2022); A Sociological Study of Tabligh Jama'at: Working for Allah (2022); Islam and Muslims in Australia: Settlement, Integration, Shariah, Education and Terrorism (2020); Islam in the West: Perceptions and Reactions (2018, co-editor) and Islamic Revivalism Encounters the Modern World: A Study of the Tabligh Jama'at (2012).

20 mins presentation and 10 mins Q&A | Facilitator: Mr. Ali Arabaci

Behaviour Policies, Wellness & Story Telling

PRESENTATION 1

Refining Behaviour Policies and Embracing Islamic Pedagogy: Fostering Islamic Wellbeing in a Caring and Inclusive School Environment.

Abstract

Malek Fahd Islamic School has gone through a renewal process to revamp the behaviour education policy, so it reflects an Islamic worldview. By embracing key principles of Islamic Pedagogy, we aspire to create a caring and inclusive school environment that fosters students' holistic well-being and their connection to their faith. Billal Khoder, the Deputy Head of Campus, plays a crucial role in working on the Behaviour Education Policy (BEP) and ensuring its successful implementation. Together with Thamina Kassar, Wellbeing Coordinator, and Samara Jalloul, Head of Wellbeing, a collaborative approach was taken to devise strategies and interventions to cater for students with differing needs using a multi-tiered system of supports. Our collective focus is on drawing out the positive attributes of each child and providing effective mentoring support throughout the implementation process. To address some initial challenges in whole-school implementation, Thamina engaged in an action research cycle, collaborating with teacher colleagues and exploring how students responded to the relational approach of the BEP, particularly focusing on Tier 1 (Universal support) and Tier 2 (Mediated guidance support) students. By focusing on drawing on their fitrah and helping them see their strengths, the aim was to create an environment where learning is connected to students' backgrounds and responsive to the underlying needs behind presenting student behaviour, thereby better meeting their needs, and minimising disengagement or behaviour escalation. The implementation of weekly mentoring, goal setting, and regular feedback (for students) and the sharing of case studies (with teacher colleagues) demonstrated positive impact with promising changes in behaviour. This finding revealed the importance of consistent mentoring for Tier 1 students and additional intervention for Tier 2 students. The results also showed a shift in how students are perceived, indicating that strategic support not only helps students strive but also guides teachers in their approach and plays an important role in creating positive learning environments conducive to our wellbeing aspirations in our school.



Ms. Thamina Kassar, Mr. Billal Khoder and Ms. Samara Jalloul

Thamina Kassar is a secondary Science educator and a Wellbeing coordinator who strives to ensure that her learners are supported in all domains. With ten years of teaching across all stages of the secondary Science, she is passionate about working collegially in teams with a focus on theory to practice. Thamina has previously served as a Boys' Year Advisor for 4 years before currently taking up the role of a Wellbeing Coordinator for the Malek Fahd Islamic Schools (MFIS), Greenacre Campus. Social-emotional wellbeing within an Islamic Worldview is something she is passionate about including the impact it has on learners' education. Thamina is dedicated to promoting a holistic approach (mind-body-soul) to behaviour education with a strong belief in the long-lasting impact of nurturing wellbeing. Thamina strives to empower students, guide teachers, and foster positive connections, ultimately contributing to the overall wellbeing and success of the school community. Thamina holds a Masters in Education and is currently completing a post-graduate course in Islamic Pedagogy at the University of South Australia. She always strives to help those who need it.

Billal Khoder is the Deputy of Secondary (Greenacre) at Malek Fahd Islamic School and is passionate about positively impacting the wellbeing of youth and school communities. Billal has dedicated himself to inspiring students and believes that all aspects of student success is created through positive relationships. The completion of the Graduate Certificate in Education (Islamic Pedagogy) course has enabled him to drive the renewal process of the Islamic at Malek Fahd Islamic School.

Samara Jalloul is a secondary Science teacher and Head of Wellbeing for girls at Malek Fahd Islamic School in Greenacre, Sydney. She draws on her training in neuroscience, psychology and TESOL to identify and respond to learning needs of students. She has taken inspiration from her recent completion of the Graduate Certificate (Islamic Education) with UniSA to promote a faith-inspired approach to behaviour education.

20 mins presentation and 10 mins Q&A | Facilitator: Ms. Samah Taki

PRESENTATION 2

Islamic Storytime – Wellness Through Connection

Abstract

Islamic Storytime was originally pioneered in 2017 to connect the youngest members of our community with the masjid and with one another. This popular community engagement initiative provides a platform for young children aged 0 to 4 years old to have a smooth transition to “big school,” in an environment reflective of Islamic tradition and values. This offers many wellness benefits to children and parents, particularly mums and, subsequently, the whole family. The demographic within the City of Whittlesea region has a significant population of young families from new and emerging communities. This means that there are many families that don’t have family in Australia or local support networks. Islamic Storytime provides an opportunity for families to connect with other parents and develop local support networks within the school community, even before their child begins their education journey. Islamic Storytime has received funding to host a range of activities such as a Neighbour Day Morning Tea, Children’s Eid Parade, Nature Play, Mums & Bubs Strawberry Picking Excursion, and Peaceful Parenting programs. We have implemented surveys of participants each term to better understand the impact of Islamic Storytime and identify opportunities for improvement moving forward, to better serve our community.



Ms. Gulhan Yoldas

Gulhan Yoldas is the Community Engagement Lead at Al Siraat College, developing platforms for the school community to engage with one another and with the broader community in meaningful ways. Gulhan is a self-published author and columnist with her writing frequently appearing in the Australasian Muslim Times newspaper. Gulhan is a public speaker. She is a strong advocate for Gambling Industry reform in Australia. Gulhan Yoldas has a Diploma in Community Services.

20 mins presentation and 10 mins Q&A | Facilitator: Ms. Samah Taki

PANEL DISCUSSION

Way forward for enhancing wellbeing in Islamic schools



Mr Sam Halbouni



Mr. Fazeel Arain



Mr. Abdullah Khan
OAM



Ms. Hanan Dover



Ms. Rochelle
Mutton



Dr. Ayda Succarie

Day 2 | 20 August

13:30- 14:45

MAIN HALL

75 mins Q&A

Facilitator:

Dr. Nadeem Memon

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A word of thanks

We'd like to extend a heartfelt expression of gratitude to our generous sponsors and supporters for their unwavering support and commitment to the advancement of Islamic education and wellbeing in Australia. Through their contribution, a platform has been fostered for sharing invaluable insights, experiences, and innovative practices. The collaboration between the Centre for Islamic Thought and Education (CITE) and the Islamic Schools Association of Australia (ISAA) is instrumental in shaping the future of Islamic schooling in the nation, with the support of these sponsors playing a vital role.

May Allah (SWT) bless these endeavours and reward all involved abundantly for their support in sha Allah.

Thank You for Attending



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