How you can Stop Islamophobia

How can you be a source of support for a friend, peer or colleague who is Muslim? Here are four ways to make a difference:

1. **Learn more** about Islam and its followers. Take a class. Read a book. Observe a typical Friday prayer service. Engage in **conversation** with your Muslim friend about her faith, how she practices it, and how it influences her outlook on life. Above all listen with an open mind, because we all have biases.

2. Pay attention to the way long-standing **stereotypes** about Muslims as unpatriotic, backward, dangerous, and violent saturate the media and society at large. Notice how certain politicians, pundits, and even academics explicitly and subtly demonize entire groups of people. Feel empowered to **speak out** against racism and intolerance when you see it.

3. **Walk or ride the bus** with a peer or colleague who is Muslim, especially at night. With incidents of Islamophobic hate speech and crimes on the rise, Muslim students may feel uncomfortable or unsafe in certain public situations. Be willing to stand with your fellow students.

4. **Show you care**. Expressing concern for the well-being of Muslims is part of showing solidarity with them. Displays of kindness such as bringing a friend tea or chocolate can go a long way, and are at the heart of Islam.

If you or your friends need assistance, contact Jennifer Walters (jwalters@smith.edu) or Dwight Hamilton (dhamilton@smith.edu).

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