



BE AN ALLY

ENDING ANTI-MUSLIM BIAS BEGINS WITH YOU.

Recent world events have created a climate of hostility toward American and international citizens who practice the Islamic faith. In light of growing concerns, the Virginia Commonwealth University offers resources to help ensure that our campus remains a welcoming and inclusive community.

HOW TO BE AN ALLY: 3 SIMPLE WAYS

- 1 Stand Up**
If you witness aggression toward someone perceived as Muslim, **call the VCU Police immediately.** Download the LiveSafe app from the App Store or with Google Play.
- 2 Know the Facts**
Get to know people for who they are and be willing to learn about differences. Knowing the facts about Islam will enable you to productively dispel misconceptions.
- 3 Don't Participate**
Have zero-tolerance for participating in anti-Muslim bias. Refusing to laugh, stare or ignore negative actions sends a clear message that such behavior is unacceptable.

IF YOU EXPERIENCE AGGRESSION, RESOURCES IMMEDIATELY AVAILABLE TO YOU INCLUDE:

VCU Police
(804) 828-1234

International Student and Scholar Programs
(804) 828-8471

Bias Response Team
rbrodriguez@vcu.edu

University Counseling Services
(804) 828-6200

Office of Multicultural Student Affairs
(804) 828-6672

VCU STATEMENT ON INCLUSION

Virginia Commonwealth University does not discriminate in admissions, treatment, employment or access to its programs or activities on the basis of race, color, religion, national or ethnic origin, age, sex (including pregnancy), political affiliation, veteran status, family medical and genetic information, sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression or disability.



VCU

Make it real.

COMMON MYTHS ABOUT MUSLIM PEOPLE AND ISLAM

(adapted from the Anti-Defamation League*)

Myth #1: All Muslim people are Arab or Middle Eastern.

Fact: Although Islam began as a religion in the Middle East and its holiest sites are located there, the region is home to only about 20% of the world's Muslims. The bulk of the world's Muslim population—62%—is located in Asia. The four largest Muslim populations are in Indonesia, Pakistan, India and Bangladesh, each home to more than 100 million Muslims. Muslim students, staff and faculty at VCU include U.S. citizens and internationals, and are diverse, including Africans, Asians and African-Americans.

Myth #2: Islam is a violent religion and Muslims identify with terrorism.

Fact: Within every religion exists a spectrum of attitudes and behavior, and extremism is not unique to one belief system. There are people who claim to be Muslims who have committed horrible acts in the name of Islam. These people, and their extremist interpretation of Islam, are a minority within the religion. The vast majority of Muslims reject their violence and consider their interpretation a distortion of the Muslim faith.

Myth #3: You can't be Muslim and be a patriotic American.

Fact: Based on a 2011 Pew Research Study survey, there are an estimated 2.75–5 million Muslims in the United States, making up almost 1% of the total population. A 2011 Gallup poll found that the majority of Muslim-Americans say that they are loyal to the U.S. and are optimistic about the future even though they experience bias and discrimination.

Myth #4: Muslim women are forced to cover their heads with a hijab.

Fact: The Quran, the holy text of Islam, directs both men and women to dress with modesty, but how this is interpreted and carried out varies a great deal. While it is true that in some countries with significant Muslim populations women are forced to wear the hijab, in most Muslim-majority countries, women dress according to their individual choices and/or social norms. A woman may choose to wear a hijab, niqab or burqa out of personal modesty, as an act of piety or to form a sense of collective religious identity.