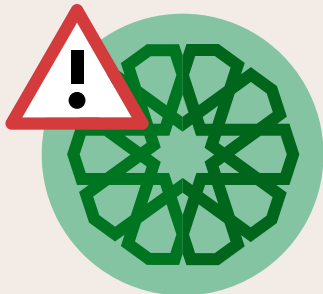


Islamophobia in the Workplace

WHAT IS ISLAMOPHOBIA?

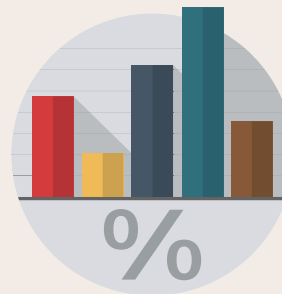
Islamophobia “includes racism, stereotypes, prejudice, fear or acts of hostility directed towards individual Muslims or followers of Islam in general. In addition to individual acts of intolerance and racial profiling, Islamophobia can lead to viewing and treating Muslims as a greater security threat on an institutional, systemic and societal level.”

~ Canada's Anti-Racism Strategy



HOW PREVALENT IS ISLAMOPHOBIA?

- Hate crimes against Muslims in Canada increased **253%** between 2012 and 2015 ([STATISTICS CANADA](#))
- **1 in 4** Canadians said it was more “acceptable” to be prejudiced against Muslims ([2019 IPSOS POLL](#))
- Islam is viewed unfavourably by **46%** of Canadians ([2017 ANGUS REID INSTITUTE POLL](#))
- **56%** of Canadians think that Islam suppresses women's rights ([TORONTO STAR, 2017](#))
- **51%** of Canadians support government surveillance of mosques ([MACLEAN'S, 2017](#))



MUSLIMS COME FROM ALL AROUND THE WORLD...

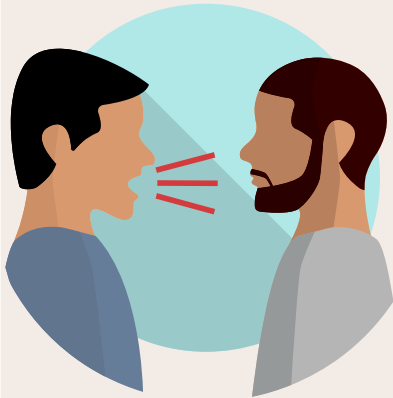
There are more than **2 billion Muslims worldwide**. Muslims come from diverse cultures and regions around the world, including North America, Latin America, the Caribbean, the Middle East, North Africa, Sub-Saharan Africa, and Europe, with the most populous region being Asia-Pacific ([Pew Research Centre, 2017](#))



What does Islamophobia look like in the workplace?

DISCRIMINATORY BEHAVIOUR

Sometimes I make fun of my colleagues and use words that mock their Muslim identity. This is just a joke and is freedom of expression.



Name-calling and using slurs based on Islamophobic and racist stereotypes constitutes harassment and violates the Ontario *Human Rights Code*.

Freedom of expression does not give you the right to harass employees in the workplace.

EXCLUSION & ISOLATION

My Muslim co-worker is complaining about being left out. But our team goes to the bar after work on Fridays. He is welcome to come, but chooses not to.



Excluding colleagues can be seen as harassment, particularly when it impacts working relationships.

Social gatherings can be held in other locations that are more inclusive of everyone, such as an accessible restaurant where everyone, including Muslim colleagues and others who may not drink for different reasons, can feel free to choose what to eat and drink.

BIASED PERCEPTIONS

My colleague wears a hijab, so she must be radicalized.



Making assumptions about how a person chooses to observe their religion is Islamophobic. When you make these judgements, it can get in the way of getting to know your colleagues as individuals.

These types of assumptions can also place individuals who wear Islamic symbols of faith, such as the hijab, niqab, or beard, in danger of physical or psychological harassment or violence.

FAILURE TO ACCOMMODATE

How come Muslims get to adjust their hours when they fast during Ramadan? That's not fair to the rest of us.



Employers have a duty to accommodate religious beliefs and practices. This allows Muslim employees, as well as those who practise other religions, to experience a fair and equitable workplace.

The duty to accommodate stems from recognizing that society isn't inclusive for many people. Providing accommodations isn't about special treatment, but about removing barriers so that everyone can participate fully in the workplace.

What does Islamophobia look like in the workplace?

FAILURE TO ACCOMMODATE



Christmas and other holidays happen the same days every year. Why can't my Muslim employees give me a clear answer on when exactly Eid is so that we can plan ahead for their absences?

The Islamic calendar is a lunar calendar. Each new lunar cycle (or month) starts based on actual observation of the moon's crescent. This means that Eid starts and ends at a different time of year based on the phases of the moon. These dates change every calendar year.

As a result, Muslim employees would know only the approximate but not exact dates of Eid and other Islamic holy days.

EXCLUSION & ISOLATION



Is this multifaith space really necessary in the workplace? Why do Muslims have to bring their faith to work and pray in the workplace?

Having a multifaith, multipurpose space is a best practice for organizations.

Faith is also a part of equity, diversity, and inclusion, and employees should be able to bring that aspect of their identities to work in a mutually respectful way. Failure to provide a space for prayer in the workplace could also be a failure to accommodate under the Ontario *Human Rights Code*.

BIASED PERCEPTIONS



If there is rising Islamophobia and anti-Muslim sentiment in the workplace then why don't Muslims just report it?

According to a recent study, 60% of Canadian Muslim respondents did not report incidents of workplace discrimination because of fear of reprisal, discomfort, and social fallout.

There is also the fear of being seen as the stereotypical "angry Muslim" and being further marginalized by management and colleagues. Many employees who experience Islamophobia end up suffering in silence or simply leaving the organization.

FAILURE TO ACCOMMODATE



Muslim employees have requested that halal food be served at our luncheons. Why should I have to provide this for them?

Employers have a duty to accommodate employees' dietary restrictions.

Not accommodating an employee who requests halal options (without an undue hardship justification) could be found to be discriminatory.

Employers should be inclusive toward all their employees by addressing all dietary restrictions.