



How to connect with my Muslim neighbors

Immigrant communities represent numerous countries and diverse cultures, and there is no one-size-fits-all approach to building community relations. Here are some things to keep in mind when reaching out to your Muslim neighbors...

Know

- Muslim families are often patriarchal. When reaching out, it may be more appropriate for men to reach out to men and women to reach out to women
- You may be asked to remove your shoes when entering a Muslim home or a mosque
- Many Muslims have dietary restrictions, which may prevent them from consuming alcohol, pork products, or meat that isn't Halal (similar to Kosher in the Jewish faith). This is important to remember when hosting neighborhood events that offer food and drink
- In Muslim culture, men and women often do not shake hands of the opposite gender. This is a cultural norm and is in no way a sign of disrespect. If you're unsure of when to shake someone's hand, wait for the individual to reach out his or her hand to you before you reach out to them

Know

- Be aware that mistrust about law enforcement is prevalent in the Muslim community. It's important to explain your role as a block watch captain, and make clear that neighborhood watch works to protect all residents
- Muslims have five daily prayers
- Know when Ramadan is happening. Many Muslims fast during Ramadan, which means they eat breakfast before sunrise, and do not consume any food or drink (even water) until after sunset

Do

- When going to your neighbor's house to introduce yourself, show up in pairs (for example, with your spouse or another neighbor). If possible, show up with someone of the opposite gender from your own

Don't

- When going to introduce yourself, avoid asking a lot of questions. Due to past experiences with discrimination, people may feel like they're being interrogated

Remember

- Building community trust between neighbors takes time and patience. Don't give up!

"There is no power for change greater than a community discovering what it cares about." - Margaret Wheatley

