



# COMMUNITIES AGAINST ISLAMOPHOBIA

A project of the American Friends Service Committee



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## How to counter Islamophobia with social media

After you leave this training, you can use social media to continue the work to change the narrative on Islamophobia. You have influence in your community and among your friends and family and now you are part of a network that is working to build more inclusive communities to end Islamophobia. Can you share your knowledge to engage your friends and build this movement?

### Consider who you're talking to

Are your friends and family already politically engaged and concerned about the treatment of Muslim people in our communities? Is this an issue they have been thinking about already? Would thinking about Islamophobia be totally new to them? If you are trying to persuade, it is important to meet people where they are.

### Find the values you share

Maybe your online friends are committed activists who share all of your values. But not necessarily! Think about the people you are trying to reach and what they value and love—whether it is family, human rights, safety in the community, or good food.

### Talk about values when you talk about Islamophobia.

In AFSC's research study, "Opening Lines," we found that certain values resonated with people when talking about Islamophobia. Two frames were most likely to move people to action. One is "everyone deserves safety and peace" and the other is "respecting human rights." The most important thing is to find values that your friends and family share and will respond to.

### Uplift the stories and voices of Muslim people.

Part of challenging Islamophobia is building empathy and connections between members of our communities. Unfortunately, our media tends to present stories about

Muslim people in one-dimensional and stereotypical ways, focusing on either extremism or victimhood. Follow Muslim artists, writers, activists, and thinkers online, share their work, and center Muslim people's voices in the stories you share online.

### Share stories of resistance and resilience to inspire.

Once you have learned about Islamophobia, you will see that many stories that circulate online reinforce hateful and stereotypical ideas about Muslim people. Don't re-post or retweet these stories to argue against them. Research shows that repeating negative stories can accidentally amplify them and put them in front of more eyeballs. What should you post instead? Stories about communities resisting and working together to push back against Islamophobia and hate.

### Offer solutions and actions people can take.

Islamophobia does not just live in individuals' hearts. It is embedded in our communities through policies, especially in profiling and surveillance. But just because it is a deep complex problem doesn't mean people can't take action to make things better. Be sure to talk about specific steps people can take, like contacting elected officials to end surveillance and change policing practices, supporting the efforts of local organizations that serve immigrants, refugees, and Muslims, offering support to Muslim friends and family, and showing up at local marches and rallies in support of inclusive communities.

### And if somebody writes something racist or Islamophobic on social media...

Remember that silence can be dangerous—it communicates approval. Depending on how well you

know the person, you might try to:

- Engage the comment directly by asking questions to break down somebody's entrenched ideas.
- Take the conversation offline—it might be time to ask your friend or family member to coffee to talk face to face.
- Post a fresh comment instead of replying to a negative one. Getting into a back and forth argument with a stranger might not be worth your time. But you can make sure a negative comment doesn't stand unchallenged.
- If someone is posting hate speech, it might be time to block them.

## Get started!

- **Share** your experience at the training on social media, including a group photo, so that your family and friends can see that many people understand how important it is to end Islamophobia, and there is a movement to do so.
- **Display** a "Sanctuary Everywhere" or "We all Belong Here" poster in a public place, take a photo, and share on social media, explaining why it is important to you to show that you care about this issue.
- **Follow** Muslim writers, artists, and activists on social media and amplify their voices by sharing their work.
- **Thank and retweet** people who inspire you and get it right.