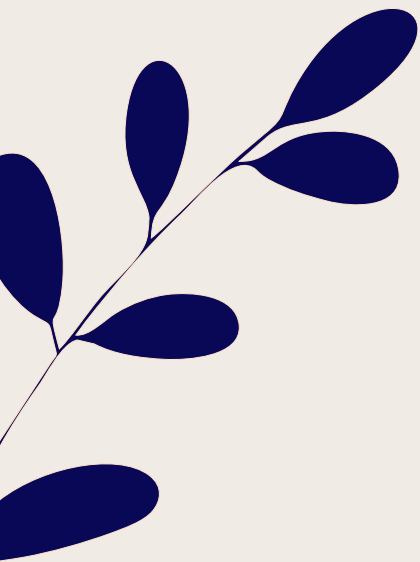


# ORGANIZATIONAL *Values*



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# MISSION & VISION

TO PROMOTE SEXUAL HEALTH, UPROOT GENDERED VIOLENCE, AND ADVANCE REPRODUCTIVE JUSTICE BY ESTABLISHING CHOICE AND ACCESS FOR THE MOST IMPACTED MUSLIMS.

A WORLD WHERE ALL MUSLIMS ARE SAFE AND EXERCISE SELF DETERMINATION OVER THEIR REPRODUCTIVE LIVES IN COMMUNITIES THEY LIVE, WORK, AND PRAY.





# WHO ARE WE?



HEART was co-founded in 2009 in Chicago by Nadiah Mohajir and Ayesha Akhtar, after launching a day-long workshop for Muslim mothers and daughters to learn about puberty, sex, and healthy relationships.

More people than they ever imagined signed up for the event, which brought together many diverse women and girls with their incredible stories. Many left this space asking for when the next workshop would be and Nadiah began planting the seeds for what ultimately became HEART.

HEART is a national non-profit with a team of 8 staff located in cities such as: Chicago, Los Angeles, the DMV, Atlanta, NYC, Houston, and more! Below are core concepts that HEART strategically incorporates into our daily work – from our health education to training to research and advocacy initiatives, we strive to actualize these concepts to move towards prevention, intervention, and narrative- and culture-shifting.

We do so by continuously grounding ourselves as Muslims and most impacted people, holding that:

- there is no one way of being Muslim;
- people who are most impacted are the experts and at the center of our work; and
- we must invest in communities of care to both end gendered violence (including but not limited to sexual violence) and advance reproductive justice (which integrates gender justice, racial justice, and economic justice).



# HEARTS GUIDING PRINCIPLES

## WHY THESE PRINCIPLES?

As a way to reclaim our stories, our faith, healing, and our work as inherently Islamic, we have grounded ourselves in core Islamic values. Many of these values have been misused to exert power and control, and impose a version of Islam on others, often resulting in respectability politics, exclusion, and a concentrating of power and privilege with those who do not accurately represent the full diversity of lived experience of Muslim communities. As such, as we ground in these values, we have co-created what these values mean to us, drawing upon Islamic scholarship, liberatory leadership frameworks, and our own understanding of embodying these values.

We approach this work with humility and acknowledge the limits of our own knowledge and power before God. **We are grounded in the niyyah (intention) that this work is our amanah (divinely entrusted responsibility).** We build upon the work of those who came before us - our beloved Prophets, Companions, and Black, Indigenous, and brown women - that have been at the forefront of this work for centuries and laid the foundation for us to do what we do. We take seriously this divine calling from God to build communities and workplaces that advance reproductive justice and end gendered violence for all. We renew our intention to use the following principles to guide our work:



# HEARTS GUIDING PRINCIPLES

## WHY THESE PRINCIPLES?

We are grounded in **niyyah (intention)** that this work is our **amanah (divinely entrusted responsibility)**.

### ***We do this by:***

We cultivate **ummah** (community of belonging and solidarity)

We lead with **adalah** (justice and equity)

We provide **inaya** (care)

We respond with **rahma** (compassion)

We seek **'ilm** (knowledge) continuously

We promote **ridha** (culture of consent)

We approach our work with **adab** (humility and integrity)

# UMMAH

*We cultivate ummah (community of belonging and solidarity),*

especially for people who don't often see themselves fully reflected in their faith spaces or workplaces. There is no one way of being Muslim; as the Prophet (pbuh) said, there are as many paths to God as there are children of Adam (pbuh). We are bound by our humanity before God and our Prophet's example of fostering interdependent connections with ourselves, each other, and our planet. Our leadership approach is collaborative, innovative, and inclusive, working alongside experts directly impacted by their lived realities to address reproductive justice and end gendered violence.

## PRACTICES

### External

- Inclusion. We are all bound by our belief in God and His Prophet (pbuh); therefore all identities and lived experiences are welcome. Everyone – including Muslims – of all races, sexual orientation, gender identities, economic backgrounds, abilities and religious practice should feel welcome, seen, and heard.
- Solidarity with the most marginalized. We center Muslims that are typically erased or iced out of traditional Muslim spaces. We don't ignore differences; we honor them.
- Responsive. We are community-led & responsive → we're not top down, we take leadership from the community because they're the experts, and we are in shura (consultation) with those who we are serving.

### Internal

- Inclusion. We create a workplace and spaces that center survivors, caregivers, and queer and trans folks as a commitment to repro justice: parenting w/safety and abundance, family, kinship.
- Leadership. We invest in the leadership and authentic inclusion of caregivers, survivors, and BIPOC, queer, and trans, Sunni and Shia Muslims.
- Collaboration. We work in partnership, with consent and curiosity, and co-create, not in silos.

# UMMAH

*We cultivate ummah (community of belonging and solidarity)*

## APPLICATION

- We are committed to being in right relationship, relationship even when it's harmful– conflict is inevitable because we are all different + we are all human.
- We build with organizations and people who have the same vision of building one ummah (community).
- We work in pods and co-collaborate across time zones on curriculum and drawing on community partners to also co-create content
  - Example: Co-creating statements internally and externally

## HOW IT'S BEEN MISUSED

- Implying that there is only one right way of being Muslim
- Prioritizing the right to comfort for those with power and privilege



# ADALAH *We lead with adalah (justice and equity).*

God is Al-'Adl (the Most Just) and we are called on to practice adalah in the communities we live, work, and pray, as the Prophet Muhammad reminded us “a day of just leadership is better than sixty years of worship”. We practice adalah by challenging harmful narratives and dismantling toxic systems of power, which is critical to preventing harm and building a thriving ummah. Our commitment to adalah begins with individual reflection and expands to the systems we are working to transform. We are invested in sharing power, responsibility, and labor to build safe and secure workplaces, communities, and relationships.

## PRACTICES

### External

- Partnership. We are in partnership with the communities we work with; they are the best experts in their lived realities.
- Abolitionist lens. We seek solutions for repairing harm beyond law enforcement and criminal justice system.
- Spiritual accountability. We understand accountability isn't just worldly, and our fight for justice isn't bound by the limits of the world: we are accountable to God and the communities we serve.

### Internal

- Culture of feedback. We're all capable of harm & we see accountability as a gift:
  - We won't overstate harm- acknowledge that we can both experience harm and cause harm to others.
  - Accountability is an invitation to reflect + grow.
- Abolitionist lens. We use an abolitionist lens when possible: we look for liberatory mechanisms to struggle through conflict rather than punitive or disciplinary options that many organizations traditionally rely on.
- Disrupt hierarchy and non-profit industrial complex (NPIC). We disrupt top down hierarchy, dominant culture, and even though we have titles and supervision, our staff has leadership and have input in decision-making.
- We do not tailor our values to align with funder priorities- generate them from the ground up
- Pay equity and transparency. We believe in paying people fairly and transparently, with the intention of building their wealth for future sustainability.

# ADALAH *We lead with adalah (justice and equity).*

## APPLICATION

- Masalahah. We work for the greater good of survivors and the most marginalized (disrupting the idea of keeping the peace at the expense of those who have been hurt).
  - We don't work with imams/authority figures who shut down disclosures of violence because "it inflames Islamophobia"
  - Thinking about greater good as "what are the values we preserve in our communities", instead of "how can we protect X"
- We do no work with law enforcement and the federal authorities.
  - Example: When working with survivors, we acknowledge and respect their choice to involve law enforcement; however, we will do not partner with law enforcement and instead will offer alternative pathways of justice and accountability.

## HOW ITS BEEN MISUSED

- Leadership/power is often concentrated at the top of organizations and institutions.
- Operating as if justice is only possible through the criminal justice system.
- Relying on law enforcement to keep our communities safe.
- Determining for the victim what justice is, instead of letting them decide for themselves.

# INAYA *We provide inaya (care).*

Grounded in the Arabic word inaya, it is often translated to mean 'help,' 'kindness,' 'care,' or 'protection.' Our Prophet (pbuh) emphasized this care for each other when he said "the parable of the believers in their affection, mercy, and compassion for each other is that of a body. When any limb aches, the whole body aches." With this inspiration, we work to ensure that the spaces we create are rooted in care, safety, healing, rest, and joy for ourselves and the most impacted Muslims.

## PRACTICES

### External

- Mutual aid. We gather mutual aid to redistribute to those who need it the most (often those who are not cared for in workplaces and communities).
- Trauma informed, survivor centered. We're all survivors of communal, interpersonal, and institutional harm. We assume survivorship and recognize trauma responses will show up in our work - care is necessary to stay in this work.

### Internal

- Centering caregivers. We care for the caregivers on our team by prioritizing their needs and welcoming children in our workplace.
- We are responsive to needs. We consider community, organization, and staff needs and pivot as necessary to be responsive. Policies and processes are adaptable guidelines, not rigid and can be amended with consent, communication, and case by case basis.
- Care is also a practice. We recognize one's needs, communicate them, and ask for consent to provide/receive care.
- We are invested in community care and equitable labor even with regards to care-taking in our internal spaces - while thinking about social identities.
- We practice spaciousness /respect for capacity.

# INAYA *We provide inaya (care).*

## APPLICATION

- Have a babysitter on site for staff retreats, in-person programming for any caregivers on the team that have children.
- Encourage staff to take PTO whenever it's needed and for whatever reason- no need to justify.
- Acknowledge that situations can emerge- we may need to take a day last minute and that's ok.
- Check ins being a regular part of this work and making time for them as part of strengthening relationships and being able to struggle together

## HOW ITS BEEN MISUSED

- Asking those in need of mutual aid to prove they need it.
- Dictating how mutual aid should be used.
- Requiring doctors notes or other types of proof when sick.
- Overworking staff/no work/life balance.



# RAHMA

*We respond with rahma (compassion).*

Our work is rooted in the whole of Bismillah, which contains the two words Raḥmān and Raḥīm, or divine mercy and compassion. The Prophet, peace and blessings be upon him, said, “Allah said: I am Allah and I am the Merciful. I created the womb and I derived it from My name (rahm). Whoever upholds it, I will uphold him. Whoever severs it, I will deprive him of My Mercy.” Our work calls for trauma-informed support; recognizing the significance of providing support that acknowledges and addresses the impact of trauma. This is essential for individuals to heal, live authentically, and reclaim their stories. Healthy communication, safety, and mutual empowerment is critical to building radical relationships that contribute towards our collective and communal growth. We approach ourselves, each other, and our tasks compassionately- we bring our full selves to this work and move at the speed of trust.

## PRACTICES

### External

- Respond with RAHMA. We respond to disclosures and center survivor needs as they move toward healing, safety, and justice.
- We begin from a place of trust in all our relationships. This also means grounding our work and interactions in trust and respect and adopting a trauma-informed approach to internal and external relationships.

### Internal

- People over tasks. We center relationship over tasks and schedules
- Relationship grace. We move at the speed of capacity + relationality
- We don't dispose of our staff, even if there is a separation, we ensure they are taken care of.
- We make room for different styles and perspectives in this organization as long as there is mutual respect; even when we disagree we align on an approach and we move the work forward, supporting each other, and moving at the speed of trust.

# RAHMA

*We respond with rahma (compassion).*

## APPLICATION

- People before tasks: Prioritizing well-being before productivity or work.
- Welcoming children in our work and communal spaces

## HOW ITS BEEN MISUSED

- Compassion only given to the “perfect victim” or “perfect Muslim”



We are committed to deepening our understanding of gender, violence, and faith and the world around us. Guided by the first word revealed to Prophet Muhammad (pbuh), "iqra" or read, we embrace the pursuit of knowledge as a central Islamic value and with curiosity at the forefront. Our work relies on various forms of expertise, including academic scholarship, public health best practices, and lived experiences. **As perpetual learners, our goal is to make the knowledge we acquire and generate accessible to our communities.** We firmly believe that knowledge is essential for informed decision-making.

## PRACTICES

### External:

- Research. We partner with academics to deepen our understanding of Muslim communities through IRB approved research studies.
- Translation + Accessibility. We translate data, research, and scholarship to be accessible to diverse communities to interact with and make sense of as they make their decisions.
- Intersectionality. We work to develop and uplift multi-disciplinary and intersectional analyses; as Audre Lorde said "There is no thing as a single-issue struggle because we do not live single-issue lives."
- Public health best practice. We incorporate public health best practice and research into our work.

### Internal:

- Self-reflection. We practice 4 areas of learning grounded in self-reflection. I know what I know, I know what I don't know, I don't know what I don't know, and I thought I knew but I was wrong.
- Hiring. We do not value degrees over lived or professional experience when making hiring decisions.
- Knowledge is generated in many forms. We acknowledge/compensate all forms of provided expertise- from Islamic scholars to those on the ground working with us to address ID needs.
- We learn and grow from and with each other, as we are all experts in our own cultural realities.

# 'ILM

*We seek 'ilm (knowledge) continuously.*

## APPLICATION

- The burden research study explored the prevalence of sexual violence and spiritual abuse in Muslim communities.
- The gender-based violence curriculum offers tools and frameworks for individuals, communities, and institutions to respond to, address, and prevent gender-based violence.
- The reproductive justice framework research and literature review resulted in a reproductive justice framework that is grounded in Islamic values and demonstrates how living into reproductive justice is inherently Islamic.

## HOW ITS BEEN MISUSED

- The only knowledge that is credible is connected to a degree (aka PhD) or traditional Islamic sciences (aka hafiz of quran, etc)



# RIDHA *We promote ridha (a culture of consent).*

A culture of consent is to be fully in choice over one's decisions, health, safety, and family in a manner in which an individual is able to be satisfied and content with the process. It requires having access to culturally-aware information and services, and the dismantling of certain systems and beliefs that inhibit that access. To be fully in choice acknowledges that there is "no compulsion in religion", and that we have moral agency over our lives and will gather resources and guidance to make decisions that align with our values and understanding of our faith.

## PRACTICES

### External

- Process over outcomes. The process is just as important as the end goal; How we set the goal is a shared process (not top down).
- Working in partnership with communities to co-create the solutions that work for them.

### Internal

- Co-creation. Staff work together to define success in their roles.
- Consent. Seeking consent through direct and compassionate communication about programming both internally and externally.
- Cultivating a culture of trust in which staff don't feel obligated to justify every decision/trusting intention.
- Valuing relationships over process
  - Being responsive to emergent/evolving needs rather than forcing outdated/irrelevant practices onto communities who don't want or need them.

# RIDHA *We promote ridha (a culture of consent).*

## APPLICATION

- Generating work plans that are not top-down.
  - Example: Not assigning tasks/projects to each other without having a conversation to gauge interest or capacity
- Being able to disengage from tasks/projects in order to preserve well-being within limit.
  - Example: If a staff is working on a project and needs some time to disengage
- ICF/SCF usage of funds defined by recipients rather than HEART staff while HEART staff tries to do its best to work within their own limitations
  - Example: if a SCF client requests funds over 3K, HEART staff still working with client to meet 3K needs while sharing that we cannot fund over 3K

## HOW ITS BEEN MISUSED

- Consent is given at nikkah and never again.
- Consent given at the signing of the employment contract and never again.
- Assigning work/projects/travel without communicating first about capacity and needs.

# ADAB

*We approach our work with ADAB  
(humility and integrity).*

Adab is the Arabic word for manners or good character. This term is often associated with Islamic manners and respect, or ikhlaq. Adab is how we interact with ourselves and others, approaching our work, each other, and our faith tradition, with humility and mutual care. It is the personal commitments we make to ensure that we do not cause further harm in our relationships and communities. Good character is an important tenet of our faith tradition, and is a way of increasing our closeness with Allah.

According to this Hadith (Prophetic saying): "The best of companions to Allah is the one who is best to his companions, and the best of neighbors to Allah is the one who is the best of them to his neighbor" (Al-Tirmidhi). Good adab means that we commit ourselves to not causing harm to others by being perpetrators of sexual and gender-based violence. It means that we examine the ways we hold privilege, and actively commit to not abusing others without that privilege.

## PRACTICES

### External:

- Relationship before tasks.
- Move with intention. We are intentional about what we say, what we do, and how we be in the world.
- Commitment to anti-harm.

### Internal:

- Dhikr
- Grounding
- Self accountability

# ADAB

*We approach our work with ADAB  
(humility and integrity).*

## APPLICATION

**In striving for adab, it is important that we:**

**A**pproach with humility and mutual care.

**D**epend on dhikr (remembrance of God) to ground in our relationships

**A**cknowledge your power and positionality

**B**e accountable to God, each other, and yourself

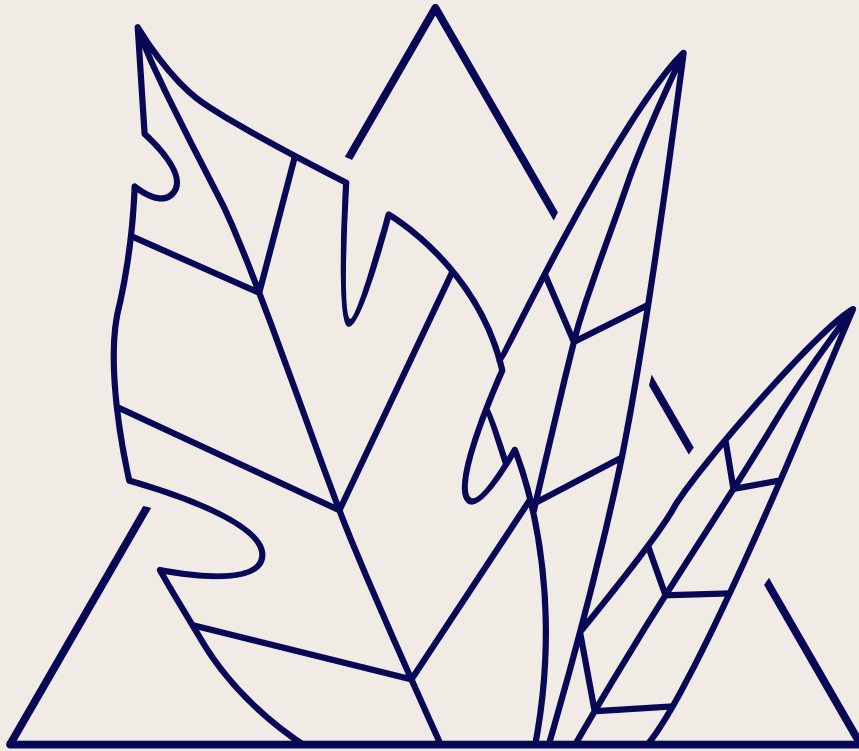
## HOW ITS BEEN MISUSED

- Tone policing others when they are being “disrespectful” or “unprofessional.”
- Silencing others when they share openly or say something that causes discomfort.



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## CONTACT US

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