

Lead with ADALAH

A Guide for Institutions and Disclosures of Gender-Based (justice) Violence

In addition to responding to individual victims with RAHMA and fulfilling your AMANAH as you work toward prevention, when a victim brings an allegation to an institutional leader, this adds an additional layer of responsibility. Put differently, when a victim discloses to an institution, they are reaching out in hopes that the institution will be able to offer protection and justice. An institution that fails to respond in a victim-centric manner can contribute to further harm to the victim and their family. In fact, many victims have spoken about how oftentimes, the institutional betrayal often generates greater trauma than the assault itself.

ADALAH at the core

Throughout the Quran, God emphasizes the importance of creating just communities, leading with integrity, and standing with the most vulnerable. In fact, the Quran says:

O you who have believed, be persistently standing firm in justice, witnesses for Allah, even if it be against yourselves or parents and relatives. Whether one is rich or poor, Allah is more worthy of both. So follow not [personal] inclination, lest you not be just. And if you distort [your testimony] or refuse [to give it], then indeed Allah is ever, with what you do, Acquainted.

As more victims of gender-based violence find the courage and strength to come forward, it is crucial for institutions and its leaders to lead with *adalah*, or justice.

ADALAH Principles

It is the leadership's responsibility to address gender-based violence in a victim-centric and timely manner, and work to establish a commitment to accountability and justice. As such, there are certain steps that an institutional leader can follow and lead with a commitment to justice, through the acronym ADALAH:

ADALAH stands for:

Allocate financial and human resources

Determine victim-centric restorative practices

Accommodate victim needs

Look beyond the perpetrator

Assess risk to community and create action plan

Honor transparency, confidentiality, and accountability



A Allocate Financial and Human Resources

When building institutional budgets, institutions should set aside money and time for intervention, prevention, and survivor support. This includes funding that may be needed for any educational programs, staff trainings, fees for outside consultants and/or investigative partners or mediators. It also may include emergency funding that victims may access for legal fees, counseling fees or other services.

D Determine victim-centric restorative practices

Due to the significant impact gender-based violence can have on the survivor, their family, and the community at large; relying on the expertise of outside, qualified trained professionals can make a huge difference. As such, bringing in the right professionals - which can indeed require a significant budget - is an important step to ensuring that the situation is handled in a manner that is trauma-informed and just.

A Accommodate victim needs

With the help and guidance of trained professionals, institutional leaders can assess risk to the community and create an action plan. This may include next steps regarding addressing the perpetrator (do they get suspended? Are they required to seek rehab services?) as well as community education and prevention efforts.

L Look beyond the perpetrator

It is important to recognize that violence and harm is not solely due to the individual who has caused harm. It is imperative for institutions to recognize that instances of harm go beyond the perpetrator and require a conscious and active effort to create policies and protocols that do not allow for replication of harm. This means, avoiding quick fix solutions like firing a perpetrator without addressing the culture of an institution that for example has staff and board who may have known about the harm and never took the proper steps to report.

A Assess risk to community and create action plan

It is imperative that the survivor dictates this journey given the need and right to agency. This could involve making accommodations so that the survivor and perpetrator are not having to interact (particularly if they are part of the same community), ensuring that the survivor has access to the necessary mental health professionals and services, and providing support and accommodations for the survivor's family. Those involved in supporting the survivor play a role in ensuring that accommodations and advocacy on their part are followed through with, and in a timely manner.

H Honor transparency, confidentiality, and accountability

Institutions can honor transparency, confidentiality, and accountability by committing to future harm reduction and alerting other communities or institutions that may hire an offender of their previous history, while also honoring confidentiality of those directly harmed, specifically if child abuse was present. This is not intended to mean that offenders should not be hired once removed from an institution, but rather to alert the other institution to put in proper protocol to prevent future harm from occurring.