

A Social Worker's Guide to Mutual Support During the Israel-Palestine Conflict

Jaffari Support Services

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Trauma-Informed

Conversations

Introduction

Salaam, my dear brothers and sisters.

As a social worker among you, and as someone deeply entrenched in the emotional currents that run through our community during these times, I write this guide with a heart full of empathy and hands ready to help. Rooted in our Shia Itnasheri values and drawing from our collective human experiences, this guide is our shared path to nurturing resilience and understanding amidst the turmoil of the Israel-Palestine conflict.

Personal Recommendations for Community Support:

1. Listening with Empathy:

- Action: Let us gather, perhaps in the quiet after our prayers or in the warmth of our community halls, to listen to one another with the patience and compassion taught by our faith.
- Phrases to use: "I hear your pain and stand with you, as our faith teaches us to bear witness and support each other," or "Your experiences matter deeply, both to me and to our community."

2. Sharing Spaces for Expression:

- Action: Encourage participation in dialogues and expressions that reflect our spiritual commitments and our human emotions—through art, writing, or speech.
- Phrases to use: "Let us share our reflections as our faith guides us, finding strength in our unity," or "Your voice adds to our collective wisdom and helps us all heal."

3. Encouraging Emotional Expression:

- Action: Promote avenues for expressing our struggles and hopes, such as through poetry that mirrors the depth of our spiritual texts or artwork that encompasses the breadth of our emotional landscapes.
- Phrases to use: "Express your heart's content in ways that feel right, knowing you are in a safe and understanding community," or "Let our creations be a testament to our resilience and faith."

4. Offering Practical Help:

- Action: Build a network where we can all lend a hand—be it through preparing meals, sharing rides, or simply offering an ear. These acts of kindness are a reflection of our values of service and compassion.
- Phrases to use: "How can I assist you today, in the spirit of our shared belief in helping one another?" or "Let's ease each other's burdens, as our teachings remind us to do."

5. Cultivating Compassion and Patience:

- Action: Establish groups where we can share stories of patience and perseverance, drawing lessons from our rich spiritual heritage to inspire modern coping strategies.
- Phrases to use: "Patience is a virtue our faith holds dear, let's explore how it can be a source of strength for us now," or "As we support each other, let's remember the compassion that our community stands on."

Advice for Parents and Teachers Talking to Children:

1. Approach with Care:

- Action: Approach discussions about the conflict with the gentleness and protective care that our faith advocates, ensuring we cater to the emotional well-being of our young ones.
- Phrases to use: "Tough times call for kindness and understanding, which we have in abundance," or "Let's help each other understand these events with hearts full of love and peace."

2. Create a Supportive Environment:

- Action: Make sure our children know they are not alone in their feelings and that their community is a constant source of support.
- Phrases to use: "You are surrounded by a community that cares deeply about you," or "Whatever you feel, you can share with us, and together, we can find comfort."

3. Encourage Expressive Activities:

- Action: Facilitate activities that allow children to express themselves in ways that align with our teachings—through stories, art, or even simple conversations about faith and feelings.
- Phrases to use: "Let's use our imagination to express our hopes," or "Drawing our feelings can help us see the beauty in our emotions."

4. Maintain Routines:

- Action: Help families maintain a sense of normalcy through structured daily activities that include time for reflection, prayer, and community bonding.
- Phrases to use: "Keeping to our routines can bring comfort and stability, just as our prayers do."

Conclusion: In writing this guide, I seek to blend the strength of our Shia Itnasheri values with the realities of our shared human experiences. By embracing empathy, offering support, and fostering an environment of understanding, we can help each other navigate these challenging times, strengthening our bonds and reaffirming our commitment to both our faith and each other.