Developing an Islamic Framework for Psychotherapy:
An Islamic Conceptualization of Psychological Wellbeing and Healing

by
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Abstract

Data from outcome research studies indicate that spiritual and religious approaches to psychotherapy are effective in improving the psychological wellbeing of clients. While there has been significant growth in the field of Islamic psychology, the development of an approach to counselling that is indigenous to Islamic thought and scholarly works is no simple task. The purpose of this study was to explore and develop the beginnings of a psychotherapeutic framework based upon the Islamic understanding of psychological wellbeing and healing. Using a modified Delphi method with Islamic scholars and teachers as participants (n=6), this study has demonstrated the application of a unique methodological approach applying Islamic epistemological and ontological principles. After three rounds of questionnaires using the Delphi method, emergent coding content analyses and quantitative analyses of the data resulted in 47 consensus statements on the Islamic views of human nature, psychological wellness and illness, and change processes. The major themes and findings of this study lay the groundwork for the development of a psychotherapeutic approach that can be used by counsellors and other helping professionals with both Muslim and non-Muslim clients. There is a need for further exploration, additional research, and multi-methodology studies to create a comprehensive and practical framework. The findings of this research ultimately further the collective effort in the field of Islamic psychology to develop an epistemologically and ontologically sound Islamic approach that can be applied in counselling practice.

Keywords: Islamic Psychology; Muslim; Mental Health; Psychotherapy; Epistemology; Islam

Dedication

This project is dedicated to the Muslim Ummah, a community that despite being sidelined and socially and politically marginalized, is thriving and in the midst of a revival. This work is for all the Muslim children, youth, and families who are struggling in some capacity, and yet cannot find or access mental health supports that centre their worldview and way of life.

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I thank Allah (SWT) first and foremost for blessing me with the opportunity to complete this research project. The ability to think, reflect, read, and write are gifts that I used each and every single time I worked on this research.

> *Abu Huraira (RA) reported: The Prophet, peace and blessings be upon him, said, "Whoever does not thank people has not thanked Allah."*
> *(Hadith, Sunan Abu Dawud)*

I am so grateful for the participants in this study – the teachers, scholars, and people of knowledge – who made this research not only possible, but so incredibly fruitful. Their knowledge, humility, time, and energy, as well as their willingness to participate in a study design that was foreign to them, was invaluable. A sincere JazakumAllah Khairun for investing in this project with your expertise. May Allah (SWT) reward you in this life and the next. Ameen.

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List of Acronyms

IOK	Islamization of Knowledge
MIP	Multilevel Interdisciplinary Paradigm
PBUH	Peace Be Upon Him, used in reference to the Prophet Muhammad
RA	Radya Allahu 'anhu or 'anha or 'anhum (May Allah be pleased with him, her, or them); used in reference to Sahabah, or companions of the Prophet Muhammad (SAW)
SAW	Salla Allahu alayhi wasalaam, (May the blessings and peace of Allah be upon Him); used in reference to the Prophet Muhammad
SWT	Subhanahu wa Ta'aala (The most Glorified, the Most High); used in reference to God.

Glossary

Ahl as-Sunnah wa al-Jama'ah	This refers to those who hold on to the Sunnah of the Prophet (SAW) and unite themselves upon it. Sometimes described as the people who follow the Prophetic way and the majority of Islamic scholars.
Allah	The Arabic word for God; how Muslims refer to God.
'Aqidah	An Islamic term of Arabic origin that refers to core creed and belief.
Ar-Rahman	One of the names or attributes that Allah (SWT) uses to describe Himself in the Qur'an. This is often translated to 'the Most Merciful', but also includes the qualities of care, compassion, mercy, and more.
Ayah	A verse of the Qur'an; a statement of varying length within a Surah (chapter) of the Qur'an.
Daleel	Evidence or proof; in the context of Islamic knowledge, refers to authenticated sources of knowledge.
Epistemology	The philosophical study of the nature, origin, and limits of human knowledge.
Fiqh	Islamic jurisprudence; the science of ascertaining the application and implementation of Shari'ah, or Islamic law.
Fitrah	The state of purity and innocence that Muslims believe all humans to be born with; original disposition.
Hadith	Hadith are considered revelation from God and relate to the Prophetic tradition and include the record and narration of anything the Prophet Muhammad (SAW) did, said, or approved of during his life. Hadith are graded and classified according to strength of evidence and the science of Hadith is rigorous to determine authenticity of narrations. The Hadith have similar weighting to the Qur'an in defining what is lawful or not within Islam.
Hadith Qudsi	Sacred Hadith; Hadith Qudsi are narrations that are transmitted from the Prophet (SAW), in which he attributes the words to God. These are usually narrated in the following manner: "The Prophet Muhammad (SAW) said, narrating from his Lord, may He be glorified and exalted…"
Hawa	The Arabic name referring to Eve.
Hijab	Refers to the headscarf worn by Muslim women as an expression of modesty and devotion to their faith.
Hukm	In fiqh, the shari'ah ruling associated with any action (e.g. obligatory, recommendable, neutral, reprehensible, or forbidden).

Ijmaa'	It is the unanimous agreement or consensus of the scholars of the Ummah after the death of the Prophet Muhammad (SAW) concerning an issue at any particular time. Consensus among the scholars constitutes a clear daleel/proof because it is based on the principle that the ummah as a whole cannot agree on misguidance. This is proven by the texts of the Sunnah. Ibn 'Umar narrated that the Prophet (SAW) said: "Allah will not cause my ummah – or the ummah of Muhammad (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him) – to agree on misguidance" (Hadith, Tirmidhi).
Ijtihad	Refers to scholarly reasoning and the thorough exertion of an Islamic jurist's mental faculty in finding a solution to a question in Islam.
'Ilm	The Arabic word for knowledge; often used to refer to Islamic knowledge but refers more comprehensively to all types of knowledge.
Insha'Allah	An Arabic and Islamic term that means 'God-willing'.
Islam	The religion of Muslims; a monotheistic faith believed by Muslims to be the final and complete religion sent by God to humanity as a guidance.
Muhasabah	The practice of self-examination leading to a self-inventory of one's deeds, characteristics, and habits.
Muraqabah	A state of being mindful or conscious of Allah, the Creator. Ibn Al-Qayyim shared that, "It is the constant knowledge and certainty harbored by a slave of Allah that Allah, The Exalted, is ever watchful of his inner and outer reality. Maintaining such knowledge and certainty is the essence of Muraqabah, which is the fruit of a person's knowledge that Allah, The Exalted, watches him, sees him, hears his sayings, and is well-aware of his actions at all times. He knows every breath he takes and every blink of his eyes" (Source: Madaarij As-Saalikeen).
Muslim	A follower of the religion of Islam; linguistically means 'one who submits'.
Nafs	The Islamic concept of the self, soul, or psyche.
Niyyah	The Arabic word for intention; residing in the heart of a person.
Ontology	The study of the nature of being, becoming, existence, and reality.
Prophet Muhammad (SAW)	In Islam, Muhammad (SAW) is considered to be the last and final Messenger and Prophet sent by God to humankind.

Qiyaas	Refers to the use of analogy and comparison. Qiyaas may be used when giving a ruling concerning a novel issue (i.e., one that is not directly mentioned in shari'ah texts) that is the same as the ruling on a basic issue (i.e., one that is directly mentioned in shari'ah texts), on the basis of some common factor between the two issues.
Qur'an	The sacred, holy book of Islam. Believed to be the word of God as dictated to the Prophet Muhammad (SAW) by the angel Gabriel and written down in Arabic.
Rahimahu Allah	Means 'may Allah have mercy on them'; used in reference to someone who has died.
Ruh	An Islamic term referring to the soul of a human being.
Sahabah	Refers to a companion of the Prophet Muhammad (SAW). A sahabah is any Muslim who was alive at the same time as the Prophet Muhammad (SAW) and saw and believed in him before his death.
Salah	The Islamic term referring to prayer; comes from the root word 'sila' which means connection or link. Salah or prayer is considered to directly link a human being with the Creator, Allah (SWT).
Scholar	Refers to one who strives to reach the shari'ah ruling and who has the ability to derive shari'ah rulings from the evidence.
Seerah	The study of the life of the Prophet Muhammad (SAW).
Shari'ah	Often used to refer to Islamic Law; Refers to the entire religion of Islam and includes what God has prescribed for humanity and what He has explained to them of commands and prohibitions.
Shaytan	The Arabic translation of Satan or the Devil.
Student of Knowledge	A phrase used to describe someone who is actively studying and seeking Islamic knowledge
Sunnah	The Sunnah of the Prophet Muhammad (SAW) includes his words, deeds, practices, and rulings. These are described in the Hadith.
Surah	Refers to a chapter of the Qur'an, each of varying lengths. There are 114 chapters in the Qur'an.
Tafseer/Tafsir	Refers to exegesis, usually of the Qur'an. In the context of the Qur'an, tafseer provides explanation, interpretation, context, and commentary on the Qur'an to elucidate its meanings and applications.
Tarbiyyah	To nurture, grow, or develop. Tarbiyyah refers to the growth and development of individuals in various aspects of life and can be used in reference to the nurturing of children as well as the development of adults.

Tawheed	Tawheed in Arabic means attributing Oneness to Allah and describing Him as being One and Unique, with no partner or peer in His Essence and Attributes.
Ukhuwa	Used to refer to the concept of brotherhood and sisterhood in Islam based on shared faith; describes a bond between one Muslim and another Muslim that can be deeper than blood relations when based on shared beliefs.
Ummah	Community; often used in reference to the global Muslim community in its entirety, past and present.
Wajh al-dalala	The manner of substantiating how a piece of evidence or proof supports a specific viewpoint or opinion within Islam and is used in the correct context.

Chapter 1.

Introduction: The Personal & Professional

> *…And the angels will enter upon them from every gate [saying], 'Peace be upon you for what you patiently endured. And excellent is the final home' (Qur'an, 13: 23-24)*

Muslims account for nearly 24% of the world's population (Pew Research Center, 2015). The global Muslim community is diverse, made up of various indigenous, immigrant, refugee, ethnocultural, and racialized groups. In an increasingly hostile and volatile social and political landscape, Muslim communities are facing heightened stigma, prejudice, and hatred. Despite the considerable increase in contemporary mental health challenges to Muslims, many choose not to seek support due to concerns that mainstream therapists do not provide effective treatment within a spiritual context (Amri & Bemak, 2012; Chen & Pallister, 1981; Haque et al., 2016; Somaya Abdullah, 2007). Muslim clients report feeling that therapeutic approaches may be incongruent or misaligned with their worldview (Hodge & Nadir, 2008). Further, research has shown that Muslim populations tend to be concerned that helping professionals do not or will not respect their Islamic values (Hedayat-Diba, 2014; Hodge & Nadir, 2008; Inayat, 2007). This is especially true for those clients who identify as practicing Muslims and who are seeking therapy within an Islamic paradigm. From personal lived experience, I know this to be the case.

The Qur'anic verse referenced at the beginning of this chapter has been a powerful source of comfort, healing, and meaning in my life. And yet, it has not been present or referenced in any therapeutic encounter I have experienced to date. While therapists and practitioners – whether Muslim or not – have easily recognized me as a Muslim due to my *hijab*, many are at a loss for how to approach my faith in the context of therapy. This is the case for many Muslims, regardless of their level of adherence to the faith. But it is perhaps more practicing Muslims who struggle the most in this regard, especially when the idea of an all-encompassing faith may be quite alien in a highly secularized society, and by extension, secularized psychotherapy (Pargament, 2007).

The word 'psychology' comes from Greek origin and means the 'study of the soul', and yet as Pargament (2007) points out, spirituality and the soul have essentially been neglected in psychology for much of the 20th century and beyond. Over recent decades, there has been a substantial increase in literature on the integration of religion and spirituality in the counselling context, as well as the efficacy of such integration when supporting clients (George et al., 2000; O'Connor et al., 2005; Richards et al., 2015). In addition, several authors have spoken to the ethical obligation of practitioners to gain competency in supporting religious and spiritual integration in therapy (Gonsiorek et al., 2009; Richards et al., 2015). Spirituality and faith are increasingly recognized as important factors in the practice and application of psychotherapy. An example of this is the American Psychological Association's creation of Division 36, the Society for the Psychology of Religion and Spirituality, as well as the United Kingdom's Royal College of Psychiatrists' development of the Spirituality and Psychiatry Special Interest Group (Kaplick & Skinner, 2017).

Much of this heightened interest has come as a result of studies demonstrating that religiously-oriented therapies have a positive impact in the treatment of religiously-observant clients when goals are framed within their spiritual understandings (Anderson et al., 2015; Hook et al., 2009; Martinez et al., 2007). Data from outcome research studies also indicate that spiritual and religious approaches are effective in improving psychological wellbeing of clients (Anderson et al., 2015; Smith et al., 2007). Cornish and Wade (2010) highlight that there is a need to discuss religion in the counselling context as it is a significant aspect of many clients' lives. Hoffman and Walach (2011) go a step further in their recommendations, suggesting that all counsellors be trained in the application of religious values in therapy. However, Sperry (2016) points out that while clinicians should complete a thorough spiritual assessment with clients as appropriate, they may not be the ideal individual to address specific identified concerns with clients. In this case, Sperry (2016) suggests a referral may be most appropriate. Related to this, Koenig (2012) highlights that while one should responsibly refer and collaborate with other helping professionals, including religious advisors or supports, clinicians must respond in a sensitive, helpful manner that he describes as 'spiritual care'. All of these recommendations are especially relevant as research findings indicate that most clients, regardless of religious affiliation, express a desire to include spiritual issues in the

therapeutic encounter, viewing spirituality as having a positive influence and impact on their life and wellbeing (Hodge & Nadir, 2008).

While the increase in research affirming the importance of spiritual integration and the reflection of this in professional ethical codes is promising, there is still considerable progress to be made. Much of the research for some time has centered on Judeo-Christian populations (Abu-Raiya & Pargament, 2011; Raiya et al., 2007). While there are many parallels that can be drawn across different religious groups, each religious group has distinct needs and experiences that must be accounted for, including Muslims. Fortunately, there has been a growth in research over the last decade focused on the integration of Islamic values in counselling and psychotherapy (Haque et al., 2016). As Abu Raiya and Pargament (2011) point out, this is critical given that Islam plays a central role in the daily living and well-being of practicing Muslims. Research has underscored the importance and relevance of Islam to the lives of Muslims and their overall well being, thus emphasizing the need for practitioners to give attention to religion when working with Muslim populations (Abdel-Khalek, 2007b; Abu-Raiya & Pargament, 2011; Tiliouine et al., 2009). Neglecting this aspect of life will lead to an incomplete accounting of the client's values and beliefs, undoubtedly impacting the therapeutic encounter and outcomes.

An increasing number of studies have shown that several psychological theories and ideas are inapplicable and potentially harmful to certain populations, including minority communities living in Euro-Western contexts (Abe-Kim et al., 2007; Haque & Keshavarzi, 2014; Keshavarzi & Haque, 2013). Hodge and Nadir (2008) have presented evidence that pathological mental health indicators are not universal and that psychopathology cannot be conceptualized and defined in one, singular way. It is evident, however, that Western conceptualizations of defining and understanding mental health and wellbeing are dominant at present (Abe-Kim et al., 2007; Haque & Keshavarzi, 2014; Hodge & Nadir, 2008; Keshavarzi & Haque, 2013). This insufficient understanding and awareness of different conceptualizations of health and healing not only reduces the positive impact on clients, but can cause harm to individuals and communities (Abe-Kim et al., 2007; Haque & Keshavarzi, 2014; Keshavarzi & Haque, 2013).

A Personal & Professional Journey

It is nearly impossible to turn on the television, read a news article, or see a headline without being exposed to a story of someone Muslim, somewhere in the world being portrayed negatively. Muslims have been centre stage for a play they did not audition for, reading from a script and narrative that is neither helpful, nor authentic to Islamic teachings and principles. There is great interest in Muslim communities, whether it be in the media, political campaigns, or in the world of academia. This interest is often ill-intentioned and has rarely focused on elevating the voices of more practicing Muslims who hold tightly to the teachings of their faith. Muslims who fit more neatly within mainstream ideological frameworks and movements may be heard from time to time, but even this has its limits. Unfortunately, this phenomenon of selective representation is also present in the social sciences, including the field of psychotherapy and counselling.

This research study is not purely an academic endeavour; it is simultaneously personal and professional. As a practicing Muslim, I have struggled in my study and practice of psychotherapy and counselling. Struggled to find my grounding. Struggled to fit within a box that simply does not feel authentic or true to my Islamic values or principles. I have struggled to choose a theory when every theory felt like a violation of my understanding of humans and existence itself. And so, I read more, researched more, and explored more. Existential theories felt more aligned, but they too were at odds with my belief system, as well as my understanding of a universal truth.

Theoretical frameworks represent more than just ideas of how one approaches counselling. These theories describe what we believe about human nature, motivations, existence, growth, and development. They affirm what one believes to be healthy or unhealthy, as well as what is helpful or unhelpful. They posit goals and outline proposed mechanisms and necessary ingredients for change, whilst offering guidance on what one should aspire towards. In more ways than one, theories are representations of belief systems. They speak to our worldview and our understanding of existence - religious or not. So, how could I adopt one of these theories as my own, when I already came into my training with a clear and confident worldview and understanding of these ideas? I simply have not been able to reconcile my faith with these other orientations. Attempting to ground myself in a different theory felt like shackling myself and my potential as a therapist and researcher before even beginning the therapeutic process.

For many, I understand that it might be challenging to comprehend how and exactly *why* someone would choose to centre their life around their faith. How could one's religious or spiritual convictions be so strong that they decide to use it as the decision-making framework for every aspect of their life? The people I associate with, the places I frequent, what I eat, what I wear, the goals I set for myself, and the ultimate vision I strive for – they all revolve around my identity as a practicing Muslim. But why?

The Islamic Worldview, My Worldview

Faith in Islam is built upon the belief in one fundamental truth– *Tawheed*. *Tawheed* is the belief that there is only one God, All-Wise, All-Powerful, All-Knowing, All-Hearing, All-Seeing, and the Absolute Truth. It is the belief that there is nothing that compares to God, and as Muslims, we do not associate any partners or children with Him. Ultimately, God – or *Allah* as we would say in the Arabic language – created all that is in the universe. With that in mind, we therefore believe that Allah is the best disposer of our affairs. Since the beginning of human existence, Allah has sent guidance for humankind through revelation. From the time of Adam and Eve (or *Hawa*, as she is referred to in Islam), to the final Messenger and Prophet Muhammad (SAW), we believe that ultimately, all humans exist to worship and submit to their Creator. As such, all of our actions and decisions in life are made with this purpose in mind.

This is a radical perspective when juxtaposed against other ideologies, theories, and frameworks that are popular today. And yet, it is arguable that every theoretical orientation posits equally radical assumptions and beliefs about the purpose of human existence. Understandably, one may wonder if the use of an Islamic framework and worldview may infringe upon the beliefs of a client who does not identify as Muslim. This is a valid question, but it is a question that should be asked of every therapist regardless of the types of values they hold and the framework they use. From humanism to feminism to existentialism– each theory puts forward an ontological and axiological understanding that underpins the therapeutic encounter. At first glance, it might seem that the narrative therapist's belief in multiple truths is far more open and respectful than the idea that fundamental, universal truths exist. But why is that? Upon further examination, it can be argued that the insistence upon multiple truths is no less radical than the belief that there exists fundamental truths.

There is no division between the personal and professional identity of a practicing Muslim in the sense that Islam, the core of our values and belief system, does not simply disappear as we walk into the counselling room. Mainstream psychology has also embraced the subjective nature of therapists, as is evidenced in my own training to date. The idea that therapists can be a 'blank screen' has not only been demonstrated to be impossible, but potentially unhelpful to the client (Hoffman, 1983). We are told that it is not possible to enter the therapeutic encounter as an objective, value-free counsellor – we bring our thoughts, ideas, perspectives, and understandings through the door with us. Religious identities also persist and exist within therapy, and yet, it has often felt that religious perspectives are inappropriate to bring forward. The subject of religion itself is often met with hesitance, discomfort, and judgement.

Over time, it has become clear that my own professional emancipation could only take place through Islamic psychology – a different framework entirely – which is based on a distinct worldview. I am grateful that I have become acquainted with a flourishing, though still small, group of researchers and practitioners who feel similarly and are committed to developing the field of Islamic psychology. While growing in breadth and depth, the field of Islamic psychology is still in its infancy, maturing more rapidly in recent years. Abdallah Rothman (2018) describes the differences between Islamic and conventional psychological approaches quite beautifully, sharing:

> Islamic psychology is an indigenous approach to the study and understanding of human psychology that is informed by the teaching and knowledge from the Quran and the Prophetic tradition (Haque, 1998; Utz, 2011). It is grounded in the ontological paradigm that is elucidated in the Islamic tradition, rather than the secular Western paradigm in which conventional psychology is rooted. Stemming from this, Islamic psychotherapy is an indigenous approach to mental health practice that is derived from Islamic traditions and practices. An Islamic psychology approach to therapy recognizes and engages the soul in the conceptualization of the self and often focuses on the heart rather than the mind as the center of the person. (p.26)

There is likely to be a strong reaction to the idea of therapies based on faith or religion. Some academics argue that there is no Islamic psychology. These researchers strongly disagree that psychology, when viewed as a science, should be conceptualized, or viewed differently based on religious beliefs (Rowatt, 2013; Sahin, 2013).

Adem Sahin (2013) assesses whether there is legitimate need for indigenous approaches to the practice of psychology if the Western approaches truly are objective and scientific in their application. He references the Islamization of Knowledge movement, focusing on the epistemological principles and methods outlined by Al-Faruqi (1989). Further, he references Abdulhamdi Al-Hashimi (1981) and his work of *Islamization of the Discipline of Psychology.* Sahin (2013) argues "that which renders psychology religious is man" (p.329). He suggests that there is no inherently Islamic psychology, but rather that Islamic psychology is "the conception of man by a Muslim who is influenced by revelation" (p. 329). With this point, Sahin neglects to recognize the holistic and comprehensive nature of the Islamic faith. Sahin (2013) argues that any information needed for a psychological theory would need to be directly described in Islamic texts in order to truly make it 'Islamic'. This is not necessarily always the case. The Islamic tradition also places great emphasis on *scholars* and people of knowledge. In an authentic *Hadith*, Abu Darda (RA) narrates that:

> *"I heard the Messenger of Allah (SAW) say: '…The scholars are the heirs of the Prophets. The Prophets did not leave behind dinars or dirhams, rather they left behind a heritage of knowledge, and the one who acquires it acquires an abundant portion.'" (Hadith, Sunan Abu Dawood)*

Sahin (2013) further expands upon his point arguing that there is no Islamic epistemology that can be used today to develop a truly Islamic psychology. He concludes with the following:

> Islamic psychology is not the psychology of the revelation, but that of the Muslim who is influenced and informed by the revelation. Or it includes information about the human being and human behaviours, which is not an essentially religious topic. Accordingly, Islamic psychology refers to the psychology whose subject and object of study is Muslims, indicating the psychological studies carried on in Islamic cultural settings. (p.333)

Rowatt (2013) provides a response to this article by Adem Sahin, further adding to the argument against the need for an 'Islamic Psychology'. Rowatt's arguments reveal his discomfort and unease about psychotherapeutic frameworks that are based on different religious worldviews. He calls for a single, united psychology of religion, suggesting that academia should instead view religion as culture. This is fascinating on several fronts. First, Rowatt's place of privilege and own background is potentially a strong contributing factor to his perspective. As an individual appearing to identify with the dominant culture that will undoubtedly hold the power to define this single, united

approach, it is unsurprising for him to hold this stance. Second, one can argue that most, if not all, of the founders of the different schools of thoughts of psychotherapy were staunch in their claims and beliefs. As mentioned before, the different components of each theory are fundamentally no different than the components of a faith. Third, Rowatt and Sahin, to an extent, fail to recognize that in normative Islamic thought, there simply is no separation or dissonance between faith and science. This perspective will be further expanded upon in Chapter 3 with a discussion of the Islamic approach to knowledge and information. Yet, the taboo label of religion makes the idea of an indigenous Islamic approach to psychology frightening and uncalled for in many circles.

In an interesting discussion between Sebastian Murken and Ashiq Ali Shah (2002), the differences between naturalistic and Islamic approaches to psychotherapy are debated. In a particularly relevant excerpt, Shah disagrees with Murken's assertion that methodologies used by all approaches to psychotherapy should follow hypothetico-deductive approaches. Shah (2002) explains:

> In my opinion, this is the major problem with the so-called scientific approach using empirical methods. These scientific theories are reductionist fallacies of the human mind that view a human being in terms of specific proportions or percentages; they are not universal. The limitation of these theories to only certain classes of people makes their assumptions and blind application to other cultures unacceptable. For example, a handful of patients with mental disorders from Viennese bourgeois society were studied by Freud to formulate his assumptions of psychoanalysis. In the history of the so-called scientific psychology, this is an example of gross overgeneralization concerning human behavior on the basis of an unrepresentative sample. The data on behavior of rats, cats, pigeons, monkeys, and U. S. students were the basis of the theory of behaviorism obtained via logical inference. Such practices in psychology have stripped human beings of their consciousness, freedom, emotion, values, virtue, and most importantly, their soul. (p. 243)

This is an important point as often theological approaches are discredited using the point that they cannot be tested. Shah responds to this attempt to discredit religious approaches by arguing that this is also the case for secular theories:

> None of the psychological theories could be refuted, or to say it in empiricists' terminology, falsified. The truth value of Murken's (this issue) assertion that "theological doctrines are not falsifiable scientific theories" could be best juxtaposed with the "pseudofalsificationism" being practiced in scientific psychology. This is due to the self-fulfilling nature of the positivistic paradigm. (p. 243)

We were trained in our graduate program to work with theory as our departing point. We were taught that it is important to be systematic and consistent when working with different clients. Of course, we tailor our approach to the client in front of us in the therapy room, but we begin from a stable, consistent foundation. A solid theoretical foundation for any therapist is like a home base. We may visit many frameworks to borrow techniques and strategies as appropriate for each unique client, but we depart and return to our home after visiting. Further, the places we visit and the things we interact with should not be so far off from home that we get lost along the way. Thus, whichever theoretical approaches we integrate into our practice should ideally be consistent with our values and beliefs. This is the subject of this study. I have yet to find a home in counselling psychology; a home that values my worldview and understanding of the human condition, or one that is based upon the principles of a faith that is beyond rituals and encompasses all facets of life. A home that allows me to best meet the needs of my diverse clients and offers a strong foundation as a launching point for my best therapeutic work. This study is a journey home.

Thus, the focus of this research is to explore the Islamic conceptualization of psychological wellbeing and healing based upon the Islamic tradition. This study aims to develop the beginnings of a framework for counselling based upon Islam's understanding of human nature, wellness and unwellness, and change processes. Through an investigation and review of Islamic epistemological and ontological perspectives, the proposed research will aim to offer a unique methodology to address the research problem at hand. *Insha'Allah*, my sincere hope is that this will contribute to the development of a comprehensive framework to be used by any therapist to support clients, Muslim or not, who may benefit from an approach to psychotherapy grounded in authentic Islamic principles.

Chapter 2.

Literature Review

Reviewing the literature has been a journey in and of itself. I have chosen not to rely solely on mainstream academic literature to guide the exploration of this subject. Although there is little doubt that peer-reviewed literature is important, the application of Islamic principles of knowledge-seeking is critical given the research question at hand. Countless literary works in the Islamic tradition outline the approach and accompanying principles to seeking knowledge – religious, secular, or otherwise. Some may understand this to mean that I have abandoned scientific principles as I review the available literature. This is certainly not the case. In fact, the incredibly high standard that must be met while gathering, preserving, and authenticating Islamic knowledge is astounding (Al-Asqalani, 1987; Hasan, 1999). This chapter will provide a critical overview of the relevant literature that will be appraised with a lens that applies Islamic principles of knowledge-seeking. This lens and approach will be described in more depth in Chapter 3.

This review began with a search of PsycInfo and EBSCO academic electronic databases using combinations of the following search terms: Islam*, Muslim*, psycho*, mental health*, well-being, religio*, and therap*. Studies cited in this literature review will be limited to those written in or translated to English. As such, this review is not comprehensive given the strong likelihood that there is literature available in other languages. In addition, searches of relevant and authentic Islamic sources, grey literature, and websites of relevant institutions and initiatives also inform this review. Through this exploration of the literature, it is easy to appreciate the myriad of perspectives on the relationship between Islam and psychology.

This chapter begins with a brief note on the application and use of the English language across the literature and in this study. This chapter will then offer a review of literature pertaining to the history of the relationship between Islam and psychology. This will provide some context for the differentiation between Muslim psychology and Islamic psychology. Given that the literature conflates many constructs, such as Muslims, ethnicity, culture, spirituality, and religion, this delineation is critical. Next, the varying

definitions of Islamic Psychology are discussed. The chapter will then shift to an overview of what has been the most popular approach in the Islam and psychology movement - the application of Euro-Western frameworks within Muslim communities, as well as the more recent attempts to integrate Islamic values, techniques, or perspectives into these existing frameworks. The overwhelming bulk of the literature retrieved and reviewed is focused on these applications and adaptations. Finally, the chapter will conclude with a focus on the current state of the literature in the field of Islamic psychology.

A Note on Language & Terminology

Language and words are powerful means of communication, especially when attempting to describe or define new or foreign concepts and ideas. As noted in the introductory chapter, this research aims to shift the focus from predominantly Eurocentric, Western perspectives and ideas, and center Islamic principles and understandings. Yet, in this chapter and the chapters to come, there are many words that are used which originate from and thus may reflect Eurocentric perspectives. Acknowledging that words hold significance in both intended and original meaning, this can set the stage for a confusing situation for readers and researchers alike. As a self-identified practicing Muslim who was born and raised in Canada, my learning and experience of Islam has largely been through the English language, using terminology and words that are translations of ideas and concepts within Islam. Sometimes, these ideas and concepts do not have a direct translation and words in languages other than the original Arabic fail to capture their true essence and meaning.

The Qur'an was revealed in the Arabic language, and as such, any translation is a best attempt at capturing the meaning of the Qur'an but would not be a literal translation. Qur'anic Arabic is multidimensional, simultaneously holding linguistic, legal, and contextual/historical definitions and meanings. Many Muslims who have grown up in the West, including myself, are very accustomed to using English words in place of specific Islamic terminology. For example, many Muslims use the English word 'soul' regularly, though in the Qur'an and *Hadith*, this concept is referred to as the *ruh* or *nafs*. It is true that the word 'soul' has ascribed meaning in a Euro-Western context, a meaning that is distinct from the Islamic understanding of the 'soul'. However, in this case, it is arguably a reasonable use of the English word as it is simply the English

translation of the Arabic word. It should be noted though that in order to provide clarity and enhance understanding of the concept, further qualifiers and descriptors would be appropriate and helpful.

In reviewing the literature, it is quite common for authors and researchers to also use English terminology to describe Islamic concepts and ideas, even when there is a clear difference between what is meant and understood in an Islamic versus Euro-Western context. The reality is that most Muslims do not speak Arabic as their first language, though they study and learn to read the Qur'an in classical Arabic along with translations of the meaning. The Arabic recitation of the Qur'an itself is believed to hold special value and reward, and as such, Muslims with different backgrounds and languages learn to recite the Qur'an in its original language. In our many diverse communities, we are quite accustomed to switching between English and Arabic terms, as well as words from any given person's native language. In a Euro-Western context, many Muslims use English words that carry specific meanings to them that perhaps only Muslims would initially understand as different from mainstream definitions. For example, when using the word 'evidence' in relation to Islam, we are usually referring to Islamic evidence, such as that in the *Qur'an* and *Hadith*. Or, when one uses the word '*scholar'*, it is often in reference to an Islamic scholar who has studied a branch of Islam in depth. To an outside observer, these words likely do not hold such implied meanings.

For the purposes of this study, certain English words will be used to describe Islamic ideas and concepts, with the disclaimer that these words have different meanings in the Islamic faith. There are times when an English word may arguably be inappropriate to use, particularly when the meaning is exceedingly distinct and when an Islamic term exists that can be used and defined. A common example in the literature is the use of the word 'meditation'. Many authors and researchers in the field of Islam and psychology use the word meditation to describe specific Islamic practices – a word that I personally avoid using. The reason for this is that the word meditation brings forward a vivid and salient image of a specific practice in this society; a practice that is not found in the Islamic tradition. This is a case where it is arguably favourable to use the Islamic terminology as the attempt to translate to English will possibly lead to confusion and misunderstanding. In sum, it is important to highlight that a combination of English and Arabic Islamic terminology, as well as Euro-Western terminology will be used throughout

this and subsequent chapters. Undoubtedly, some richness and nuanced meaning may be lost in translation along the way, though every effort will be made to qualify meanings.

History of Islam & Psychology

Several researchers and writers have focused on the historical relationship between Islam and psychology. Karim (1984) points out that a relationship between Islam and Psychology has existed for quite some time, describing it as a lost asset for the Muslim community. He writes:

> Islamic psychology is a prime example of Muslim superiority in knowledge, which they have lost due to the political and economic exploitation by the colonialist powers with a consequent deterioration in education. For this reason, Muslims have not produced any leading scientists for the past two centuries. Yet the Muslim masters of the past have done much research into psychology, some of their findings having been plagiarized by the West, and many of their concepts antecede those of the West by centuries. (p. 2)

Karim's point about the "Muslim superiority in knowledge" highlights that the Muslim communities of the past were once at the height of exploration and innovation in various fields. This historical status and their advancements, including those in the field of human psychology, deteriorated and eventually diminished due to colonialism. Unfortunately, this history is often neglected despite the contributions to the global knowledge base made by Muslims scientists, researchers, and leaders of the past.

A review published by Haque (2004) provides a review of several early writings of Islamic scholars between the 9th and 12th century. The author highlights that psychology in the Muslim world appears to have arisen as a science at least a century prior to the advent of modern psychology as we know it today. Haque (2004) and others have worked to bring attention to many of the concepts and techniques written about by early Islamic scholars (al-Balkhī & Badri, 2013; Awaad & Ali, 2015, 2016; Badri, 2000). There have also been several attempts to translate scholarly works on the subject of psychology to further spread the work of classical Muslim scholars (Arberry, 2007; Ghazali, 2014). Some research has focused on early classical scholars' writings and descriptions of specific disorders. For example, Awaad and Ali (2015) studied Al-Balkhi's understanding and conceptualization of obsessive-compulsive disorder, in which they were able to identify several transcultural diagnostic consistencies with the present-day

DSM criteria for the disorder. As Awaad and Ali (2015) note, despite the remarkable observations in this text that was written well over 1000 years ago, it is virtually unknown in the field of psychology. Rather, Euro-Western researchers and contemporaries have been dominant in the field.

In another study, Abbas et al. (2017) provide an overview of the perspectives of early Muslim scholars and psychologists on spirituality from an Islamic standpoint. Highlighting several historical and contemporary pieces of literature, the authors offer a striking conclusion:

> Unlike their counterparts in the West, Muslim scholars and psychologists who believe in the existence of the human soul, emphasize greatly on the spiritual dimension of man. To them, the understanding of man will be incomplete without understanding the entity and nature of the human soul. Many Muslim scholars call to restore the spiritual dimension of man as a way to solve many issues related to man's psychological problems, mainly in the area of mental health. At the same time, Muslim scholars are aware that not all ideas developed and promoted by Western scholars and psychologists are against their religious beliefs. As such, they adopt, adapt and assimilate Western ideas and psychological tools that are useful in solving human problems. The qualifying reason that allows Muslim scholars to integrate ideas taken from others is that such scientific and innovative approach should be in harmony with their metaphysical framework *('aqidah)* and the value system. (p.66)

Unfortunately, although potentially a rich line of inquiry, the historical accounts of early Muslim scholars constitute a small portion of the available published literature. It is likely that additional literature exists that has not yet been written or translated into English, thus representing a significant gap in this review. Attempts to conceptualize an Islamic framework for wellbeing and healing will need to address this gap in the future, so that valuable sources of Islamic scholarly literature are not neglected. Contemporary Islamic scholars today can also support this endeavour given their familiarity with such works and the original languages of the texts.

Muslim Psychology VS. Islamic Psychology

There are several divergent conceptualizations of the field of Islam and Psychology. In a narrative review, Kaplick and Skinner (2017) discuss the evolution of the Islam and psychology movement to provide an overview of the field as it presently stands. The authors describe three primary approaches within the Islam and Psychology

movement, including the Islamic filter approach, the Islamic psychology approach, and the Comparison approach. In reviewing the literature, this choice of categorization seems fitting. The Islamic filter approach is described by Kaplick and Skinner (2017) as one that "evaluates modern psychology from a critical Islamic viewpoint but still functions within the paradigm of Western psychology" (p.200). The comparison approach is different in that it is focused on commonalities, and as the authors note, "draws comparisons between Western psychological concepts and their assumed equivalents in Islamic sources" (Kaplick & Skinner, 2017, p.201). The authors highlight that Islamic psychology refers to psychology developed from Islamic sources, and not the religious experiences of Muslims. The latter would be referred to as Muslim psychology or Muslim mental health. It is important to distinguish between psychotherapeutic frameworks that can be applied with Muslim populations and psychotherapeutic frameworks that are based upon Islamic principles. While there has been significant growth of research on Muslim psychology or mental health, the field of Islamic psychology has taken more time to develop and is still in its infancy (Haque et al., 2016).

Throughout the literature, there is evidence that these two constructs – Islamic psychology and Muslim psychology, are often conflated and used interchangeably. The bulk of the literature relates largely to Muslim psychology, focusing on the application of mainstream Euro-Western approaches with Muslim populations. This research is complex given that Muslims differ in their level of practice of the faith, as well as the importance they place on their religion. One person may adhere to one aspect of the faith, and another may not. Some researchers have responded to this challenge of treatment fidelity by developing scales to measure level of religious practice (Abdel-Khalek, 2007a; Alghorani, 2008; AlMarri et al., 2009; Dasti & Sitwat, 2014; Francis et al., 2008; Jana-Masri & Priester, 2007; Raiya et al., 2008). These tools are helpful in clinical settings for therapists to understand the importance of faith in the lives of Muslim clients, but unfortunately do not provide direction or guidance on how to competently integrate spirituality in therapy. Thomas and Ashraf (2011) suggest that this requires further studies to synthesize and integrate Islamic principles and competencies into psychotherapeutic practice. Over the last decade, there has been some progress in this area, with a proliferation of research aimed at integrating Islamic practices and values within existing Western frameworks (Paukert et al., 2009; Thomas & Ashraf, 2011). These adaptations of Euro-Western approaches to include Islamic concepts or sources

are what Kaplick and Skinner (2017) refer to as the filter and comparison approaches within the Islam and Psychology field and have certainly gained traction.

Islamic Adaptations of Western Approaches

A significant portion of the literature focuses on the adaptation of existing Euro-Western frameworks to suit Muslim populations and/or Islamic beliefs. This is not surprising given there is widespread interest in enhancing culturally competent care to diverse populations. Consequently, the adaptation of dominant models is a common approach employed to achieve this goal. There is a wealth of literature on the integration and adaptation of mainstream approaches for religious communities, though historically much of it centred on Christian and Jewish-identifying populations, rather than Muslim-identifying communities. However, over the last two decades, there has been a steady increase in research done specifically with Muslim populations (Azhar et al., 1994; Azhar & Varma, 1995b; Razali et al., 1998).

There have been several attempts to incorporate spiritual and religious aspects of Islam into the practice of psychotherapy (Al-Krenawi & Graham, 2000; D. J. Carter & Rashidi, 2003; Hamdan, 2008). These approaches largely look to incorporate Islamic teachings into Western psychotherapeutic frameworks or techniques. Several empirical studies have found that different forms of adapted religious psychotherapy are effective with Muslim clients who suffer from anxiety, depression, and bereavement (Azhar et al., 1994; Azhar & Varma, 1995a, 1995b; Razali et al., 1998). As an example of one such approach, Amer and Jalal (2011) offer a review and adaptation of psychodynamic, cognitive-behavioural, and humanistic-experiential models of psychotherapy to align with Islamic understandings. They detail an analysis of each that includes points of divergence, convergence, and where specific techniques may be adapted for Muslim clients with the aim of achieving more positive, helpful outcomes.

Various modalities of cognitive-behavioural approaches are commonly adapted for diverse religious and cultural groups. Hodge & Nadir (2008) explore four therapeutic approaches and their alignment with Islamic values, including psychoanalytic, group, strengths-based, and cognitive therapies. The authors begin by arguing that cognitive therapies are especially aligned with Islamic values, citing several other research articles with similar findings (Al-Radi & Mahdy, 1994; Banawi & Stockton, 1993; R. B. Carter & El

Hindi, 1999; Haynes et al., 1997). They highlight that reason, education, and logic are all affirmed as important within Islamic tenets, and as such, cognitive-behavioural approaches are potentially aligned. They note, however, that the use of self-statements within the approach would need to be adapted to be more fully congruent. In another study, Hamdan (2008) explores beneficial cognitions and self-statements that could be integrated into existing cognitive-behavioural approaches when working with Muslim clients. Hamdan (2008), like Hodge and Nadir (2008), suggests that if the self-statements used in Western cognitive therapy are replaced with statements drawn from Islamic teachings, therapies can be more effective and appropriate when working with Muslim populations.

Dwairy (2006) offers an adaptation and application of culture analysis and metaphor psychotherapy with Arab-Muslim clients. Dwairy (2006) argues that unlike individualistic notions of self-actualization, the metaphor approach allows therapy to be more clearly rooted in the culture and religious position of the client, rather than that of the therapist. He notes that this is especially important when working with clients in conflict or in difficult relationships with their families, where values and belief systems may be particularly salient. Similarly, Isgandarova (2019) adapts mindfulness-based therapies using the practice of *muraqabah*, which she defines as meditation. While initially it appeared that the author was shedding light on a technique indigenous to Islamic thought, it became clear that the aim of the research was instead to use the approach as a tool in existing cognitive-behavioural approaches. While these approaches provide valuable insight into how therapies may be altered and applied in practice for Muslims, their focus remains the adaptation of existing, largely Eurocentric approaches to psychotherapy.

Some authors have found that the extent to which Islamically-modified therapies are effective with clients is dependent on the degree of their practice of the faith (Nadir & Dziegielewski, 2001). Several studies over the last decade have focused on the development and implementation of measures that are appropriate when working with Muslim clients. Hodge (2005) identified the degree to which clients practice the five pillars of Islam as a key indicator of how applicable Islamically-modified cognitive therapy may be to clients. Some researchers suggest that the scarcity of literature exploring Islamic approaches may be related to the lack of reliable, valid measures of religiosity that would indicate how to best work with a particular client (Raiya et al.,

2008). However, Haque et al. (2016) found that there has been a rapid growth in scales and assessments focused on Islam specifically. While there are several scales presently available that could be applied, they suggest that the further development of scales focused on Islamic dimensions is a critical step towards developing authentically Islamic frameworks. This would ultimately enhance understanding of individual differences and of how treatment may need to be modified across populations. In their review of the last ten years of research in the field of Islam and psychology, Haque et al. (2016) highlight the need for theoretical frameworks that are grounded in Islamic epistemology and ontology, with few existing models of psychotherapeutic care that are authentic to Islamic understandings. As highlighted, the presently available frameworks predominantly reflect Eurocentric assumptions and perspectives of human psychology (Kaplick & Skinner, 2017). This is not unique to Islam and psychology, as many cultural and religious-based therapies are in fact adaptations or simply translations of mainstream approaches, rather than frameworks that are indigenous to a culture or religion.

Islamic Psychology

Defining Islamic Psychology

Throughout the literature, it is evident that there are varying perspectives on what exactly Islamic psychology is, how it should be defined, and what should be included in the field of study. York Al-Karam (2018) discusses the difficulty in arriving at a consistent definition of Islamic psychology, citing various works that claim to define it, but then do not. She also notes many works that provide a definition with no clear methodology or rationale as to how the authors or researchers arrived at the definition. Using the Multilevel Interdisciplinary Paradigm as a methodology, York Al-Karam suggests the following definition of Islamic psychology:

> An interdisciplinary science where psychology subdisciplines and/or related disciplines engage scientifically about a particular topic and at a particular level with various Islamic sects, sources, sciences, and/or schools of thought using a variety of methodological tools (York Al-Karam, 2018, p.101-102).

York Al-Karam (2018) argues that while there is no single agreed-upon definition, this proposed definition allows Islamic psychology to be "broad and diverse yet unified and

whole" (p.103). Although this is certainly intriguing, it leads to a definition that is both comprehensive, yet seemingly empty at the same time. As York Al-Karam accurately points out, there is still considerable debate over what makes Islamic psychology *Islamic*.

Kaplick and Skinner (2017) offer a different definition of Islamic psychology, describing it as:

> …the interdisciplinary field that explores human nature in relation to Islamic sources and which uses this knowledge to bring human beings into their best possible state, physically, spiritually, cognitively, and emotionally" (Kaplick & Skinner, 2017, p.199).

This definition appears to align more closely with an Islamic epistemology and ontology. Kaplick and Skinner (2017) note that at the time of their publication, there had been very few fulsome frameworks that convey the Islamic understanding of human nature based on Islamic sources (Abu-Raiya, 2012b; Ansari, 2002). In a similar line of thinking to Kaplick and Skinner (2017), Abdallah Rothman (2018) offers his definition of Islamic psychology that is potentially more comprehensive:

> Islamic psychology is an indigenous approach to the study and understanding of human psychology that is informed by the teaching and knowledge from the Quran and the Prophetic tradition (Haque, 1998; Utz, 2011). It is grounded in the ontological paradigm that is elucidated in the Islamic tradition, rather than the secular Western paradigm in which conventional psychology is rooted. Stemming from this, Islamic psychotherapy is an indigenous approach to mental health practice that is derived from Islamic traditions and practices. An Islamic psychology approach to therapy recognizes and engages the soul in the conceptualization of the self and often focuses on the heart rather than the mind as the center of the person. (p.26)

This definition's strength is in the clear criteria it includes, as well as its focus on the ontological paradigm used within Islamic psychology. For the purposes of this research, this is the formal definition that will be used to understand Islamic psychology.

Why Islamic Psychology?

One cannot speak of Islamic psychology without referring to one of the most seminal and key contemporary pieces of work in the field of Islam and Psychology, Malik Badri's *The Dilemma of the Muslim Psychologist* (1979). Badri's landmark publication is

arguably the catalytic piece of writing that sparked the contemporary Islamic Psychology movement. Badri (1979) suggests that Muslim practitioners must be wary of accepting Western approaches to psychology that are often at odds with Islamic principles. He suggests that Muslim psychologists, and by extension therapists, must initially only accept the aspects of Western psychology that are objective and not value-driven. Badri then goes on to argue that Muslims should then ensure that any of these objective elements only be used in accordance with Islamic values. In other words, anything that Muslims do accept from Western Psychology must be both objective and morally acceptable and aligned with Islamic principles. The question remains what specifically can be considered objective and free of values, as one could argue that all concepts and ideas are ultimately linked to or driven by values. In the most recent edition of his book, Badri includes a preface where he notes that at the time of the initial publication, he did not feel Muslim psychologists were ready to accept more than a limited critique of Western psychology (Badri, 2016). In more recent works over the last decade, Badri argues that there is a need for purely Islamic psychological frameworks first and foremost. Badri refers to a powerful *Hadith* to exemplify what he feels is the danger of blindly following Euro-Western theories and norms:

> *Abu Sa'id al-Khudri reported Allah's Messenger (SAW) as saying: "You would tread the same path as was trodden by those before you inch by inch and step by step so much so that if they had entered into the hole of the lizard, you would follow them in this also." (Hadith, Sahih Muslim)*

Badri suggests that Muslim social scientists have followed and adopted theories, such as Freudian theories, from the West to such a significant extent that even when these theories have been abandoned by the West, Muslims continue to hold fast to the approaches. He describes these Muslim practitioners as suffering from an inferiority complex, being "more Western than Westerners; more royal than the King" (Badri, 2016).

In a more recent article, Badri (2012) outlines several reasons why Western psychotherapies cannot be of real or meaningful help to Muslim clients. Firstly, Badri (2012) challenges the notion that Western theories can be universally applied. Secondly, he highlights what he suggests is the established fact that psychological disorders and wellbeing are culture-bound. Finally, Badri (2012) shares his own perspective that many approaches to Western psychotherapy include theories of human nature that hold a

generally godless worldview. Badri (2012) suggests that when working with Muslim clients, therapists grounded in Western approaches may have contradictory philosophies of life and understandings of human existence. Badri (2012) highlights that conflicting epistemologies ultimately impact the process of therapy, noting that "One who holds revealed knowledge in the highest esteem cannot have a harmonious interaction with one who considers such an epistemological aspect in the lowest status" (p. 5). In this case, revealed knowledge is in reference to knowledge that has been revealed by God (e.g. Qur'an, *Hadith*).

Using the landmark work of Badri (1979) as a starting point, Aglikaya-Sahin (2019) reviews the developments within the Islam and Psychology field to date, with the aim of assessing if Muslim psychologists have left the lizard's hole or not. She characterizes the overall Islamic Psychology movement as an extension of the Islamization of the Knowledge (IOK) movement, beginning with the publication of the *Dilemma of the Muslim Psychologist* by Malik Badri (1979). Agilkaya-Sahin (2019) describes the progression of the field as initially defensive and emotional, shifting to research emphasizing the work of early Muslim scholars, and eventually moving towards the development of more grounded conceptual frameworks. She argues that perhaps it is more appropriate to focus on an ontological emphasis rather than epistemological. To this end, she suggests that the underlying issue in the field of Islamic psychology is the lack of a conceptual framework and a clear answer to the question of what makes Islamic psychology *Islamic*.

The Development of Islamic Frameworks

Aisha Utz (2011) outlines a detailed description of Islamic psychology in her book *Psychology from the Islamic Perspective*. In reading this text, it is evident that Utz is strongly grounded in Islamic epistemology, consistently citing evidence from authentic sources of knowledge, including the Qur'an and *Hadith*, as well as secondary sources from Islamic scholars. She reviews several pertinent topics relevant to the practice of contemporary psychology, including the Islamic perspective on emotions, lifespan development, motivation, and mental illness more generally. Utz (2011) describes the similarities and often vast differences between Euro-Western and Islamic understandings of these subject areas. In reviewing the literature, it is refreshing and quite rare to see a piece of work truly focused on illuminating Islamic evidence and

sources. However, the shortcoming in this text is its lack of direction and guidance for practitioners to practically translate this information in the context of the therapeutic relationship. Although the text lacks sufficient guidance for therapeutic practice, Dr. Utz offers a helpful conceptualization of Islamic psychology as a discipline that can be used as part of the foundation for a fulsome framework.

G. Hussein Rassool (2016) offers another attempt to describe counselling theory from the Islamic perspective in his text, *Islamic Counselling: An Introduction to Theory and Practice*. In a review of the book, Golden and Boddie (2016) highlight that the text is heavier in its emphasis on theory, lacking a clear illustration of Islamic counselling in practice. While Rassool's work appears to align more with the field of Muslim psychology rather than Islamic psychology, his text does offer an 11-stage model that attempts to stay rooted in Islamic values. Golden and Boddie (2016) suggest that Rassool's work complements another text, *Counseling Muslims: Handbook of mental health issues and interventions* (2012) which emphasizes practical applications. Again though, it is evident that the text offers an approach that may be applied with a broad range of Muslim audiences, rather than a framework grounded in Islamic principles. This is yet another example in the literature where these two constructs, while certainly interrelated and connected, are conflated to a significant degree.

Recently there have been a few notable attempts to further the development of frameworks for psychotherapy grounded in Islamic thought (Rothman, 2018; Skinner, 2019). In a recent publication, Skinner (2019) offers a working Islamic model of the self, or soul, stemming from his discomfort, as a practicing Muslim, with the theories and tools used in Western psychology. Skinner references Badri's work and argues that there is a need to go back to the Qur'an itself and the models constructed by classical scholars, such as Ghazali and Ibn Sina to develop therapeutic models. Skinner (2019) suggests that Western psychological theories and practices are too "culturally contaminated" (p. 1093). In this paper, Skinner presents a working model of the self that he suggests is based upon traditional Islamic thought. Although the model references Qur'anic verses, *Hadith*, and scholarly texts, Skinner states that the conclusions are "based on [his] understanding of such sources" (p.1093). While this is a noteworthy piece of work, it is critical to take the further step of consulting with Islamic scholars and people of knowledge. This is especially true in relation to complex concepts, such as the soul. The soul, or *ruh* as it is referred to in the Qur'an, is a concept that is especially difficult to

comprehend as human beings. There is specific reference to this in the Qur'an itself, in Chapter 17, Verse 85:

> They ask you ˹O Prophet˺ about the soul. Say, "Its nature is known only to my Lord, and you ˹O humanity˺ have been given but little knowledge."

While I agree with Skinner's insistence that a model should be based upon the Qur'an and *Hadith*, this is a highly complex task requiring the assistance and support of Islamic scholars with a thorough understanding of religious texts and evidence. Although the Qur'an and *Hadith* are readily understandable by any human being, the competency and ability to apply the verses and *Hadith* to a specific context requires a deeper study and greater level of knowledge. Further, in Islam, all written works outside of the Qur'an and *Hadith* are considered fallible. As such, they require thorough review and examination to fully appreciate their context and application.

To demonstrate this point, take the case of an individual who has independently read about medicine and health, but who has not been trained as a physician or healer. This individual may be able to offer helpful insights and medical advice but may not have the depth of knowledge to understand the intricacies, interrelations, and ramifications of different treatments for different people and situations. Similarly, while any human being can certainly explore and study these texts and learn from them independently, it is critical to have the support of teachers and scholars when examining and applying complex concepts in a new area. The Islamic approach to knowledge and its application is discussed in detail in the next chapter. Thus, while Skinner offers the beginnings of a promising model, he arguably needs to go one step further by consulting and working alongside Islamic scholars to ensure the model is sound and captures the full richness of the texts. Skinner successfully stimulates further discussion and movement in the field though ultimately falls short in the delivery of a model that is epistemologically and methodologically sound from an Islamic perspective.

In a similar attempt to Skinner (2019), Briki and Amara (2018) propose a framework for understanding the self using the three-heart model of a renowned classical scholar, Ibn Al-Qayyim. In their study, the authors chose to focus on Islamic texts and writings of scholars to offer a bottom-up approach to studying the concept of the self in Islam. They explore several key aspects of human nature and describe the interplay between different components of human existence. In a similar but different

vein, Joshanloo (2013) looked at the differences between Western and Islamic concepts of happiness, illuminating the unique way in which Islam conceptualizes happiness. While not specifically in the field of Islamic psychology, the research offers interesting insight for the discipline. Given the centrality of the concept of happiness in mainstream discourse, this type of research may be helpful to understand the conceptualizations of emotions and emotional expression within an Islamic framework.

Pasha-Zaidi (2019) suggests that the development of a fulsome Islamic framework may best be addressed using the Multilevel Interdisciplinary Paradigm (MIP). She cites York Al-Karam (2018) when suggesting the use of MIP in order to allow for the inclusion of Islamic conceptualizations of psychology, as well as the lived experiences of Muslims. She argues that the MIP would include the contributions of earlier scholars, as well as contemporary Muslim scholars to inform the literature and research. She contends that this would lead to a comprehensive review of human nature, rather than what has historically been a positivistic and reductionist approach in psychology. Of note is Pasha-Zaidi's suggestion that there is an unnecessary division between Islamic psychology and the psychology of Muslims, a divide noted by Kaplick and Skinner (2017). Although the point of broadening the area of research to include both fields is certainly one to be considered, the distinction between the two is critical from an Islamic perspective. Within Islam, there is a significant distinction between the pure perfection of Islam as a faith and Muslims, who are diverse, fallible, and imperfect. As odd as it may sound, Muslims do not define or necessarily represent Islam. This is critical in relation to the development of a framework based on Islamic epistemology and ontology, as it must be grounded in Islamic evidence, rather than diverse lived experiences. The difficulty lies in the reality that there are no comprehensive Islamic psychology frameworks developed at this time. Once a clearly articulated framework is available, it would then be possible to consider and highlight the lived experiences of Muslims.

Some researchers have focused on the development of theories of personality as part of the overall movement towards establishing an Islamic psychology framework. Abu-Raiya (2015) details a Qur'anic model of psychotherapy building upon his previously developed theory of personality based on the Qur'an (Abu-Raiya, 2012b, 2014). Drawing on Qur'anic evidence on the human psyche, Abu-Raiya offers a model that is in stark contrast to secular approaches that are antithetical to Islamic principles. In addition to Abu-Raiya's efforts, there have been other notable attempts to develop and

conceptualize a model of personality using Islamic principles and evidence (Othman et al., 2014; Othman, 2015). The authors in each case have drawn on the Qur'an and *Hadith*, as well as writings of scholars to begin the development of such frameworks of personality.

In a recent book chapter, Abdallah Rothman (2018) proposes an Islamic theoretical orientation to psychotherapy. Rothman (2018) accurately summarizes that much of the research to date has been in response to the need for increased multicultural competency in therapy, rather than a genuine exploration of psychotherapy using an Islamic worldview. The result has been various recommendations for best practices when working with Muslim clients. The challenge with this approach is the diversity of personal lived experiences, a point that is confirmed through research by Kettani (2010) in which he demonstrates that Muslims identify with hundreds of different cultures. Rothman (2018) points out that while there are Muslim practitioners who may be able to adapt their work to the benefit of their Muslim clients, there are very few who know how to practice psychotherapy using an Islamic paradigm. He describes this as the "distinction between a Muslim psychologist and a Muslim who practices Islamic psychology" (Rothman, 2018, p. 26).

Rothman (2018) suggests that conventional and secular conceptualizations of the 'self' may actually be leading not only Muslims, but all clients, away from holistic, meaningful healing. To this end, Rothman (2018) presents his personal journey towards developing an Islamic theoretical orientation. A specific excerpt of Abdullah Rothman's writing beautifully describes and aligns with my practice of psychotherapy, with Rothman sharing that:

> I do not consider what I do as an integration of Islam into psychotherapy as much as I consider my practice of psychotherapy as a translation of concepts relating to the soul and to healing from the Islamic tradition into the language of psychology within a therapeutic process. (Rothman, 2018, p. 30)

In one part of his chapter, Rothman compares the Rogerian concept of unconditional positive regard to the Islamic perspective of love based on *ukhuwa,* sometimes translated as brotherhood or sisterhood that Muslims exhibit towards one another. Rothman's analysis draws a strong distinction between the concepts, highlighting that within an Islamic framework, the love stemming from the relationship between one

person and another (including a psychotherapist and a client) is not unconditional. He notes that the love based on *ukhuwa* for another within Islam goes deeper, rooted in "standing in the truth" and supporting people "toward what is better for them" (Rothman, 2018, p. 33). In other words, a truly Islamic orientation recognizes that simply because a client wishes to do something, it does not mean it is in their best interest, especially when harmful to the soul. As such, a therapist working from this orientation would support a client to see the potential harms of a thought or action, while recognizing that ultimately the client possesses the agency to make independent choices. A strength of Rothman's work is his use of Islamic sources, referencing and citing Qur'an and *Hadith* throughout. Unfortunately, in a few key places, Rothman's article does not seem to fully reference the Islamic sources. For example, Rothman mentions a "famous" *Hadith Qudsi*, but the reference provided is unclear which made it difficult to authenticate and then use the evidence. Nonetheless, Rothman's work represents exciting advancements in the field.

As described in this brief literature review, research published over the last several years demonstrates promising growth in the field of Islam and Psychology. As highlighted though, much of the literature to date has largely centered on Muslim mental health, as well as adaptations and testing of existing Western theories with Muslim populations. Through an investigation and review of Islamic epistemological and ontological perspectives as well as scholarly Islamic literature, this research aims to develop the beginnings of a framework for counsellors and mental health practitioners to integrate into their practice. The overall goal is to better support clients using an approach grounded in Islamic principles.

Chapter 3.

Methodology

˙Are they better˺ or those who worship 'their Lord' devoutly in the hours of the night, prostrating and standing, fearing the Hereafter, and hoping for the mercy of their Lord? Say, O Prophet, "Are those who know equal to those who do not know?" None will be mindful ˙of this˺ except people of reason. (Qur'an, 39:9)

Research Purpose and Question

The purpose of this research is to support the development of a framework for counselling based upon the Islamic understanding of human psychology and development. The hope is that this will allow therapists to better support clients who identify as practicing Muslims or who may benefit from an approach to therapy grounded in Islamic principles. A multi-faceted research question guides this work: What is the Islamic conceptualization and understanding of human nature, wellness and illness, and psychological healing and change processes?

Ontology & Epistemology

This research is concerned with the Islamic ontological positions for understanding human nature, psychological wellbeing, and healing. Unsurprisingly, Islam has a unique position on the nature of being, consisting of considerations for physical and material realities, as well as spiritual and unseen elements that cannot be felt or sensed. This research is oriented to the approach of *Ahl as-Sunnah wa al-Jama'ah*, involving a specific methodology related to knowledge, knowledge-seeking, and the validation of opinions and ideas.

The Methodology of Ahl as-Sunnah wa al-Jama'ah

It is essential to clearly outline the methodology and theory underlying this research study as it provides the rationale for its design and intended output. As such, this section will begin by detailing the underpinnings of this research, which ultimately stem from the methodology of *Ahl as-Sunnah wa al-Jama'ah*, or that of Sunni Muslims.

There are several common questions that arise when discussing the prospect of an approach rooted in Islamic thought. Which interpretation of Islamic texts? Whose opinion? In the context of widespread post-modernist influences and popularity, it becomes challenging to appreciate and understand the Islamic approach to knowledge and information. In an article discussing the differences of opinion within Islam, Dr. Nazir Khan offers several insights on the approach to knowledge within an Islamic framework, contextualized in modern-day society. This section will outline some of Dr. Khan's conclusions which are relevant to the study at hand, with particular emphasis on his articulation of the methodology of *Ahl as-Sunnah wa al-Jama'ah*.

Khan (2019) argues that the concept of textual intentionalism is critical to understanding the Islamic approach to knowledge and the validation of religious opinion:

> …God has given us a system of guidance that is meant to be followed and, in order for one to understand that guidance, one must study it and acquire knowledge. This is a crucial point which leads to the concept of textual intentionalism—namely, that there is an intended meaning to the words of the scripture. In other words, we do not invent the meaning of scripture, rather we seek to discover—to the best of our human capacities—the meaning of scripture through study and scholarship. (Khan, 2019, para. 5)

Khan (2019) suggests that this is quite different and contrary to post-modernist thought which may argue that there are multiple truths and interpretations, with one being no more correct than another. Khan challenges those who advocate for a post-modernist interpretation of Islam, highlighting the methodology of *Ahl As-Sunnah wa al-Jama'ah*:

> If Islam is to have any coherent meaning at all, then it has to involve following the faith as it was revealed by Allah in the Qur'an and explained and implemented by the Prophet Muḥammad (SAW). Moreover, the collective understanding of those who learned Islam directly from the Prophet Muḥammad (SAW), namely his companions, should be taken as authoritative since we believe that the Prophet was successful in communicating and clarifying his message to his audience.
>
> The mainstream understanding of Islam transmitted generation after generation throughout the history of this ummah, therefore, carries immense epistemological weight. It is illogical for someone to posit that fourteen hundred [years] of Muslim scholars have been blinded from the plain sense meaning of the Qur'an or the core teachings of the faith and that only in the modern era have we discovered what Islam 'really' means. Following the faith on the basis of the Prophetic teachings and the mainstream understanding is what is meant by the term Ahl al-Sunnah wa-al-Jama'ah. (Khan, 2019, para. 6)

Khan makes a case for valuing and approaching knowledge using a defined Islamic epistemology that aims to ensure that conclusions are reliable, valid, and sound. Khan also discusses the place of opinion within Islam given there is no central authority or clergy in the Islamic system:

> To give one person such unilateral authority would entail declaring that they have privileged access to God through divine revelation like a Prophet or Messenger which would nullify one's belief in the Prophet Muhammad ﷺ as the last and final messenger. Rather, the teachings of Islam are known through learning the Qur'an and Sunnah…. Conclusions are not based on personal opinion but are contingent on the strength of the evidence that one provides. It doesn't make sense in these disciplines, therefore, to ask for central authorities. Instead, one should seek rigorous standards to ensure sufficient knowledge of the scholars of these fields. (Khan, 2019, para. 8)

This is an important epistemological point to highlight, especially as this study will engage individuals with a certain level of knowledge and scholarly expertise. Unlike some other religions, Islam does not have a clergy, and therefore there is no individual or institution that intercedes between one human being and God. Rather, that connection is direct, open, and available to any living human being at any time. However, there is great reverence and respect afforded to people of knowledge, whether they are Islamic scholars, students of knowledge, teachers, or laypeople. This is because God tells humanity in the Qur'an:

> *Say: 'Are those equal, those who have knowledge and those who do not know? Only the people of understanding take heed.' (Qur'an, 39:9)*

As such, while knowledge and guidance are not exclusive to individuals with credentials or who studied at specific institutions, humans are told to learn from those who have invested the time to study, research, and obtain deeper, more comprehensive understandings of the faith.

In the process of developing this study, colleagues in the counselling field were curious how a faith-based approach could be developed given there would be a multitude of opinions on the subject. It is understandable that an outsider may hold this view if they are not well-versed with the Islamic approach to knowledge. There are certainly areas that are open to interpretation, but this requires a process known as *ijtihad*. *Ijtihad* is applied in various areas of knowledge and involves specific steps

defined by the methodology of *Ahl as-Sunnah wa al-Jama'ah*. Khan (2019) quotes a great Islamic scholar, Abu Ishaq al-Shatibi, who underscores this point, writing:

> Ijtihad that occurs in religious matters is of two types. The first is legitimate ijtihad, namely that which arises from those who are well-versed in the requisites of Ijtihad ... The second type is that which arises from one who is not proficient in the requirements of Ijtihad. This is invalid Ijtihad, for in reality it constitutes an opinion based on nothing more than conjecture, desires, and personal whims. (Khan, 2019, para.8)

Thus, it can be understood that not all opinions are valid, and that authenticated evidence and proof must be provided any time a claim is made that something is *Islamic* (see Appendix A for an Islamic framework on evaluating opinions). Once the textual evidence is authenticated, it must then be confirmed that the evidence is used in the proper context. This manner of substantiation is referred to as *wajh al-dalala* and involves describing how the proof in question supports a particular viewpoint. For example, one may use a piece of evidence that is authentic and true, but simply does not apply in a particular situation.

Over the last several decades, there has been considerable work to highlight and elevate the Islamic methodology, principles, and approach to knowledge in various disciplines, including the field of psychology. This is significant as it represents a shift to developing frameworks and approaches that are indigenous to Islamic teachings, rather than simply attempting to adapt or test existing Eurocentric approaches. There has been extensive work to propel this endeavour forward, with substantial efforts to conceptualize and elucidate what precisely Islamic epistemology encompasses.

What is Islamic Epistemology?

This study is grounded in Islamic epistemology. This is perhaps the most important premise underlying this research, as epistemology is concerned with the nature of knowledge and what justifies belief or valid information. To answer the research question at hand, it is important to acknowledge that the way Islam conceptualizes knowledge and how we come to 'know' is distinct. Islam is neither positivistic, nor constructivist in nature. Salam and Shaikh (2014) explored the question of whether an Islamic epistemology exists through a comparison of the Islamic perspective with many popular epistemological approaches, including social

constructivism, positivism, relativism, and post-modernism. In their analysis, the authors conclude that there is in fact a distinct Islamic epistemology that differs from other existing frameworks. Salam and Shaikh (2014) suggest that further work is needed to articulate this approach and allow it to stand independently. Azram (2012) also details the Islamic perspective on epistemology, proposing that it is critical for human beings to understand knowledge within the framework provided by Islam. Of particular interest is Azram's distinction between knowledge and *'ilm,* an Islamic term that is often translated into English as 'knowledge'. The author suggests that while knowledge refers generally to information of some sort, '*ilm* encapsulates theory, action, and education. For the purposes of this research, the English word 'knowledge' will be used with the intended meaning being that of the word *'ilm*.

Utz (2011) describes that the challenge with contemporary and modern approaches is the lack of acknowledgement of what practicing Muslims would understand to be the most vital sources of knowledge – the Qur'an and *Hadith*. Utz (2011) comments on this critical point, sharing that:

> Giving priority to revelation does not mean that Muslims ignore or neglect science and reason… The Qur'an itself, as well as various Hadiths, urges humans to contemplate the universe and seek knowledge, but revelation should be the criteria by which we judge the developing sciences. Reasoning becomes secondary to these primary sources. (Utz, 2011, p. 141)

With this, Utz (2011) contextualizes the criteria used within an Islamic framework to assess all types of knowledge, not just religious. Utz (2011) discusses what is often described as a dissonance between religion and science, sharing that this method and criteria is used regardless of the type of knowledge in question:

> In Islam, there is no separation between the religious and secular, as is found in other systems. The sciences must be treated as a trust and should be assessed from the perspective of Islam. Scientific discoveries are only made through the grace and mercy of Allah. (Utz, 2011, p. 141)

Thus, it can be said that from an Islamic perspective, there are two types of knowledge: (1) revealed or divine knowledge which comes directly from God in the *Qur'an* and through the authenticated *Hadith* and (2) derived or acquired knowledge which also comes from God but is acquired throughout life. And as such, all knowledge, scientific or otherwise, is viewed and assessed through an Islamic lens.

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In a discussion on the Islamic perspective of human nature, Bhat (2016) notes the following observation about the early Muslims and scholars:

> The early Muslims could not leave us a particular book on the methodology for the study of nature. This is of course not to say that they did not express their views about nature at all. In the Islamic world, early ideas on man, human nature, his behaviour, characteristics and personality have been explored and explained by scholars…In conceptualizing their ideas on man, these scholars mainly used the Holy Qur'an and Hadith as their primary sources. Further using numerous descriptions and specific ideas found in the authentic books of Islam, Classical scholarship also made use of some logical and philosophical ideas on human nature developed by the Greek philosophers. (p. 67)

On the point of classical scholars using ideas brought forward by Greek philosophers, Bhat (2016) clarifies the method that scholars used to ascertain information:

> …It is praiseworthy that whatever ideas they borrowed from Greek philosophy were first scrutinized and brought under the scale of empirical study of Islamic knowledge in order to judge their authenticity and assimilated, accommodated and integrated within the existing knowledge they have perceived through the Islamic sources. (p. 67)

This relates back to the importance of an Islamic lens and filter that Utz (2011) referenced in her writings. Muslims do not simply ignore discoveries or new information, but they also do not wholly accept it without assessing its validity and authenticity using an Islamic lens. Taking these writings and articles together, along with my own studies with teachers and scholars, it can be understood that an Islamic epistemology includes the following parameters:

A) The strongest source of knowledge is the *Qur'an*, which contains the direct words of God. It should be noted that the *Qur'an* must be understood in Arabic and translations into any other language aim to convey its meaning as best as possible.

B) The *Sunnah* of the Prophet Muhammad (SAW), including his words, deeds, practices, and rulings, are contained in the *Hadith*. *Hadith* are authenticated through a rigorous process, are critical sources of knowledge, and are considered a source of revelation from God as well.

C) Islamic *fiqh* or jurisprudence involves scholars deriving guidelines, rules, and regulations from the principles of the Qur'an and the *Sunnah*. Over centuries, these have been formulated and elaborated upon by successive generations of scholars. While the texts of the Qur'an and Sunnah are permanent, Islamic jurisprudence facilitates

the application of those principles to the activities and daily lives of human beings throughout time.

D) Besides the Qur'an and the Sunnah, scholars are considered critical secondary sources of knowledge and rulings in Islam. In terms of strength of sources, we have the Qur'an and Sunnah firstly, and then *ijmaa'* (consensus of scholars). The consensus achieved through *ijmaa'* is built upon proofs from the Qur'an and Sunnah. There are many historical and contemporary issues that have achieved *ijmaa'*, which refers to agreement or consensus among competent Muslim scholars. Issues or topics which reach *ijmaa'* are accepted as truth. Scholars also use *ijtihad* (disciplined study and research) to address different questions.

E) *Qiyaas*, referring to analogical deduction within the Islamic law framework using human reasoning, is often used by scholars to navigate contemporary issues facing Muslim communities. This is a source that is not always agreed upon.

Ultimately, it is critical to understand that the first and foremost principle of Islam is *Tawheed*. This principle refers to the belief in the oneness of Allah (SWT), who is the Creator of everything, unlike anything else, and who holds the ultimate authority. Human knowledge is, by definition, limited and humans turn to the Creator of knowledge to understand the nature of knowledge itself. The following verse beautifully elucidates this point:

> *And with Him are the keys of the unseen; none knows them except Him. And He knows what is on the land and in the sea. Not a leaf falls but that He knows it… (Qur'an, 6:59)*

The Need for Islamic Epistemology in Psychology

> *Every human behavior is culturally significant and represents some epistemological paradigm and perspective. A paradigm is a mental abstract picture, an imaginary construct, and a symbolic representation of reality that results from mental reconstruction and deconstruction. The mind assembles some features from reality, rejecting some and keeping others, rearranging them in order of priority and to correspond to reality. The paradigm can exaggerate those elements it deems essential and underplay all others. Each paradigm is epistemological with its intrinsic and fundamental criteria, beliefs, hypotheses, and answers.*

> *Abdelwahab Elmessiri (2013)*

It is impossible to speak of the need for research grounded in Islamic epistemology and ontology without referencing the Islamization of Knowledge (IOK)

movement. The idea of IOK was initially introduced by Ismail Raji Al-Faruqi in 1972 at the Association of Muslim Social Scientists Conference, where he introduced what was considered a rather radical perspective:

> As social scientists, we have to look back at our training and reshape it in the light of the Qur'an and the Sunnah. This is how our forefathers made their own original contributions to the study of history, law and culture. The West borrowed their heritage and put it in a secular mold [sic]. Is it asking for too much that we take this knowledge and Islamize it? (al-Faruqi, 1972)

Al-Faruqi suggests that Islamization represents truth, justice, transformation, and reformation. In a talk at the Aligarh Muslim University, Haque (2018a) discusses the case of psychology in the IOK movement. Haque (2018a) specifically highlights the *Islamization of Knowledge: General Principles and Work Plan* (Al-Faruqi, 1989), which offers a step-by-step guide to propel the IOK movement forward in different academic disciplines. Haque (2018a) notes that Al-Faruqi argued that the only director in the process and plan for Islamization is Allah (SWT) and its manual of operation should be Islam itself—Islamic ideals and Islamic norms.

Some authors have clarified that the process of Islamization requires an entire epistemological shift, noting that knowledge is not Islamic simply because it is acquired or shared by a Muslim (Ghamari-Tabrizi, 2004). Similarly, Ahsan et al. (2013) describe IOK as a "comprehensive phenomenon that re-establishes knowledge on its original basis according to the light of revealed knowledge" and that it is a "reform-oriented movement driven by conscious change in Muslim thought, attitude, and behaviour and characterized by a commitment to revive Islamic civilization" (pg. 1). Elmessiri (2016) provides a powerful analysis of the dangers and bias of adopting secular approaches without a critical Islamic epistemological lens:

> These paradigms have advantages in the West's economic and political domains but do not always connect with the reality of non-Western peoples and can therefore have a distorting effect. Scholars who abandon indigenous paradigms and biases of their own particular existential and historical situations adopt Western paradigms in the process, and start to view themselves from a Western point of view, even when it is biased against them. Any community becomes threatened when it adopts imported alien paradigms and points of view, sometimes without profound knowledge of the epistemological implications of such paradigms. (Elmessiri, 2016, p. 1)

With this in mind, the proposed study aims to demonstrate a unique methodological approach that honours distinct Islamic epistemological and ontological positions.

The Delphi Method

A modified Delphi technique was used to achieve the aims of this study. The Delphi method is a consensus-building approach used in research to address issues that may require specialist or 'expert' knowledge and experience (Jorm, 2015). Linstone and Turoff (2002) describe the method as "structuring a group communication process so that the process is effective in allowing a group of individuals, as a whole, to deal with a complex problem" (p. 3). The original version of the Delphi method involved recruiting a group of experts to anonymously respond to questionnaires, after which they review group responses along with their own responses (Jorm, 2015). This process is repeated with the goal of reducing the range of responses to arrive at eventual consensus. Ziglio (1995) suggests that the key purpose is to gather informed judgement on issues that might be highly context and expertise-specific, as well as those issues that are more difficult to define. Further, the approach is especially helpful as it can create a dialogue between participants who span across vast geographic locations (Linstone & Turoff, 2002).

The iterative nature of the Delphi technique supports exploration and brainstorming, while advancing towards a solution to the problem or question at hand (Jorm, 2015). Okoli and Pawlowski (2004) highlight that one of the most critical steps in a successful Delphi study is to ensure that knowledgeable and informed experts are recruited for the study. Given the importance placed on knowledge and people of knowledge within an Islamic framework – be it scholars, teachers, or students of knowledge – this approach aligns well with Islamic principles. Hence, the Delphi is a conducive and compatible methodology. One criticism of the method is that it forces consensus and neglects outlying opinions or ideas (Goodman, 1987). However, from an Islamic perspective, this is not necessarily problematic. As mentioned earlier in this chapter, Islamic epistemology values scholarly consensus, although there may be a plethora of different opinions that are considered valid so long as they are supported with *daleel* (authentic evidence or proof).

The conventional Delphi method was modified to align more closely with Islamic epistemological principles. The first modification was the criteria for opinions expressed by the experts to be supported by *daleel*, which can be understood to mean sound Islamic evidence. For the purposes of this research, the words *daleel* and evidence are used interchangeably. Linguistically, *daleel* means a proof or an evidence. As such, *daleel* refers to the source or evidence for a particular idea, concept, or ruling. Any opinions, rulings, or legislations within Islam must be accompanied by *daleel*. The need for evidence is a critical principle of knowledge-seeking and learning within the Islamic epistemological framework. The Qur'an itself highlights this in several verses:

> *… So, ask the people of the message if you do not know. [We sent them] with clear proofs and written ordinances. And We revealed to you the message that you may make clear to the people what was sent down to them and that they might give thought. (Qur'an, 16:43-44)*

In this verse, the requirement for evidence (referred to as proofs in this translation) is made explicit. Muslims are asked to provide proofs and evidence when speaking, rather than simply sharing opinions that may be baseless, contain biases, or are based on personal whims. This is further illustrated in the following verse:

> *O you who have believed, obey Allah and obey the Messenger and those in authority among you. And if you disagree over anything, refer it to Allah and the Messenger, if you should believe in Allah and the Last Day. That is the best [way] and best in result. (Qur'an, 4:59)*

This verse guides us to turn to Allah (SWT) and the Messenger (SAW) if we disagree or are unsure of something. In other words, we refer to the Qur'an and Sunnah for evidence and seek guidance or clarification from "those in authority", referring to scholars or people of knowledge. It should be noted that the consensus achieved through this Delphi process would not be considered equivalent to *ijmaa'*, as this would require additional consultation and verification. As an example, imagine that a Delphi study was conducted with one hundred scholars and consensus was reached on several points. If, after the consensus is reached, a different *daleel* was brought forward by one scholar and assessed to be a stronger piece of evidence, the consensus reached through the Delphi would no longer hold according to Islamic epistemological principles. In fact, scholars following the methodology of *Ahl As-Sunnah wa al-Jama'ah* would likely change their stance considering this new evidence.

Given the emphasis on expert knowledge, as well as the opportunity to build consensus despite geographic diversity, a modified Delphi method is positioned well to shed light on this study's research question. It should be noted that the Delphi method was first developed in the 1950s by the RAND Corporation (Hsu & Sandford, 2007). As a researcher, I admit I feel conflicted using this methodology given the established reputation of RAND as intolerant of Islam and especially of devout, practicing Muslims. Nonetheless, it is hoped that the modification and application of this methodology to centre Islamic principles is ultimately beneficial to Islam and the Muslim community at large.

Participant Recruitment & Selection

In accordance with the guidelines of Simon Fraser University (SFU) regarding the protection of human participants, this project was submitted to SFU's Research Ethics Board for approval. As outlined in the consent form in Appendix C, expert participants' comments and ratings were not shared with anyone outside the research team. In the consent form, the participants also had the opportunity to determine how their identities were shared, if at all, in the final research findings.

The selection of research participants is an essential step in the Delphi method, as the output and result of the study is based upon their expert opinions. Adler and Ziglio (1996) outline four requirements for 'expertise' that each participant should meet: 1) knowledge and experience with the issue being researched, 2) capacity and willingness to participate, 3) sufficient time to participate, and 4) effective communication skills. This study employed a purposive sampling approach to identify participants in order to ensure that respondents could contribute to the exploratory study based on their specialist knowledge (Parahoo, 2014). The recruited participants in this study are Islamic scholars, teachers, and students of knowledge who could provide insight to address the core research questions, and thus possessed knowledge and familiarity with the Islamic understanding of human psychology and development. Recruitment was facilitated by established contacts and personal and professional networks, as well as publicly accessible information. In addition, this project employed a snowball sampling approach whereby existing participants helped to identify other participants. To contact new potential participants, permission was obtained prior to their contact information being shared with the researcher. Details of the study were shared with potential participants

along with the consent form to ensure they had comprehensive information prior to consenting to the study. It should be noted that each potential participant was a known scholar, teacher, or person of knowledge in their local Muslim community. In line with the methodology outlined above, these individuals were recruited to participate as it was evident that they met the minimum threshold of expertise through their knowledge, training, and credentials.

Based on a review of the literature, it is clear that a relatively small panel can produce strong and valuable results (Adler & Ziglio, 1996). Further to this, Delbecq et al. (1975) argued that the number of participants should be limited to the minimum and sufficient number to achieve the intended results. In other words, a greater number of participants is not necessarily better or more appropriate in the case of the Delphi method. In total, ten potential participants were sent e-mails with a letter of invitation detailing the study (see Appendix B), as well as a consent form (see Appendix C). Potential participants were given a deadline by which they were asked to return their completed consent forms. At the time of the deadline, eight total respondents submitted completed consent forms. Due to personal circumstances, two participants had to withdraw from the study. This resulted in a total of six participants comprising the expert panel for the study.

Method of Data Collection & Analysis

The data collection process used the Delphi method, which was modified slightly to align with the Islamic perspective on the importance of textual evidence. Underlying the Delphi method is the belief that as a group, the opinions of the participant experts are more valid and reliable than that of a single individual (Linstone & Turoff, 2002). The experts participated in three rounds involving multiple questionnaire that ultimately attempted to achieve consensus on several key areas for a therapeutic framework based on Islamic principles.

Round One – Open-ended Questionnaire

Participants completed the first round of the Delphi process (i.e., the first questionnaire) via e-mail. The questions chosen were decided upon using a common breakdown of theoretical orientations in psychotherapy. Psychotherapeutic theories are

often described and understood to have a particular stance on the following: (1) View of human nature, (2) View of wellness/illness, and (3) View of change or the change process (Rychlak, 1981). Using this as the overarching framework, the following six questions were designed to elicit the scholarly opinions of the participant experts:

1) What is Islam's view of human beings? Are humans considered to be innately good or bad?

2) How do humans come into existence? How do they psychologically develop?

3) What is Islam's view of health? What is considered healthy development?

4) What is Islam's view of illness? What is considered unhealthy development?

5) What is the Islamic perspective on how people change? What is necessary and/or sufficient for change to occur?

6) What might be the overarching goal of therapy using an Islamic framework? What might be the role of the therapist? The client?

As part of their responses to these six questions, the participants were instructed to also include *daleel*, or sound Islamic evidence to support their statements, in line with an Islamic epistemological understanding. The Round One Questionnaire (see Appendix D) was sent via e-mail as a Word document to each participant after receipt of their consent form.

Round One of the study was analyzed with a qualitative content analysis of participant responses using emergent coding (Krippendorff, 2018). Similar statements were grouped together and collapsed into a comprehensive statement. When possible, collapsed statements were true to one of the statements provided by an expert panelist, or a combination of statements when appropriate. The remaining statements were then discarded. Statements that were unique, with no similarity to other themes, were edited for clarity, if appropriate and were also included in the list of statements to be used in the Round Two questionnaire. This led to the development of a total of 47 comprehensive response statements that were used as the basis for the development of the Round Two questionnaire.

Round Two – Consensus Questionnaire with Open-Ended Option

The results of the Round One data analysis formed the template for the questionnaire used in Round Two of the Delphi. The same expert participants who had participated in Round One were asked to complete the Round Two questionnaire. This was emailed to them along with a copy of their original Round One responses. This approach led to a 100% response rate, though there were some delays in the receipt of responses. The Round Two Delphi questionnaire (see Appendix E) included a total of forty-seven statements. These statements were grouped together according to the question they were originally offered in responses to, with the following breakdown: Question 1 (seven statements), Question 2 (eight statements), Question 3 (five statements), Question 4 (six statements), Question 5 (six statements), and Question 6 (fifteen statements).

The Round Two questionnaire asked the expert participants to indicate their level of agreement with each statement using a five-point Likert scale, consisting of the following options: 'Strongly Agree', 'Agree', 'Neutral', 'Disagree', and 'Strongly Disagree'. Under each statement, space was provided for the participants to elaborate and respond to the following question: *Is there anything you would ADD, TAKE AWAY, or CHANGE to this response statement? Do you have additional daleel/evidence to provide that would help to make this statement more evidence-based?* Some of the participants did use this opportunity, and these responses provided further information to develop the Round Three questionnaire (see Appendix F). Several researchers have noted that the opportunity for expert panels or participants to reassess, revise, and add further commentary on a subject is significant and a key advantage of the Delphi method (Hsu & Sandford, 2007; Skulmoski et al., 2007).

Participant responses to the Round Two questionnaire were analyzed both quantitatively and qualitatively. Likert scale responses indicating the participants' level of agreement with the statements were entered into an Excel spreadsheet. 'Strongly Agree' and 'Agree' were collapsed into a general category of 'Agreement', while 'Strongly Disagree' and 'Disagree' were collapsed into a general category of 'Disagreement'. Consistent with other studies, the threshold for consensus was set at 70% (Hasson et al., 2000; Mokkink et al., 2006). Given the relatively small number of participants, a 'Neutral' response was not considered agreement and thus could not be used to achieve

the 70% threshold for consensus. As such, to reach consensus, each response statement required five out of six participants to select 'Strongly Agree' or 'Agree', with no more than one 'Disagree', 'Strong Disagree', or 'Neutral' response. In total, 34 of the 47 statements achieved the 70% threshold for consensus during Round Two of the Delphi.

Qualitative data for each response statement was analyzed using a general content analysis (Krippendorff, 2018). For each statement, all comments from participants were compiled and reviewed. For statements that reached the threshold for consensus in Round Two, additional comments were used to further refine the response statement without qualitatively changing the nature of the response. When additional Islamic evidence was provided by participants, this was added to the list of evidence linked to that statement. In one instance, the feedback and evidence provided by participants during this round led to the collapsing of two statements into one (2E was incorporated into 2C). Thus, while 34 statements did reach consensus in this round, ultimately a total of 33 statements were included in the Round Two Consensus Statement Summary document shared with participants in Round Three of the Delphi (see Appendix G).

In the case of a response statement that did not reach consensus, the additional comments and feedback were used to adjust and refine the statement accordingly in hopes that this would make the statement stronger and a more accurate reflection of the group response. Again, additional Islamic evidence provided was added to the list of evidence linked to that particular response statement. This led to the refinement of thirteen response statements that had yet to reach consensus in Round Two. In three instances, the feedback and comments provided under a particular response statement warranted the creation of a new response statement altogether as it would qualitatively change the nature of the response statement previously asked about. This led to a total of 16 refined and new response statements, which ultimately formed the basis of the Round Three Delphi questionnaire. The 13 statements that did not reach consensus in Round Two, along with the revised statements developed based upon participant feedback can be found in Appendix H. In addition, the three new statements that arose during Round Two, along with whether they achieved consensus or not, are outlined in Appendix I.

Round Three – Consensus Questionnaire with Open-Ended Option

The analysis of the Round Two responses formed the template for the questionnaire used in Round Three of the Delphi. The same expert participants who had participated in Round One and Two were asked to complete the Round Three questionnaire via e-mail. Based on requests from participants in Round Two, the questionnaire during this round was in the format of a fillable PDF document that was more user-friendly than a Word document. This approach led to a 100% response rate, though there were some delays in the receipt of responses due to the timing of the final questionnaire.

The Round Three Delphi Questionnaire included a total of 16 statements (see Appendix F). This was made up of statements that did not reach consensus in Round Two and were now refined and adjusted (a total of 13) and any new statements put forward by participants during Round Two (a total of 3). As previously mentioned, the other 33 remaining statements that had reached consensus were refined using the additional suggestions and evidence provided by participants during Round Two. Because these revised statements were not qualitatively different than their original wording in Round Two, they were not included in the Round Three questionnaire. These consensus statements and their accompanying Islamic evidence, as well as the overall group consensus rate (reported as a percentage), were compiled in a Round Two Consensus Statement Summary that was shared with participants during Round Three (see Appendix G). Participants were informed that they could review the document but were not required to provide any further feedback on this document unless they wished to do so. In sum, as part of Round Three of the Delphi, participants were each sent the Round Three questionnaire, the Round Two Consensus Statement Summary, as well as their individual Round One and Two responses.

For the Round Three questionnaire, the expert participants were asked to indicate their level of agreement with each of the 16 statements using the same 5-point Likert scale used in the previous round. The 16 statements were grouped according to the question they were originally offered as responses to, with the following breakdown in Round Three: Question 1 (zero statements), Question 2 (three statements), Question 3 (three statements), Question 4 (one statement), Question 5 (one statement), and Question 6 (eight statements). Once again, participants had the opportunity to elaborate

further on their responses, if they chose to do so. Many of the participants elected to provide further evidence and explanations as part of their responses during this round. Similar to Round Two, consensus was set at a level of 70%, which again required that 5 of 6 expert participants expressed agreement with the statement (Hasson et al., 2000; Mokkink et al., 2006).

Participant responses to the Round Three questionnaire were analyzed both quantitatively and qualitatively. Likert scale responses indicating each participant's level of agreement with the statements were entered into an Excel spreadsheet. 'Strongly Agree' and 'Agree' were collapsed into a general category of 'Agreement', while 'Strongly Disagree' and 'Disagree' were collapsed into a general category of 'Disagreement'. A 'Neutral' response was not considered agreement and thus could not be used to achieve the 70% threshold for consensus. In total, 14 of the 16 statements reached the 70% threshold for consensus. Two of the final 16 response statements did not achieve consensus and therefore were discarded at the end of this round.

Qualitative data for each response statement was analyzed using a general content analysis (Krippendorff, 2018). For each statement, all comments from participants were compiled and reviewed. For statements that reached the threshold for consensus in Round Three, additional comments were used to further refine the response statement without qualitatively changing the nature of the response. When additional Islamic evidence was provided by participants, this was added to the list of evidence for that statement. In the case of response statements that did not reach consensus, no adjustments were made as Round Three was the final round of this Delphi method. These 14 consensus statements, accompanying Islamic evidence, and the group consensus rate were added to those originally included in the Round Two Consensus Statement document to form the Final Consensus Statement Summary document (see Appendix J). This led to a total of 47 consensus statements produced at the conclusion of Round Three of the Delphi, and two that were unable to reach consensus and thus were discarded and not included in this final document. As Vázquez-Ramos et al. (2007) note, convergence occurs as group responses become more similar. If a question leads to increasing divergence, it can be removed and excluded from the next rounds (Vázquez-Ramos et al., 2007). As such, in the case of this study, those responses that did not reach consensus by the end of Round Three were not considered further. It should be noted that generally the Delphi method is not

considered a true experiment as there is no way to attain statistical reliability (Hasson et al., 2000). In this study, convergence of responses is important, but statistical reliability is not as the study intends to offer the groundwork for continued development of a framework for counselling based on Islamic principles.

A Note on Data Analysis

The data analysis used in this study was not precisely aligned with common analyses cited in other Delphi studies. As Hsu and Sandford (2007) highlight, the approach to data analysis is at the discretion of the researchers themselves in the case of the Delphi. Given that the first round of this Delphi study asked experts open-ended questions, the Round One data analysis of responses was qualitative in nature, as is often the case (Skulmoski et al., 2007). As Stemler (2000) highlights, qualitative analysis of data does not simply consist of word counts and instead focuses on groupings of words and phrases that included similar meanings and ideas. In the case of this study, emergent coding was used rather than a priori coding. With Delphi approaches, emergent coding is considered preferable as researchers usually do not have pre-conceived notions of what the expert participants will offer in response to open-ended questions in the first round (Stemler, 2000). The additional requirement for expert participants to offer evidence as part of their responses is also quite unique to this study and was not observed in other studies as far as the researcher is aware.

Chapter 4.

Results & Findings

Profile of Participants

Six Muslim scholars and teachers participated on the expert panel in this Delphi process. Of the six participants, two identified as women and four identified as men. Four of the participants live and work within Canada, though each reside in different provinces, spanning from coast to coast. One participant lives and works in the United States and one in the Middle East. Participants were contacted via e-mail with information related to the study, and then completed the informed consent and confidentiality form required to participate. Participants possessed a wide range of expertise in various areas of Islamic knowledge, including areas relevant to Islamic psychology, healing, and wellbeing. Areas of expertise in Islamic scholarship included Islamic history, jurisprudence, Arabic grammar and morphology, science of the Qur'an, applied linguistics, and the science of *Hadith*. A profile describing each participant is outlined in Table 1.

Table 1. Profile of Expert Panel Participants

Participant	Sex	Summary of Professional and Academic Background
A	Male	• Diversity and Inclusion and Leadership consultant; Adult Educator; Shaykh; Imam; Islamic Teacher; Speaker. • Studied Islam and Arabic in South East Asia, North Africa, Malta, and Sierra Leone. • Holds master's degrees in Arabic Language and Islamic Studies.
B	Female	• Medical Director and Family Physician; Islamic Teacher and Speaker. • Actively studying Islam and teaching for 20+ years, with a focused effort working with women and young girls.
C	Female	• Qur'an Teacher and Educator; Author. • Holds an undergraduate degree focused on the Qur'an and its meaning, as well as a bachelor's degree in Industrial Economics. • Teaches tafsir (meaning and commentary on the Qur'an) internationally and online and teaches memorization of the Qur'an.

Participant	Sex	Summary of Professional and Academic Background
D	Male	• Shaykh; Imam; Islamic Teacher and Speaker; Lecturer; Author; Executive Director with the Council of American-Islamic Relations. • Focus of study and expertise is Arabic grammar and morphology, Islamic jurisprudence, and science of the exegesis of the Qur'an. • Expertise also includes activism and centering Black narratives and identities in the Muslim community.
E	Male	• Shaykh; Imam; Islamic Teacher and Speaker. • Holds a bachelor's degree in Islamic law and jurisprudence, as well as a master's degree focused on comparative jurisprudence. • Expertise is fiqh/jurisprudence and Islamic law and has completed significant study of the different schools of thoughts within Ahl As-Sunnah wa al-Jama'ah.
F	Male	• Shaykh; Imam; University Professor and Lecturer; Islamic Teacher and Speaker; Life Coach; Interpreter. • Holds a Doctorate (PhD) in Applied Linguistics and Islamic Studies, a Master of Arts in Simultaneous Translation between Arabic and English, as well as a bachelor's in English and another bachelor's degree in Islamic Studies. • Expertise in Qur'anic linguistics and commentary/meanings.

Question One

Question One invited expert participants to respond to the question: *What is Islam's view of human beings? Are humans considered to be innately good or bad*? Seven themes from Question One were identified after a qualitative analysis using emergent coding. These seven themes were developed into seven response statements included in the Round Two Delphi questionnaire (see Appendix E) which used Likert scales to assess level of agreement. Participants were also offered an opportunity to further elaborate on each statement in the Round Two questionnaire. The final consensus statements for Question One can be seen below in Table 2. The development of each of these final consensus statements is described below, including the iterative changes that were recommended by participants over the course of the study.

Table 2. Final Summary of Question 1 Consensus Statements

	Consensus Statement	Daleel/Evidence for Response	% Consensus
A	Humans are innately good, born innocent and sinless. Humans are born with a pristine, innate disposition known as the fitrah. This fitrah is pure and inherently good. Humans have inclinations towards altruism, goodness, kindness, mercy, justice, and compassion. No one is born a killer, hateful, spiteful, or with any evil disposition. All these qualities stem from the core belief in one God, who created everything and who we submit to.	• Qur'an, Surah Ar-Rum, 30:30 • "No child is born but upon the fitrah. It is his parents who make him a Jew or a Christian or a Polytheist." (Hadith, Sahih Muslim) • "Every child is born on the nature [inclining towards God] (al-fitrah)." (Hadith, Sahih Muslim) • "Every child is born in a state of fitrah, then his parents make him into a Jew or a Christian or a Zoroastrian." (Hadith, Sahih Bukhari and Muslim) • "Allah, may He be blessed and exalted, says: 'I created all of My slaves as hunafa' (i.e., believing in monotheism), but the devils diverted them from their belief.'" (Ta'weel Mukhtalaf al-Hadith, p. 200)	100%
B	Humans are among the most honoured of Allah's creation, with a high status and lofty purpose.	• Qur'an, Surah Al-Isra, 17:70 • Qur'an, Surah At-Tin, 95:4 • Qur'an, Surah As-Sad, 38:75 • Qur'an, Surah Al-Baqarah, 2:151 • Qur'an, Surah Al-Baqarah, 2:129 • Qur'an, Surah Ali-Imran, 3:164 • "[Humans are] completed in intellectual capacity and understanding and capability in comportment, knowledge, and eloquence in communication." (Fakhr ad-Din ar-Razi in Mafātīḥ al-Ghayb)	100%
C	Humans are created to worship and live by Allah's commands and use knowledge and fear of Him to bring justice to the earth.	• Qur'an, Surah Al-Baqarah, 2:31 • Qur'an, Surah Adh-Dhariyat, 51:56	83%

	Consensus Statement	Daleel/Evidence for Response	% Consensus
D	Life is a test. Human beings are given a choice of how to act, and whether to do good or evil. God does not compel nor bid human beings to do evil. Humans can be influenced by the devil.	- Qur'an, Surah Al-Araf, 7:28-29 - Qur'an, Surah Al-Araf, 7:33 - Qur'an, Surah Al-Kahf, 18:29 - Qur'an, Surah Al-Insan, 76: 1-3 - Qur'an, Surah Al-Mulk, 67:2 - Qur'an, Surah Al-Kahf, 18:7 - Qur'an, Surah Al-Infitar, 82:10-11 - Qur'an, Surah Al-Qaf, 50:27 - Qur'an, Surah An-Nas, 114:1-6 "There is no one among you but a companion from among the jinn has been assigned to him." They said, "Even you, O Messenger of Allah?' He said, "Even me, but Allah helped me with him, and he became Muslim (or: and I am safe from him), so he only enjoins me to do that which is good." (Hadith, Sahih Muslim, 2814) - Ibn Taymiyyah: "God does not compel humans' actions meaning that He does not force humans to act against their good nature." (Minhaj As-Sunnah An-Nabawiyyah, Volume 3, Page 75)	100%
E	Humans are forgetful and can be negatively influenced by their environment. As such, humans can develop negative traits, such as envy, hatred, anger, rebellion, selfishness, and negligence.	- Quran, Surah Al-Maarij, 70:19-22 - Qur'an, Surah At-Taha, 20:115 - Qur'an, Surah Al-Adiyat, 100:6-8 - Qur'an, Surah Al-Nisa, 4:119-120 "One of you would be influenced by the company they keep, so be careful who you take as a friend." (Hadith, Sunan Abu Dawood, 4833)	100%
F	Humans have desires and tendencies that can lead them to transgress and cross boundaries. Examples include the desire to live, to rest, to acquire material objects, to have relationships, and to reproduce.	- Qur'an, Surah Ali-Imran, 3:14 - Qur'an, Surah Ash-Shams, 91:7-10	100%
G	Response G now combined with Response D, so G has been eliminated.	Response G now combined with Response D, so G has been eliminated.	N/A

Theme 1A

The first theme to emerge revolved around the Islamic concept of the *fitrah* – an innate purity and goodness human beings are believed to be born with. 100% of the participants highlighted *fitrah* in their responses to this question. Participants noted that humans were born sinless and that no human was born evil. One participant noted that "in Islam, humans are considered innately good," providing an evidence from Chapter 30, Verse 30 in the Qur'an to demonstrate this concept. Another participant used the same verse as an evidence, stating that "regarding the nature of humans, it innately inclines towards good." One participant elaborated further on the nature of the *fitrah*, stating that humans had an "innate inclination towards, but not limited to altruism, kindness, compassion, and at the core of this is the belief in One God." Supporting this statement, a participant shared that "no one is born a killer, no one is born hateful, spiteful, or in any evil disposition." Together, these statements, along with the Islamic evidence, demonstrated the central importance of the *fitrah* when describing the Islamic view of human nature as innately good and pure. In Round Two, the response statement stemming from this theme reached 100% consensus, with four out of six participants strongly agreeing with the statement and the other two agreeing with it. The statement itself remained the same with no recommended change. However, additional evidence was provided for the statement and was incorporated into the Final Consensus Statement Summary (see Appendix J).

Theme 1B

The second theme to emerge focused on human beings being viewed as an honorable creation of God. One participant referenced a Qur'anic verse (95:4) that describes human beings as "created in the best upright, established form." This idea was not overtly stated by all participants but did seem to be indirectly referenced in some cases. For example, one participant's response highlighted that humans are "honored with knowledge and abilities." Another participant noted that this honor is what "differentiates humans from animals" and as such, this was included in the overall response statement included in the Round Two questionnaire. In Round Two, this response statement reached 100% consensus as well, with participants suggesting additional evidence. Based on feedback from respondents, the part of the response statement referencing the difference between humans and animals was removed as it was not seen as particularly important to include. Several pieces of evidence were

provided by participants during Round Two, which were incorporated in the final consensus statement.

Theme 1C

A third theme that was brought forth by participants connected the nature of human beings to their purpose. The statement developed came directly from one participant's response which noted that humans were "created to do Allah's work and use knowledge of Allah and fear of Him to bring justice to earth." It should be noted that no Islamic evidence was provided alongside this statement. Although this was not a theme that came forward across all participant responses during Round One, it still managed to achieve consensus with 83% of participants in agreement. Based on participant feedback in Round Two, the statement was slightly altered to reflect the Islamic understanding of human purpose more accurately. The new statement read "Humans are created to worship and live by Allah's commands and use knowledge and fear of Him to bring justice to the earth" and included two additional pieces of evidence provided by participants in Round Two.

Theme 1D

The fourth theme that emerged is linked in part to the concept of *fitrah* brought forward in 1A, focusing on the Islamic understanding of human actions that are evil. One participant highlighted that God does not create or compel human beings to do evil, which aligns with the Islamic understanding of the human *fitrah*. Although this did not emerge across all participant responses, it reached 100% consensus with most participants strongly agreeing with the statement. However, the response statement was ultimately changed to reflect feedback offered during Round Two. First, several participants connected this statement with 1G. They emphasized that the statement needed to include the view that life is understood to be a test for human beings. Participants note that this is linked to the Islamic perspective that humans have free will and personal agency. Participants shared that while humans are born upon a *fitrah* and are innately good, the nature of life as a test allows for human beings to make the choice to do evil though they are not compelled by God to do so. Participants felt it was important to include this in the statement as it more fully encapsulates the Islamic understanding of human nature and free will. As such, 1G was combined with 1D as they became qualitatively similar. After merging the two statements and adding new

evidence provided during Round Two, there were a total of eleven pieces of Islamic evidence, indicating the high level of support for the statement.

Theme 1E

This statement emerged from responses focused on the origin of evil or negative actions enacted by human beings. In a way, it is a continuation of the previous theme in that it focuses on the Islamic understanding of when and why humans commit evil actions or possess negative traits. If the Islamic understanding is that human beings are born innately good and pure, how and why do they then commit evil? The previous statement described the Islamic understanding that humans possess the capacity for evil and have the agency to act on this capacity. This statement instead focuses on the why and how – namely that humans are forgetful and are influenced by their environment and *Shaytan* (the devil). This leads them to develop negative traits and characteristics which causes a person to engage in evil actions. Although this statement did reach 100% consensus in Round Two, there were a few subtle changes to the wording of the final statement based upon participant feedback. These changes did not qualitatively alter the meaning, but instead clarified the meaning of the statement as agreed upon by the participants. Additional evidence offered by participants was also included in the Final Consensus Statement Summary (see Appendix J).

Theme 1F

This response statement is again connected to the previous theme in its focus on the rationale for evil or bad actions of human beings. Participants highlighted the role of desires in human nature, which can "lead humans to transgress and cross boundaries" as one participant described. Specifically, some participants named different desires that can lead humans to transgress, such as the "desire to live", "to rest", "to acquire objects" and so on. In Round Two, 100% of participants agreed with this statement, and no revisions or additional evidence were recommended by any participants.

Theme 1G

This statement emerged from several participants' comments on the understanding that life is viewed as a test according to an Islamic perspective. The response statement developed was based upon one participant's point that "worldly life is meant to be a test…. each human being is assigned an angel and a devil." Although

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this statement did achieve 100% consensus, the additional comments provided in Round Two led it to be sufficiently qualitatively linked to Theme 1D. As such, 1G and 1D were merged to strengthen the accuracy and uniqueness of the response statement.

Question Two

Question Two asked expert participants to answer the question: *How do humans come into existence? How do they psychologically develop?* Eight themes from Question Two were identified after a qualitative analysis using emergent coding of Round One responses. These eight themes were developed into eight response statements included in the Round Two Delphi questionnaire. Likert scales were used to assess each participant's level of agreement, and participants were offered an opportunity to further elaborate on each statement. After Round Two, two sufficiently similar statements were collapsed into one statement and one new unique statement was added. The final consensus statements in response to Question Two are outlined in Table 3. The development of each of these consensus statements is described below, including the iterative changes that were recommended by participants over the course of the study.

Table 3. Final Summary of Question 2 Consensus Statements

	Consensus Statement	Daleel/Evidence for Response	% Consensus
A	Humans come into existence by the expressed decree of God, starting as dust and beginning with the creation of Adam and Eve. After this, each human is born through biological conception by the command of God as nothing exists except by His will.	• Qur'an, Surah Al-Mu'minun, 23:12-14 • Qur'an, Surah Al-Hajj, 22:5 • Qur'an, Surah An-Nisa, 4:1 • Qur'an, Surah Al-Rahman, 55:14	100%
B	Although human beings are born with a fitrah (natural instinct), a human's development can be affected by a variety of internal (e.g. personal traits and characteristics) and external influences (e.g. parents, bad friends).	• "Every newborn is born in a state of Fitrah – the parents would influence the child taking them away from the innate state of Fitrah." (Hadith, Tirmidhi) • "One of you is influenced by his companions – so be careful whom you take as a friend." (Hadith, Sunan Abu Dawud)	100%
C	Every human is born obedient to the Creator, and as they develop, they learn to do otherwise as a result of external influences. Humans are affected by parents, family, their friends, and their environment. They both affect and get affected by things and people around them. The psychological development of humans is shaped by how they are raised, a process known as Tarbiyyah. As a child grows, companions become more significant in their development. Islam emphasizes the need to choose friends and role models wisely from an early age as one is influenced by them.	• "No one is born except they are upon al-fitrah (instinct). His parents turn him into a Jew or Christian or Magian." (Hadith, Sahih Muslim and Bukhari) • "One of you is influenced by his companions – so be careful whom you take as a friend." (Hadith, Sunan Abu Dawud) • Dr. Husna Dialameh in Al-Fikr at-Tarbawi al-Islami 'Inda al-Imam Ja'far as-Sadiq (Page 29).	100%

	Consensus Statement	Daleel/Evidence for Response	% Consensus
D	Humans develop and grow through hardships, tests, trials, and tribulations.	• Qur'an, Surah Al-Fajr, 89:15-16 • Qur'an, Surah Al-Balad, 90:4 • Qur'an, Surah Al-An'aam, 6:165 • Qur'an, Surah Al Baqarah, 2:155-157 • Qur'an, Surah Al-Ankaboot, 29:2-3 • Qur'an, Surah Muhammad, 47:31	83%
E	Response E now combined with Response C, so E has been eliminated.	• Response E now combined with Response C, so E has been eliminated.	N/A
F	Children need nurturing without much need for structure before the age of 7 – they only need to be loved and protected. At the age of 7, they are conscious enough to learn structure and follow instructions carefully. This is a formative stage, where instructions about things that are good (e.g. manners, prayer) need to be emphasized. At the age of 10, they are ready to understand and know that consequences exist. After the age of 10, development varies from person to person. In the mid-teens and beyond, a young person may be given serious responsibilities. In their 20s, humans are in their physical prime. In their 30s and 40s, this is the time for spiritual growth. Most Prophets were sent around this age.	• There is no authentic narration or ayat that reference this, but there are sayings of the sahabah. • Ali (RA) OR Abdul Malik bin Marwan (*Rahimahu Allah*) said: "Nurture your children for seven years, discipline/structure them for seven years and teach them for seven years. Afterward, leave them to their design." • Omar ibn Al Khattab (RA) said: "Show loving care and leniency to your child throughout the first seven years [guide by being an example to your child], afterwards - and for the next seven years, have a direct hand in mentoring your child…correct him if he errs [through love and care] - direct them, teach them and be there for them. After that, and for the next seven years, accompany them for seven years – correcting them and directing them through a friendly relationship."	83%

	Consensus Statement	Daleel/Evidence for Response	% Consensus
G	Islam places significant emphasis on how a parent should be with their child, highlighting the critical influence of families on child development. Islam warns against harshness so that children may be able to grow and develop into healthy, functioning individuals. It is important to note that children of parents who have been harsh and abusive can still excel and develop into strong, resilient individuals as they may turn to Allah (SWT) for healing and hope.	• Anas (RA) narrated that: "the Messenger of Allah (SAW) was one of the best of men in character.... I swear by Allah, I served him for seven or nine years, and he never said to me about a thing which I had done: Why did you do such and such? Nor about a thing which I left: why did not do such and such?" (Hadith, Sunan Abi Dawud, 4773) • "Al-Aqra' b. Habis saw Allah's Apostle (SAW) kissing Hasan. He said: I have ten children, but I have never kissed any one of them, whereupon Allah's Messenger (SAW) said: He who does not show mercy (towards his children), no mercy would be shown to him." (Hadith, Sahih Muslim 2318a) • Narrated `Abdullah bin `Amr: The Prophet (SAW) never used bad language neither a "Fahish nor a Mutafahish. He used to say, "The best amongst you are those who have the best manners and character." (Hadith, Sahih Bukhari, No. 56 (B) Vol. 8) • Qur'an, Surah Al Kahf, 18:82 • Example of Prophet Ibrahim (AS) and the abuse and vilification he endured at the hands of his own father. • Qur'an, Surah Al Kahf, 18:28	100%

Theme 2A

The first theme to emerge was clearly articulated by each participant and centered on the creation of humankind. As one participant noted, "humans come into existence by the expressed decree of God." Others further elaborated on this, noting that human existence "[starts] as dust" and "[began] with the creation of Adam and Eve." Participants were resoundingly clear that human existence is only a result of God's command, as demonstrated with one participant's statement that "nothing exists except by His will." These various comments were clearly connected and combined into one response statement, along with the evidence provided by participants. This response statement reached 100% consensus during Round Two, with four out of six respondents expressing strong agreement. The response statement was not altered in any way, but additional evidence was provided by participants and incorporated into the final consensus statement summary.

Theme 2B

The second theme that emerged emphasized different factors that influence development, linking back to the concept of the *fitrah* that emerged in response to Question One. Several participants highlighted the concept of the *fitrah* once again, as well as the potential influences on one's development, such as "inborn traits and talents" or "traits from both parents." This statement did not reach consensus during Round Two, with participants recommending several changes. The statement shifted to more clearly state that while the *fitrah* is a given, there are many factors that influence a human's development. Participants felt that the statement before did not clearly articulate the relationship between the *fitrah* and development. In addition, the participants shared different evidence to more clearly support the suggested revised statement. The changes were evidently favourable to the expert panel as this statement reached 100% consensus in Round Three, with five of six participants strongly agreeing with the revised statement.

Theme 2C

The third theme to emerge revealed that an Islamic framework recognizes the significant impact of external factors on psychological development. This theme was evident across several responses highlighting the significance that other people can have on one's development, including "parents, family, and friends." Although this theme

is qualitatively similar to 2B, there is a much greater focus on the specific roles people play in influencing one's development. In Round Two, this statement achieved 100% consensus among participants, and thus required no revisions. However, in reviewing the responses, many participants linked 2C and 2E. This led to a merger of the statements, ultimately leading to a revised 2C statement that more fully reflected participant responses and made it conceptually distinct from 2B.

Theme 2D

The fourth theme that arose relates to the Islamic understanding of hardships and difficulties. Although only one participant highlighted this concept and did not provide supporting evidence in Round One, the statement still achieved 83% consensus in Round Two. Participants also offered evidence that supported the statement. In the comments section, several participants expressed agreement with the statement by expanding on it further. However, no recommendations were made to change the original statement and as such, it remained the same with only the evidence section amended.

Theme 2E

The primary theme reflected in this response statement is the concept of *tarbiyyah*, which a participant described as "holistic rearing of the physical being, including the spiritual and intellectual state." Participants linked this to how one is raised, as well as the environment in which one grows. This is what ultimately led 2E to be merged with 2C, given the shared focus on environments in which one grows and the impact of people within those environments. The original 2E statement achieved consensus at a level of 83%. However, as it was merged with 2C, it was not included in the final consensus statement summary.

Theme 2F

A distinct theme began to emerge related to the important role parents play in the psychological development of human beings. One participant outlined a multi-stage approach to caring for children until they grow into adults. This participant's response was used verbatim as the statement in 2F. The participant did not provide any Islamic evidence for the breakdown, and yet the statement achieved 83% consensus in Round Two. Several participants noted that although there is no clear authentic *Hadith*

supporting the statement, it is aligned with Islamic understandings and the advice of the *Sahabah*, or companions of the Prophet Muhammad (SAW). As such, although no authentic narration or verse of Qur'an could be cited, it seems that participants felt it was sufficiently supported by Islamic values and principles to express agreement with the statement.

Theme 2G

The next theme to emerge links to the 2F response statement, but it is distinct in its focus on the negative impact parents can have on their children. Participants emphasized the importance of early childhood experiences, as one expert stated that "if parents damage their children early on in life, the child will not grow to be able to function." Several participants offered evidence in their response, highlighting that the Prophet Muhammad (SAW) taught his followers to be kind and gentle with children, rather than harsh. This statement achieved 100% consensus in Round Two, though several participants recommended changes. Two participants brought forward the point that early adverse childhood experiences do not necessarily mean that a child will not develop into a healthy, functioning adult. Instead, they shared that in some instances, children grow more resilient and can excel. As such, the final statement was revised to reflect these recommendations, with the inclusion of additional pieces of evidence to support the statement.

Theme 2H

This theme appeared quite similar to that described in 2F, and yet it was distinct in its differential breakdown of the stages of child and adolescent development. Ultimately, it did not reach the threshold for consensus in Rounds Two and Three, and the same participants did not offer reasons for their lack of agreement. It should be noted that the participants did not state they did not agree, but instead selected neutral responses which could not be used to meet the threshold to achieve consensus. It could be suggested that this statement is quite similar to that in 2F, but that 2F was more strongly supported by evidence according to participants.

Theme 2I

Unlike most of the response statements, this theme did not arise during Round One. Instead, it emerged from the feedback and comments offered in response to

Theme 2B during Round Two. The responses warranted the creation of a new theme statement focused on the states of the soul as understood from an Islamic perspective. The participant who offered this breakdown of the types of *nafs* suggested it as a model for understanding human development. However, several participants did not agree with the conceptualization and instead suggested that these are better understood as fluid states that humans oscillate between depending on their actions and the state of their heart. In response to this statement, one participant wrote that these could shift and change "regardless of the stage of human development." This statement only had one opportunity to reach consensus after Round Two and ultimately did not achieve the minimum threshold.

Question Three

Question Three invited expert participants to answer the question: *What is Islam's view of health? What is considered healthy development?* Five themes were identified after a qualitative analysis using emergent coding. These five themes were developed into five response statements included in the Round Two Delphi questionnaire. Likert scales were used to assess each participant's level of agreement, and participants were offered the opportunity to further elaborate on each statement. One additional statement was added after Round Two, leading to six total themes emerging in response to this question. The final consensus statements for Question Three are outlined in Table 4. The development of each of these final consensus statements is described below, including the iterative changes that were recommended by participants during each round.

Table 4. Final Summary of Question 3 Consensus Statements

	Consensus Statement	Daleel/Evidence for Response	% Consensus
A	All Islamic laws aim to achieve five goals – preservation of faith, life, the mind, family, and wealth. From an Islamic perspective, holistic health would involve achieving a balance in these five areas.	• In a narration, it states: لا تزولُ قدما عبدٍ يومَ القيامةِ حتى يُسألَ عن شبابِه فيما أبلاه ، وعن عُمُره فيما أفناه ، وعن مالِه من أين اكتسبَه وفيما أنفقَه ، وعن عِلمِه ماذا عمل فيه Meaning: "On the Day of Resurrection, one would be asked about his youth, and what he did with it, and about his life and what and he did in it." • Hadith of Ammar, wherein the Prophet (SAW) told him to take the necessary means to preserve his faith and his life. • The fact that we are forbidden from consuming intoxicants is in effect the preservation of one's intellect and being told not to squander it is in effect the preservation of one's wealth.	83%
B	The human body is a trust and gift, ultimately belonging to Allah (SWT). Each human is responsible for taking care of this trust, neither neglecting nor indulging the body. Further, there is a direct relationship between physical wellness and healthy development and spiritual wellness. Healthy development includes protection from harmful substances, such as intoxicants that alter one's state of mind and harm the body.	• Qur'an, Surah Al-Isra, 17:36 • "Your body has a right over you, and your eyes have a right over you." (Hadith, Sahih Bukhari #5199) • "Surely excessive sleeping begets excessive oral consumption, and excessive oral consumption leads to excessive fullness of the stomach, and both of these then become weighty on the person pertaining to their obedience of God." (Imam Ja'far as-Sadiq in Misbah as-Shar'iyah, Page. 45)	100%

	Consensus Statement	Daleel/Evidence for Response	% Consensus
C	We should strive towards healing, health, and wellbeing. Weakness and sickness are not vilified, but rather we are encouraged to maintain and care for our health according to what is in our control. In fact, sickness can bring Muslims closer to Allah (SWT). The vulnerability inspires surrender and humility which are indicative of spiritual health. Muslims should never intentionally harm themselves and should stay away from all things that may affect their health negatively.	• "The strong/healthy believer is better and more beloved to Allah than a weak believer – though in all believers there is good." (Hadith, Sahih Muslim) • "A headache that a believer suffers or a thorn he steps on or anything that harms him would raise him in ranks before Allah on the Day of Resurrection and these would efface sins from his record." (Hadith, Targheeb, 3434)	100%
D	Parents should show love and affection towards their children and make them feel safe and cared for. These are critical ingredients that support healthy human development.	• There are many proofs for this – one of which the Hadith of Al-Aqra' bin Haabis, who never showed love to his children – and the Prophet (SAW) said to him, "The one who shows no mercy/love will not be shown any by Allah." (Hadith, Adab Mufrad 71)	100%
E	Connection is key for healthy development. Young people should be engaged with and guided by adults around them. Adults should remain connected with one another, collaborating and caring to avoid loneliness which can also be a source of spiritual illness.	• The Prophet (SAW) used to ride with the youth. He used to talk to them, sit with them and give them advice. He used to engage them and keep them company. He used to give them responsibilities according to the capacities they exhibit. Hence, he gave Ali the flag in the battle of Khaibar, sent Mus'ab Bin Omair as an ambassador to Al Madinah and assign Usam Bin Zaid the command of an army as a teenager.	83%

F	Consensus Statement	Daleel/Evidence for Response	% Consensus
F	Healthy development requires balance, without extremes in any regard. This requires one to focus on spiritual development, as well as physical and mental development.	• The Prophet (SAW) said "By Him in Whose Hand is my life, if your state of mind remains the same as it is in my presence and you are always busy in remembrance (of Allah), the angels will shake hands with you in your beds and in your roads; but Hanzalah, time should be devoted (to the worldly affairs) and time should be devoted to your spiritual affairs." (Hadith, Sahih Muslim) • The Prophet (SAW) established a bond of brotherhood between Salman and Abu Darda'. Salman paid a visit to Abu ad-Darda and found Um Ad-Darda' dressed in shabby clothes and asked her why she was in that state.?" She replied, "Your brother, Abu Ad-Darda is not interested in the luxuries of this world." In the meantime Abu Ad-Darda came and prepared a meal for him (Salman), and said to him, "(Please) eat for I am fasting." Salman said, "I am not going to eat, unless you eat." So Abu Ad-Darda' ate. When it was night, Abu Ad-Darda' got up (for the night prayer). Salman said (to him), "Sleep," and he slept. Again Abu- Ad-Darda' got up (for the prayer), and Salman said (to him), "Sleep." When it was the last part of the night, Salman said to him, "Get up now (for the prayer)." So both of them offered their prayers and Salman said to Abu Ad-Darda' "Your Lord has a right on you; and your soul has a right on you; and your family has a right on you; so you should give the rights of all those who have a right on you). Later on, Abu Ad-Darda' visited the Prophet (SAW) and mentioned that to him. The Prophet, said, "Salman has spoken the truth." (Hadith, Sahih Bukhari)	100%

Theme 3A

The first theme identified was brought forward by only one participant and centered on the goals of the *shari'ah* in Islam, which the participant described as focused on, "five goals – preservation of one's faith, one's body, one's mind, one's family, and one's wealth." In the explanation of this point, the participant noted the importance of a holistic understanding of wellbeing rather than a narrow definition of health. In Round Two, this statement did not achieve consensus. Although 50% of the participants expressed strong agreement with it, another participant disagreed, and another was neutral. In an effort to use the exact words of the participants, the statement developed for Round Two appeared to miss the mark in terms of conveying the essence of what the participant was trying to communicate. Based on the feedback provided during Round Two, the statement was amended to more clearly describe the meaning of the response provided by the participant in Round One. The statement was shortened considerably and included the term 'holistic' although this word was not initially used by a participant. Ultimately this statement reached consensus in Round Three, with the individual who originally disagreed changing their response to agree with the revised statement.

Theme 3B

A theme that quickly emerged centered on the idea that the human body is viewed as a "trust and gift" that belongs to God, linking physical health to spiritual wellbeing. Participants commented that Islam requires individuals to be "responsible for taking care of this trust" and to avoid "neglecting or indulging the body." Another participant described the importance of prevention and avoiding "harmful substances, such as intoxicants," an idea that was clearly connected to the responsibility to care for one's physical and mental health. Those participants who commented on this theme also noted that the Islamic perspective is that physical health and spiritual health are deeply related and interconnected. This statement easily surpassed the threshold for consensus in Round Two, with 100% of participants agreeing and the majority strongly agreeing with the statement. No changes were recommended and as such, the statement was unaltered.

Theme 3C

The third theme to emerge emphasized the participants' understandings of sickness and whether one should strive for health. One participant shared that humans are encouraged to "strive towards healing, health, and wellbeing." At the same time, "weakness and sickness are not vilified." Participants noted that this balanced understanding was important and that individuals must focus on "caring for health according to what is in [their] control." Importantly, this theme also encapsulated the purpose of illness and sickness, as understood in the Islamic tradition. As one participant described, "sickness can bring Muslims closer to Allah (SWT)," and another clarified that one "should never intentionally harm themselves." This balance seemed key across participant responses. This statement achieved a consensus rate of 100% in Round Two, and no changes were suggested. One additional evidence was provided, and this was incorporated into the final summary.

Theme 3D

The next theme to emerge centered on the influence of parenting on healthy development. One participant noted that "parents must nurture their children with love, adoration, and fairness," and at the same time prepare children to "face the challenges of modern-day life." Another participant also highlighted this point sharing that "healthy development is when a child is raised according to Islam… using [their] physical and mental skills for the betterment of [their] own life and the lives of others." These ideas were merged into one theme statement as they both emphasized the link between parenting or raising children with healthy development. Initially, no evidence was provided by participants for this statement. In Round Two, this statement did not achieve consensus though it should be noted that two participants left the question blank, while the others all agreed with it. As such, it is unclear if they disagreed with the statement or simply missed the question. Regardless, feedback and additional evidence was incorporated, and a revised statement was developed to better convey the message. The revised statement focused more clearly on the role of a parent's love and affection on children, which participants had shared was critical for development. Ultimately, this statement achieved 100% consensus in Round Three, with five of six participants strongly agreeing with the statement.

Theme 3E

This theme shifted the focus from young children to youth and young adults, seemingly highlighting the importance of connection for healthy adolescent development. No evidence was provided by participants, so verbatim responses were used to formulate the statement. The response statement ultimately was a combination of one participant's assertion that "young people should be kept engaged and guided by adults around them," and another participant's statement that "collaborating and caring to avoid loneliness" are essential for good health. Though this statement reached consensus in Round Two, participants offered several pieces of feedback and new evidence to incorporate. It became clear that the key theme was human connection and the importance of relationship and mentorship, whether in the case of young people or adults. As such, a revised statement was offered emphasizing connection and engagement. A piece of evidence was also offered to support the statement.

Theme 3F

This theme emerged in a participant's response to theme 3E during Round Two and suggested that the Islamic tradition emphasizes balance as key for healthy development. The participant had originally made the comment in relation to 3E, sharing that "healthy development requires balance, without extremes in any regard." The statement achieved 100% consensus in Round Three, with the only feedback being additional evidence for the statement.

Question Four

Question Four requested that participants answer the question: *What is Islam's view of illness? What is considered unhealthy development?* Six themes from Question Four were identified after a qualitative analysis using emergent coding. These six themes were developed into six response statements provided in the Round Two Delphi questionnaire. Likert scales were used to assess the participant's level of agreement, and each statement included an opportunity to further elaborate on the statement. The final consensus statements for Question Four are outlined in Table 5. The development of each of these final consensus statements is described below, including the iterative changes that were recommended by participants throughout the study.

Table 5. Final Summary of Question 4 Consensus Statements

	Consensus Statement	Daleel/Evidence for Response	% Consensus
A	Illness can be of a mental, physical, emotional, or spiritual nature. Spiritual illnesses are of the most concern and most critical to wellbeing.	• "Know that there is a piece of flesh in the body, if it is rectified, the whole body is rectified, but if it rots the whole body rots, and that is the heart." (Hadith, Sahih Bukhari) • Qur'an, Surah Al-Hajj, 22:46	100%
B	Spiritual illnesses exist within the heart. They occur when a person cannot find happiness because their heart is unable to connect with Allah (SWT) and is filled with diseases, such as envy, hatred, anger, or resentment. It may manifest through a sense of loss and meaningful purpose in life. Some, but not all, emotional or mental illnesses are due to a lack of connection with Allah (SWT).	• Qur'an, Surah Al-Hajj, 22:46	83%
C	In Islam, illness is understood to only come by the permission of Allah (SWT) and is believed to be good for those who obey the commandments of Allah. For a believer, there are many spiritual aspects to sickness as an individual may seek forgiveness, practice patience, and receive great rewards. A person can also achieve rida', which is to be content with God's will. Illness can also be a test, which may serve to confirm one's claim of faith, remind humans of their weakness, and purify and spiritually cleanse a person, raising their rank with Allah (SWT).	• Qur'an, Surah Al-Baqarah, 2:155 • It was narrated that Abu Hurairah said: "Mention of fever was made in the presence of the Messenger of Allah (SAW), and a man cursed it. The Prophet (SAW) said: 'Do not curse it, for it erases sin as fire removes filth from iron.'" (Hadith, Vol. 4, Book 31, Hadith 3469) • Qur'an, Surah Al Mulk, 67:2 • "How wonderful is the affair of the believer, for his affairs are all good, and this applies to no one but the believer. If something good happens to him, he is thankful for it and that is good for him. If something bad happens to him, he bears it with patience and that is good for him." (Hadith, Sahih Muslim, 2999)	83%

	Consensus Statement	Daleel/Evidence for Response	% Consensus
D	Allah (SWT) has created illness and He has created the cure for illness. Humans should seek treatment and medicine while recognizing that these are simply means to the cure. It is Allah (SWT) who ultimately provides healing.	• Qur'an, Surah Ash-Shu'ara, 26:80 • Qur'an, Surah Al-Anbiyah, 21:83 • "Indeed, the one who allows people to get sick, He created the medication, there-fore, seek healing." (Hadith, Abu Dawood, 3855) • "Allah does not send down any disease, but He also sends down the cure." (Hadith, Sunan Ibn Majah, Vol. 4, Book 31, Hadith 3439)	100%
E	Islam requires us to stay away from all things that lead to illness, and practice moderation in all aspects of life.	• Qur'an, Surah Al-A'raf, 7:31 • "One third for your food, one third for your drink and one third for your breath." (Hadith, At-Tirmidhi, 516) • Qur'an, Surah An-Nisa, 4:29 • "If you hear of the sickness / infectious disease/ plague in a land do not enter it, and if you are there do not leave from it." (Hadith, Sahih Muslim, 2218) • "There should be neither harming nor reciprocating harm." (Hadith, al-Haakim, 2/57-58) • Qur'an, Surah Al-Baqarah, 2:195	83%
F	Giving into negativity or being pessimistic is considered unhealthy from an Islamic perspective. As Muslims, we should endeavour to maintain an optimistic outlook.	• The Prophet (SAW) said: "Whoever says it is over – giving into negativity – is the source of the problems or is the worst one within that community." (Muslim 2623). • The Seerah [biography] of Prophet Muhammad mentions that the Prophet went through dire circumstances but was strong through faith.	100%

Theme 4A

The first theme to emerge focused on the various types of illnesses according to the Islamic tradition, noting the significant impact of spiritual illnesses. A few participants highlighted that illnesses vary in nature, as one participant described that they can be "mental, physical, emotional, or spiritual." While not every participant described the multiple types of illnesses, the majority did make specific mention of spiritual illness and its interaction with one's overall wellbeing. It was also evident through the responses that Islam views wellness and illness through a holistic lens. This approach acknowledges the different parts of one's being but views them as inextricably linked. This statement achieved 100% consensus in Round Two, with the addition of one piece of Qur'anic evidence which was included in the final consensus statement summary.

Theme 4B

The next theme to emerge described the nature of emotional and spiritual illnesses, linking this to a disconnect in the relationship with Allah (SWT). Several different diseases of the heart were mentioned by participants, including "envy, hatred, anger, or resentment." Connected to this, another participant noted that this poor relationship and inability to find happiness can then "manifest as a sense of loss and purpose in life." While this statement did achieve consensus in Round Two, one participant disagreed with the statement and offered a suggested change to the statement. The participant noted that "not all emotional or mental illness is due to a lack of connection with Allah," citing various potential biological or social factors that may impact one's emotional wellbeing. When reviewing the first round of responses, it was clear that this nuance was missed in the original development of the theme statement. As such, the beginning of the statement was revised from "spiritual and emotional illnesses exist within the heart" to only include spiritual illnesses in this statement. The end of the statement was also revised with the addition of "some, but not all, emotional or mental illnesses are due to a lack of connection with Allah (SWT)" to reflect the feedback provided. In addition, a participant recommended the removal of one piece of evidence that was not applicable to the response statement.

Theme 4C

This theme revolved around the Islamic perspective on the purpose and reason for illness, answering a fundamental question of "Why do people get sick? Why does

God allow us to experience illness?" Participants were clear in describing illness as only coming by the "permission of Allah (SWT)" and that Islam does not view illness as evil or negative in all cases. Several participants described illness as a test. One participant elaborated on the concept of illness as a test, describing that the purpose of the test is "to confirm one's claim of faith, remind humans of their weakness, and purifying a person." Others also highlighted the importance of patience and gratitude when faced with illness, noting these were essential for "spiritual cleansing." This statement did achieve 83% consensus, surpassing the minimum threshold. However, the only participant who did not agree with the statement suggested critical changes to the statement. In particular, the participant noted that the idea that illness is good is specific to a believing person as belief is essential for reframe and benefit from illness. When reviewing the participant's feedback in conjunction with the original response, it was evident that the original statement did not fully articulate the perspectives brought forward in the first round. As such, the statement was revised to incorporate this feedback without changing the essence of the statement.

Theme 4D

A clear theme arose around the Islamic perspective that the creator of illness is God, and that He is also the creator of the cure for these illnesses. Participants were unified in this understanding, with one participant articulating the group perspective in their statement that "meditation and other ways of healing are just means – Allah is the one who provides healing." One participant also stated that humans must "seek healing" given that God created these cures for humans to seek. During Round Two, this statement achieved 100% consensus, with some minor suggested changes to wording and the provision of additional evidence in support of the statement.

Theme 4E

This theme focused on the Islamic perspective on what human beings should avoid and stay away from to prevent illness. One participant described this understanding, sharing that "Islam requires us to stay away from all things that lead to illness." Another participant noted that humans should stay away from extremes as well, and need to "practice moderation in all aspects of life, including relationships, food, drink, activity, etc." No evidence was provided by participants in Round One. However, the statement still managed to achieve 83% consensus among the expert panel. During

Round Two, however, more evidence was provided by participants to strengthen the statement and this was incorporated into the final summary.

Theme 4F

The final theme to emerge centered on the Islamic perspective that negativity is unhealthy for human beings. The statement also included a related point on the importance of having trust in God and being optimistic. The original statement offered did not achieve consensus, with participants sharing feedback that some concepts were being conflated. One participant also suggested that the statement linking negativity to unhealthy development was incorrect. Based upon this feedback, the statement was revised to focus more specifically on the Islamic understanding that "giving into negativity" or "not being optimistic" – as some participants described in their responses – is unhealthy overall. In addition, the latter portion of the statement was revised to better reflect participant responses regarding the goal of optimism. In Round Three, the revised statement achieved 100% consensus among participants.

Question Five

Question Five invited participants to respond to the question: *What is the Islamic perspective on how people change? What is necessary and/or sufficient for change to occur?* Six themes from Question Five were identified after a qualitative analysis using emergent coding. These six themes were developed into six response statements provided in the Round Two Delphi questionnaire. Once again, Likert scales to assess level of agreement were used, along with the invitation for participants to further elaborate on each statement. After reviewing the feedback and responses provided in Round Two, one additional statement was included, leading to a total of seven response statements representing themes that emerged for Question Five. The final consensus statements for Question Five are outlined in Table 6. The development of each of these final consensus statements is described below, including the iterative changes that were recommended by participants during each round of the study.

Table 6. Final Summary of Question 5 Consensus Statements

	Consensus Statement	Daleel/Evidence for Response	% Consensus
A	Every individual has the capacity to change and change begins with one's own self. Change requires willpower, motivation, and commitment to change. Once a person has this intention and will, Allah (SWT) will help a person to change and increase them in guidance and support. Similarly, a person is not misguided towards a negative change until that person takes a conscious step towards misguidance.	• Qur'an, Surah Ar-Rad, 13:11 • Qur'an, Surah Yunus, 10:9	83%
B	A person will not change unless they recognize that their situations needs to change or be rectified. This awareness and acknowledgement can be achieved through self-inventory, a practice known as *muhasabah*. This requires an understanding that every action in life has consequences. After a person recognizes what needs to change, the next step is to feel remorseful and then repent. With sincere repentance and an intention to change, a person must maintain a strong desire to not repeat the same steps which led to prior mistakes and transgressions.	• Examples from the *Seerah* with the people of Quraish and their journey towards change. • As ibn Qudamah al-Maqdisi stated in Mukhtasar Minhaj al-Qasidin, page 278, remorse is produced by that person having knowledge that they were behaving as reprobate between themselves and people and between themselves and their Beloved meaning God. • Imam Yahya bin Hamzah adh-Dhammari in Kitab Tasfiyyah al-Qulub, page 322 described this self-inventory as reading one's own heart, actions of the tongue and the physical limbs to evaluate every form of disobedience. • Qur'an, Surah An-Nisa, 4:1	83%
C	The primary driver for change is the prospect of the Hereafter and being held accountable in front of Allah (SWT). Allah (SWT) provides humans with everything, including life, body, health, education, children, jobs, homes, cars, etc. These are means by which we should do good in the world, rather than abuse these gifts. We will be held accountable for how we use these gifts and blessings.	• Qur'an, Surah Al-Qari'ah, 101:6-11 • Qur'an, Surah At-Taubah, 8:53 • Qur'an, Surah At-Takathur, 102:1-8	100%

	Consensus Statement	Daleel/Evidence for Response	% Consensus
D	It is never too late to change. The path back to Allah (SWT) is always available, so change is always possible no matter how significant the shortcoming or mistake.	• Qur'an, Surah Ar-Room, 30:41 • "Allah accepts the repentance of anyone of us as long as they do not utter the death rattle." (Hadith, Tirmidhi, 3537) • The verses of the Qur'an that say that Allah forgives the repentant are numerous.	83%
E	From an Islamic perspective, positive and negative change can both occur. A positive change is one that brings a person closer to Allah (SWT) and a negative change is one that distances a person from Allah (SWT).	• "Righteousness is good character and sin is something you do and feel uncomfortable and you feel afraid to be exposed." (Hadith, Sahih Muslim, 185) • Qur'an, Surah Al-Baqarah, 2:4-5 • Qur'an, Surah At-Taha, 20:124 • Qur'an, Surah Ar-Room, 30:41	83%
F	For change to be permanent, a person must believe this change is possible, and that is what is best for them and most pleasing to Allah (SWT). Sudden changes are not always ideal, rather sustainable change is preferred. Once an individual firmly accepts this and takes the necessary steps, change is possible and more sustainable.	• An example of this is in the prohibition of intoxicating beverages. Makkans were renowned for their drinking culture. Its prohibition was not revealed overnight; it took a long period and was deemed unlawful in the third year after the migration of the Prophet to the city of Madinah.	83%
G	Change is influenced by many factors, including one's upbringing, friends, role models, etc. Positive change can be sustained with the help of environmental influences, such as friends and family. The better the environment, the better the chance of sustaining a change. The worse the environment, the more likely a negative change will take place.	• Example of Abu Bakr – many of the people he brought to Islam were friends, which is evidence of the impact of good friends. • "Man follows his friend's religion, so be careful who you take for friends." (Hadith, Riyad As-Salahin)	100%

Theme 5A

The first theme to clearly emerge was the Islamic perspective that "every individual has the capacity to change." As one participant described, the resounding understanding is that within an Islamic framework, "people can change … once they have the willpower and motivation to do so." This theme reflected the view that change is possible should any individual wish to do so. Others commented similarly that the necessary ingredients for change included intention, determination, and commitment. Another related comment came from a participant who noted that the same is true for individuals making negative changes, sharing that this requires that a "person takes a conscious step towards misguidance." This statement achieved consensus in Round Two at a level of 83%. The only suggested changes were on the wording for the purpose of clarity, and as such, minor changes were made to the final statement.

Theme 5B

The second theme focused on how people change, including the various factors that influence people to change. One participant described this, sharing that "a person will not change unless they recognize they have some type of shortcoming to rectify." Similarly, another mentioned that a "self-inventory" is required to bring about "awareness and acknowledgement" of what one needs to change. This was elaborated on by a participant who described that after acknowledging the need to change, "the next step to change is feeling remorseful." In a similar vein, other participants noted the different factors that impact whether one will change or not, including "upbringing, friends, role models, etc." or "environmental influences" more generally. In summary, participants described several internal factors required for change, as well as helpful environmental and external factors that support or inhibit the change process. This statement achieved 83% consensus during Round Two, though some minor changes were recommended to the wording of the statement. Evidently, the second part of the statement seemed to represent a separate theme in its focus on factors that can influence change. This was distinct from the first part of the statement's emphasis on what is necessary for change to take place, mostly detailing internal factors. As such, the second part of the statement was removed and developed into a separate theme statement that was included in Round Three, independent of 5B. In addition, the first part of the statement that remained was edited for clarity based upon recommendations from participants. Additional evidence was also incorporated in support of the statement.

Theme 5C

A key theme that emerged is the Islamic understanding of the "primary driver for change," which participants described as revolving around accountability and the Hereafter. One participant described the Islamic perspective that "God provides people with everything: life, body, health, education…" as gifts for humanity. The participant shared that these gifts should not be abused, as humans will be held accountable for how they used these gifts. Thus, every gift from the Creator must be used for good in the world. When a human being has this understanding, this should motivate and encourage them to do good and change their behaviour for the better. In Round Two, this statement reached 100% consensus. The only feedback provided was additional evidence in support of the statement.

Theme 5D

Another prominent theme focused on the Islamic perspective that it is "never too late to change" as one participant explained. Similarly, another participant shared that "the door back to Allah (SWT) is always open 24/7," indicating that change can begin at any moment, day or night. In the same token, one participant commented that a critical Islamic view is that "change can always begin and is always possible no matter how significant the shortcoming or mistake." This statement easily reached consensus during Round Two at a level of 83%, with one participant leaving the question blank. Most participants responded that they strongly agreed with the statement and offered additional evidence and comments that allowed the statement to be further strengthened and refined for clarity.

Theme 5E

This theme focused on the Islamic understanding of the nature of change, with participants noting that both positive and negative change are possible. Participants defined what they understood to be the Islamic definition of good or positive change, with one describing it as "one that brings a person closer to Allah (SWT)." A negative change, on the other hand, was described as "one that distances a person from Allah (SWT)." Another participant shared a related point, stating that "the primary reason for negative change is societal influence and excessive love of worldly positions and possessions." Although this initially seemed to be a separate point, it appeared to be sufficiently relevant. These were combined to create one thematic statement. No

evidence was offered to support this statement during Round One. Ultimately, this statement did achieve consensus at a level of 83%, with participants providing several pieces of evidence to strengthen it, as well as suggesting minor wording changes. Based on the feedback provided, as well as another review of initial Round One responses from participants, the latter part of the statement focused on the factors influencing change was extracted to create one new additional statement, 5G. It was felt this part of the statement was in fact sufficiently unique to warrant the development of a separate statement.

Theme 5F

The final theme to emerge from the analysis of the Round One data focused on the permanency or sustainability of change. As one participant described, change must be "something that [one] can practically apply," and similarly another commented that "sudden change is not the aim as sudden change does not yield results." One participant shared that a critical ingredient for permanent or sustainable change is deep conviction that there is a need for change – "one has to believe in it." While this statement did achieve consensus in Round Two with 83% of participants agreeing with it, a piece of feedback from the lone participant who disagreed helped further refine and clarify the statement. The most significant change to the statement was the incorporation of the point that "a person must believe this change is possible, and that this is what is best for them and most pleasing to Allah (SWT)." Additionally, a point was included to reflect a recommended adjustment to the statement to clarify that "once an individual firmly accepts this and takes the necessary steps," change is then possible and sustainable. This was consistent with other participants' responses in Round One and as such, was consistent with the theme and strengthened it overall. Given the statement remained true to the original theme and had already achieved consensus, it was simply updated and included in the consensus statement summary.

Theme 5G

Statement 5G was developed after Round Two based on feedback provided and additional commentary that was offered by participants. Several participants commented on the factors that influence or facilitate positive or negative change. It became clear that part of 5E fit more closely with this new statement. As such, it was used to develop the new statement. As one participant commented, the Islamic understanding is that

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"change is influenced by many factors." Other participants described several factors that can influence change for the better or worse, including "upbringing, friends, role models" and other "environmental influences." One participant summarized this sharing that "the better the environment, the better the chance of sustaining a good change. The worse an environment, the more likely it will be negative changes." This statement easily reached consensus during Round Three with 100% of participants agreeing with it. The only change to the statement was the addition of one new evidence provided by a participant.

Question Six

Question Six invited participants to answer the question: *What might be the overarching goal of therapy using an Islamic framework? What might be the role of the therapist? The client?* Fifteen themes from Question Six were identified after a qualitative analysis of Round One data using emergent coding. These fifteen themes were developed into fifteen response statements provided in the Round Two Delphi questionnaire. The questionnaire used Likert scales to assess level of agreement and offered an opportunity to further elaborate on each statement. It should be noted that while this question garnered many more unique response statements compared to other questions, there were relatively fewer details and shorter responses for Question Six. In hindsight, this may not be surprising given this question is the most out-of-scope of the experience of the expert participants. Thus, it is more reasonable to expect a wider range of responses and ideas that were not as unified. This may also explain the lack of consensus on over half of the statements during Round Two. After feedback was received and incorporated after Round Two, however, all the response statements for Question Six did achieve consensus. The final consensus statements for Question Six are outlined in Table 7. The development of each of these consensus statements is described below, including the iterative changes that were recommended by participants throughout the study.

Table 7. Final Summary of Question 6 Consensus Statements

	Consensus Statement	Daleel/Evidence for Response	% Consensus
A	In Islam, therapy would aim to restore balance in the soul. This balance is achieved through servitude – 'ubudiyyah. Thus, the aim is to restore a healthy life with tranquility and peace of the heart and mind. This would mean the person: • Realizes the purpose of life and their role in this life • Finds Allah (SWT) in all aspects of life and sees the blessings in life. • Understands justice in this world and the hereafter, with a focus on accountability. • Surrenders their will to Allah (SWT) and accepts what has been given to the person and what has been taken away. • Restores peace with oneself and with others.	• Qur'an, Surah Al-Mulk, 67:2 • Qur'an, Surah Ali-Imran, 3:14 • "The real patience is at the first stroke of a calamity." (Hadith, Sahih Bukhari, 1302) • A daughter of the Prophet (SAW) sent a message to him that her son was at his last breath and requested him to come to her. The Messenger of Allah (SAW) sent back the informer saying: "To Allah belongs what He takes and what He gives, and everything has a limited period (in this world). So, ask her to endure patiently, and expect the reward of Allah." (Hadith, Sahih Bukhari & Muslim) • "Look at those who are beneath you and do not look at those who are above you, for it is more suitable that you should not consider as less the blessing of Allah." (Hadith, Sunan Ibn Majah)	100%
B	Some mental illnesses stem from spiritual illnesses which can affect someone psychologically. However, Islam acknowledges that mental illnesses, like physical illness, can have causes beyond a person's control and may not be linked to spiritual illnesses. Holistic therapy would involve both seeking treatment and turning to the Qur'an and Sunnah for guidance.	• "And when I am ill, it is He who cures me." (Qur'an, Surah Ash-Shu'ara, 26:80) • "And whoever turns away from My remembrance - indeed, he will have a depressed life, and We will gather him on the Day of Resurrection blind." (Qur'an, Surah Ta-Ha, 20:124)	100%
C	In an Islamic framework, therapy would support a person to connect better with their Creator as a means of healing. In other words, the goal is to mend the relationship between the creation and Creator.	• Qur'an, Surah Muhammad, 47:2 • Qur'an, Surah Al-Jinn, 73:1-2 • Qur'an, Surah Taha, 20:124	83%

	Consensus Statement	Daleel/Evidence for Response	% Consensus
D	A therapist should facilitate a safe, confidential space for the person to be able to speak.	• The Hadith in Sunan Abi Dawud and others of "Gatherings are a trust" relates to confidentiality. • There is evidence for this - the Prophet, may Allah praise him, would receive people who would speak to him one to one - asking for help, and he would do this in privacy. There is also a weak narration that mentions: 'Complete your affairs in secrecy - for everyone who is blessed would be envied by others.'	100%
E	A client needs to have humility, confidentiality, and willingness to engage with the therapist.	• The Prophet (SAW) only made it compulsory to give counsel if another person does ask. In the Sahih Hadith, He (SAW) said: "The rights of a believer upon another believer are six: among them is this '...and if he seeks your counsel, counsel him." (Hadith, Sahih Bukhari & Muslim)	83%
F	A therapist should support a client to focus on Allah (SWT), rather than the opinions and perceptions of people. Islam places significant emphasis on respecting the rights and needs of other people, so long as this is within Islamic law.	• Qur'an, 15:97-98	83%
G	A therapist should help a patient to see their own strengths, gifts, and blessings, including the blessing of iman.	• "Look at those who are beneath you and do not look at those who are above you, for it is more suitable that you should not consider as less the blessing of Allah." (Hadith, Sunan Ibn Majah) • Qur'an, Surah Al-Hashr, 59:9	100%
H	A therapist should help the patient to develop a routine, spiritually and physically.	• One of the goals offer 5 prayers in Islam is to establish that physical routine to establish a good spiritual connection to Allah. The Prophet taught his companions to say "awrad" or "regular verbal prayers" as a means of remembrance of Allah on regular basis to establish a similar goal, among others.	83%

	Consensus Statement	Daleel/Evidence for Response	% Consensus
I	A therapist should help a patient identify better companions and environments to be in.	• The Prophet (SAW) said, 'The example of a good pious companion and an evil one is that of a person carrying musk and another blowing a pair of bellows. The one who is carrying musk will either give you some perfume as a present, or you will buy some from him, or you will get a good smell from him, but the one who is blowing a pair of bellows will either burn your clothes or you will get a bad smell from him." (Hadith, Sahih Bukhari, 5534) • Hadith of the man who killed 99 people – he was told to change his environment.	83%
J	A therapist should teach the patient ways to protect their soul, which will also lead to protecting their physical being.	• The Prophet (SAW) would often say to his companions 'Shall I not give you advice', 'Shall I not inform you…', 'Shall I not guide you'? He was keen on conveying the goodness to his Ummah and taught them every goodness and guided them to every good thing. • Qur'an, Surah Al Baqarah, 2:195 • Qur'an, Surah Luqman, 31: 12-19 • Qur'an, Surah Al Asr • Qur'an, Surah Al Balad, 90:17	100%
K	A therapist should guide a patient to humility and love of Allah (SWT). When one loves Allah, they would love Allah's decisions and not try to challenge it mentally, which causes mental tiredness.	• This is based on the example of our Prophet, may Allah praise him, who was a role model for Muslims. He was humble and had a genuine desire to guide mankind to that which was good. As well, it is based on the concept of submission, wherein if one is afflicted, they are to be patient. • Story of Nuh (AS) in the Qur'an, Surah Hud	100%

		Consensus Statement	Daleel/Evidence for Response	% Consensus
L		Salah (Prayer) should be used as a means in therapy. Salah comes from the word silah which in English means connection or relationship. Thus, salah can help build a strong connection with Allah, and subsequently all things in the universe, including humans, animals, plants, and the environment.	• "When the Messenger of God used to go through a tough hardship, he used to rush to pray." (Hadith, Abu Dawood, 1319) • Qur'an, Surah Al-Baqarah, 2:45 • Qur'an, Surah Al-Ankaboot, 29:45	83%
M		The therapist should focus on supporting the client to have a healthy life as a social being with different relationships. The most important relationship is between the person and their Creator.	• Qur'an, Surah Al-Mudatthir, 74:1-3 • Qur'an, Surah Al-Isra, 17:23	83%
N		The patient must have patience, as well as confidence and trust in the therapist.	• Qur'an, Surah An-Nisa, 4:59	83%
O		A faith-based approach uses logical steps and reasoning, while incorporating faith. A therapist would therefore use methods found in the Prophetic tradition to support the client to see the need for positive change. The goal is to have lasting change.	• Qur'an, Surah An-Nahl, 16:126	100%

Theme 6A

The first theme to emerge described the goal of therapy within an Islamic framework as "[restoring] balance in the soul." A participant shared that the "aim is to restore a healthy life with tranquility and peace of the heart and mind." This statement included several points of what this balance looks like for a person, though no evidence was provided by participants in Round One. These points centered around one realizing their purpose of life, surrendering to Allah (SWT), and the concepts of justice in this world and the Hereafter. 100% of participants expressed agreement with this statement during Round Two, and participants offered five new pieces of evidence to strengthen the statement.

Theme 6B

This theme statement emerged from one participant's statement that "holistic therapy should involve guidelines from the Qur'an and Sunnah as the Creator knows the creation best." The rationale offered was that "many mental illnesses stem from spiritual illnesses." No evidence was provided for the statement. This statement did not achieve consensus in Round Two, with participants expressing feedback that the statement should be revised to reflect that only *some* mental illnesses stem from spiritual illnesses. Further, participants were clear that the Islamic view is that "mental illnesses, like physical illnesses, can have causes beyond a person's control." Another participant noted in their feedback that the Islamic approach requires holistic therapy that "involves both seeking treatment and turning to the Qur'an and Sunnah for guidance." In addition, two pieces of evidence were offered during Round Two and were added to the revised statement included during Round Three of the Delphi. The revised statement achieved 100% consensus during Round Three, with no additional feedback suggested.

Theme 6C

This theme highlighted that "therapy would support a person to connect better with their Creator as a means of healing." The participant who offered this response linked this to the idea that there may be a need to "mend the relationship between the creation and Creator," and that therapy can facilitate this. The evidence offered was a beautiful verse from the Qur'an that mentions how God will "amend their condition," which the participant described as meaning that God will "give them inner peace of mind and contentment in life and the hereafter." Most participants strongly agreed with this

statement, though one participant had left the question blank. As such, the statement achieved 83% consensus. In Round Two, the only additional comments were two new pieces of evidence that were included in the final consensus statement summary.

Theme 6D

The need for confidentiality was emphasized in several responses, and one participant shared that confidentially was essential to allow therapy to achieve its aim to "support people to take a true self-inventory." No evidence was offered to support this statement in Round One, and the statement ultimately did not achieve consensus in Round Two. The statement was revised based upon suggested changes, and the new statement focused on confidentiality alone, though no new evidence was offered. During Round Three, this statement did reach 100% consensus and additional evidence was suggested and incorporated into the final consensus statement summary.

Theme 6E

The role of the client and the necessary ingredients from a client's perspective were touched upon in Round One responses, with one participant sharing that a client must have "humility and a willingness to engage with the therapist." Another noted that a client must also have "confidence in the confidentiality of therapy" for therapy to be effective. No evidence was provided to support these claims and the statement did not achieve consensus in Round Two. In Round Three, however, evidence was incorporated, and the statement achieved 83% consensus.

Theme 6F

The role of the therapist, intertwined with a goal of therapy, emerged as a clear theme as a participant explained that "a therapist should support a client to realize that the perceptions of others is insignificant." However, no evidence was provided, and this statement did not achieve consensus in Round Two. In their feedback, participants highlighted that the perception of others is not completely insignificant, but instead that it is secondary to the judgement of Allah (SWT). Participants described that humans can often be too significantly impacted by the opinions of others, and that these opinions mean very little compared to the opinion of Allah (SWT). As such, the Round Three statement was revised to reflect that "a therapist should support a client to focus on Allah, not the opinions or perceptions of people." In addition, a point was incorporated to

reflect the feedback that while opinions and perceptions are not paramount, "Islam places significant emphasis on respecting rights and needs of other people." This statement seemed to reflect the balanced approach more accurately. An Islamic framework respects the rights and needs of others in our lives, while recognizing that their perceptions and opinions are not always of the utmost importance. The statement achieved consensus in Round Three, with the only change being the removal of one piece of evidence that was highlighted as unrelated to the theme statement.

Theme 6G

An additional role of the therapist was suggested by a participant who described a therapist as needing to "help a patient understand that they are not a loser, as losing is a misperception." Another participant similarly posited that a therapist "should help a patient to see their own strengths and gifts." No evidence was suggested to support the statement in Round One, and it did not achieve consensus in Round Two. Participants offered feedback to revise the statement to remove the part of the statement discussing one's perception of being a loser. In addition, evidence was offered to help refine the statement. The statement reached 100% consensus in Round Three, with no additional changes recommended.

Theme 6H

One participant suggested that a key role of a therapist is to "help the patient to develop a routine, spiritually and physically." The evidence offered was the example of the five daily prayers and how routines are important for one's holistic wellbeing and success. The statement achieved consensus in Round Two and no changes or additional evidence was incorporated.

Theme 6I

The importance of companions and environments emerged once again in response to this question with a participant noting that a "therapist should help a patient identify better companions and environments to be in." The evidence provided was also offered in response to previous questions with the *Hadith* about good and bad companions. The statement reached consensus during Round Two, with the addition of one new piece of evidence to support the statement.

Theme 6J

Protection of the soul emerged as both a goal of therapy and a role of the therapist according to one participant's responses. The role of the therapist as a "teacher" came forward in this response as the participant suggested the therapist "should teach the patient ways to protect their soul" and that this in turn would also help to protect "their physical being." The statement did not reach consensus in Round Two, though no feedback was provided or suggested, and no evidence was provided in Rounds One or Two to support the statement. As such, the original, unaltered statement was included once again the Round Three questionnaire. Interestingly, the statement did achieve 100% consensus in Round Three, though several participants provided feedback in the form of additional evidence to support the statement.

Theme 6K

The Islamic understanding of illness and its source was highlighted as participants suggested that "a therapist should guide a patient to humility and love of Allah (SWT) as spiritual illnesses can come from a sense of entitlement and lack of love for God." Another participant suggested that "when one loves Allah, they would love Allah's decisions." No evidence was offered for these assertions during Round One, and the statement did not achieve consensus in Round Two. The feedback provided during Round Two allowed for the statement to be refined, namely with the removal of the statement around spiritual illnesses as this was thought to make the statement less accurate. In addition, new evidence was incorporated based on participant feedback. The statement achieved 100% consensus in Round Three, and one additional piece of evidence was incorporated into the final consensus statement summary.

Theme 6L

Salah, or prayer, was described by one participant as a "means in therapy." The participant explained the rationale for this sharing that "salah comes from the word silah, which in English means connection or relationship. *Salah* can help build a strong connection with Allah and all things in the universe, including humans, animals, plants, and the environment." This participant's description was quite clear and was used essentially verbatim in the Round Two questionnaire, though no evidence was included. This statement easily achieved consensus in Round Two, and several participants

offered additional evidence to support the statement which was then incorporated into the final consensus statement summary.

Theme 6M

This statement was originally going to be collapsed into 6C and 6L, as it highlighted the importance an Islamic framework places on relationships. However, the statement was left independent, as it was describing the therapist's role as "supporting the client to have a healthy life as a social being" which seemed distinct from the focus on the relationship with the Creator or the use of *salah* in therapy. The statement achieved consensus in Round Two, and participants offered a few pieces of evidence supporting it. It should be noted that originally, I had considered removing the latter part of the statement which highlighted the fundamental nature of the relationship with the Creator as it appeared to be repeating the sentiment in theme 6C. However, participants made it clear in their feedback during Round Two that it was essential to keep this part of the statement as it contextualized all relationships in relation to the one with the Creator.

Theme 6N

Patience emerged as an important characteristic and action on the part of the client or patient, as one participant described that the "patient must have patience, as well as confidence and trust in the therapist." Again, no evidence was offered in support of the statement during Round One of the Delphi. However, the statement still achieved consensus. Participants remarked that this was fundamental on the part of the patient or client, and one participant offered a piece of evidence in support of the statement.

Theme 6O

The final theme statement to emerge highlighted the importance of reasoning in a faith-based approach, with a participant describing that "a therapist would use methods found in the Prophetic tradition to support the client to see the need for positive change." Interestingly, the statement did not achieve consensus in Round Two, but no changes or additions were recommended. As such, the statement was unchanged for the Round Three questionnaire. Despite being unchanged, the statement achieved 100% consensus, with the only feedback coming in the form of a suggested piece of evidence in support of the statement.

Chapter 5.

Discussion

The purpose of this study was to explore and develop the beginnings of a psychotherapeutic framework based upon the Islamic understanding of psychological wellbeing and healing. Using a modified Delphi method, this study has demonstrated the application of a unique approach using Islamic epistemological and ontological understandings. Although the results are limited in scope, the demonstrated approach provides the groundwork to be expanded upon and developed further to create a comprehensive framework. The first section of this chapter will briefly discuss the overarching themes generated by this study, as well as how these themes may offer insights into the development of an Islamic psychotherapeutic framework. Many studies throughout the literature in the field of Islam and Psychology have often linked findings to existing theoretical orientations. In an effort to avoid perpetuating what can be an implicit or unsaid understanding that Eurocentric approaches are neutral and a standard to compare to, this discussion will explore the themes independent of other frameworks. The remainder of the chapter will highlight the strengths and limitations of the study, as well as proposed applications and future directions to further develop this work.

Central Themes & Implications

Relationships matter, firstly with God.

The significance of relationship emerged as a central theme across responses to each of the six questions, with one's relationship with God being of the utmost importance. In the context of a counselling framework, the findings indicate that relationships are a potential means for healing and required for holistic health and wellbeing. Further, it is suggested that a key goal of therapy within an Islamic framework is the strengthening of relationships, beginning with the relationship one has with God. The Islamic concept of the *fitrah* is inextricably linked with relationships, as it defines the innate capacities and inclinations of human beings. This is essential to recognize as it provides insight into what therapists working from an Islamic framework may believe to be true about their clients and their potential capacities. This is a highly optimistic and

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hopeful perspective that would require a therapist to see the client's potential and never assume they cannot or will not change, despite how they may be presenting at that moment.

Across the different responses, the relationship one has with God was emphasized as paramount to one's wellbeing. The importance of humankind knowing that Allah (SWT) is *Ar-Rahman,* or the Most Merciful, is a critical element of this relationship. Although *Ar-Rahman* is usually translated as the Most Merciful, the Islamic concept of mercy from Allah (SWT) is unique. A fulsome understanding of God being the Most Merciful includes, but is not limited to knowing that Allah (SWT) is:

- The Most Gracious and Compassionate.

- The One who continually showers all of creation with blessings and prosperity.

- The One who is most kind and loving.

- The One whose endless, loving mercy is perfect and inclusive.

- The One who has perfect mercy and loving beneficence.

In the context of therapy, this concept would be critical to highlight and actively include in a therapist's work. For an individual who is struggling with the trials and tribulations of daily living, an understanding of the depth of God's mercy could be transformative and healing in many ways. A therapist applying an Islamic framework may explore specific verses of the Qur'an or narrations of *Hadith* to convey this concept to the client. As an example, a therapist could explore this *Hadith Qudsi* with a client:

> *The Prophet (SAW) said, "Allah says: 'I am just as My slave thinks I am, (i.e., I am able to do for him what he thinks I can do for him) and I am with him if He remembers Me. If he remembers Me in himself, I too, remember him in Myself; and if he remembers Me in a group of people, I remember him in a group that is better than they; and if he comes one span nearer to Me, I go one cubit nearer to him; and if he comes one cubit nearer to Me, I go a distance of two outstretched arms nearer to him; and if he comes to Me walking, I go to him running.' (Hadith, Sahih Al-Bukhari)*

For a client in the depths of despair or experiencing immense hardship, realizing the level of deep and expansive mercy and love from Allah (SWT) could be the balm to their heart and soul.

Therapists working with practicing Muslim clients may work with them to identify breaks or ruptures in their relationship with God while maintaining a supportive, safe, and confidential space. One suggested technique described in the results of this study was *muhasabah*, which is a self-inventory of one's deeds, characteristics, and habits. In the therapeutic context, a therapist may teach this technique to a client and support them to practice this on their own. As described by the panel, this may be a key practice in an Islamic framework to support increased awareness of one's areas of strength, as well as their difficulties and challenges. This enhanced awareness may humble the client, causing them to re-examine and strengthen their relationship with God. Part of the intent with this practice and approach is also to remind the client of their humanity, and that mistakes and missteps are simply part of being human. They will inevitably err from time to time, but the key is to take steps once they become aware of their mistakes.

The findings indicate that within an Islamic framework, relationships are thought to be interconnected and stem from one's connection to the Creator. As such, a therapist may support a client to see these interconnections and explore how their different relationships are related and impacting one another. The results suggest that the building of strong familial and social relationships, as well as mending those that are broken, may be a key focus in therapy. Many of the qualities that were noted as admirable characteristics that clients should strive towards (e.g. altruism, mercy, compassion) are all enacted in the context of relationships with others and thus would also be emphasized in therapy.

By expert consensus, the Islamic view is that familial relationships are critical to wellness, citing evidence that individuals have a duty to maintain the ties of kinship. As such, unless a family member was significantly harming the client, the therapist would be unlikely to encourage cutting off familial relationships. However, a therapist may support the client to establish boundaries and learn ways to better navigate these relationships. The especially important relationship that children have with their parents and caregivers was also emphasized by the expert panel and will be explored in the next section.

Tarbiyyah is critical to development.

The importance of early childhood experiences and development was highlighted repeatedly through the concept of *tarbiyyah*, an Arabic term that refers to the care,

development, nurturing, and education of individuals. It can be used to describe the development of people in various aspects, including but not limited to, the raising of children, the teaching of manners, and leadership development. The findings indicate that nurturing and raising children is a key responsibility of parents and the community at large. The expert participants offered several different models of how parents and caregivers may nurture children, with each of these models stressing the responsibility of adults to express love and mercy, while being protective of young children. This has several implications in relation to psychotherapy.

In an Islamic psychotherapeutic framework, the development of strong attachments from a young age may be an important goal and intervention when working with parents/caregivers and their children. Further, childhood experiences, both positive and adverse, may be a significant subject of the therapeutic encounter with any given client. It is also evident that the Islamic position is that adverse childhood experiences do not necessarily directly lead to negative outcomes in adolescence and adulthood in all situations. These experiences may represent substantial barriers and challenges that the client will need support to overcome, but they do not necessarily inhibit a client from excelling and achieving their goals. The Islamic position appears to be that these early childhood experiences may help to explain one's difficulties later in life, but that humans are ultimately responsible for their choices. This is linked to the understanding that from an Islamic perspective, human beings have the capacity for choice – both good and bad - regardless of their circumstances and upbringing. For some individuals, families, and communities, the good, healthy choices may be harder to make, but in those cases, the Islamic understanding is that the reward is even greater for them.

Environments impact health and change.

The findings of this study clearly articulate the Islamic position that the environment, internal and external factors, as well as the trials and tribulations of life, influence wellness, development, and the change process. The Islamic perspective is that while the environment influences wellness and the ability of people to change, it is not ultimately responsible for change, or lack thereof. In other words, individuals have agency and still possess the capacity for choice, even if that choice is made easier or more difficult because of environmental factors. With this perspective, an Islamic framework evidently is a systems approach to therapy. As such, a therapist would be

concerned with the environment of the individual and would work with them to change their surroundings to better support holistic wellbeing.

The groups and places that individuals frequent are noted as especially impacting one's wellbeing and ability to change. The expert panel highlighted several examples from Islamic texts as evidence that one must be mindful of their environment in order to sustain healthy life choices and positive changes. This stems from the understanding that while human beings have an innate capacity for good, they also have innate desires that can become more powerful depending on their environment. The panel was clear that humans are naturally forgetful and will undoubtedly make errors and fall into bad habits. As such, a therapist would help normalize this with a client and then support them to alter their environment and choices as much as possible.

A therapist employing an Islamic framework will also support the client to enhance their awareness of the role systemic and environmental factors are playing in their life. Based on the findings, it seems that it is imperative the therapist does not describe these factors as justifications for unhealthy choices the client has made and would encourage the client to take hold of the control and agency they do possess. Further, the expert panel noted that a therapist may support a client to understand that they are not held accountable by God for anything beyond the realm of their control. The value of justice and equity was also apparent. This indicates that a therapist using this framework would actively work against injustice and inequities both within and outside the counselling room. This may translate to therapists actively advocating for the specific client(s) they work with, as well advocating and working towards broader systemic or institutional changes that will benefit the community as a whole.

Humans are responsible and accountable.

The results of this study indicate that an Islamic framework posits that humans are viewed as ultimately responsible for their actions and way of life, regardless of their circumstances. External factors and environmental influences are considered helpful in explaining and understanding the choices and decisions humans make, or the state of their personality or wellbeing. However, it is believed that humans possess agency and free will, thus maintaining the capacity for choice, and by extension, the capacity to change. The expert panel was clear in communicating that the Islamic view would

require a therapist to maintain a compassionate and understanding stance towards the systemic and external factors that impact the lives of people. At the same time, the therapist would support the client to strive for holistic wellness and positive change within their means and capacity.

Linked to this concept of responsibility is the understanding that life is viewed as a test. This ascribes meaning to hardships, difficulties, and challenges someone may experience, and thus offers potential reframing within the therapeutic context. This may be a tool used by the therapist at a cognitive and emotion-focused level, depending on the client. Tests are meant to develop a person and nurture growth. A therapist may support a client to reframe their difficulties in this way and draw meaning from their circumstances. This meaning may then encourage the client to act, rather than be paralyzed by their situation. Working with a Muslim client, a therapist working within this framework would highlight the prospect of the hereafter with the client, exploring their understanding of it and how their current way of life is helping or hindering their pursuit of the hereafter.

As noted previously, the panel articulated that humans have desires that are natural and that this should be normalized for clients. The panel was careful to differentiate between normalizing internal thoughts and desires, but not normalizing acting on those thoughts or desires if they are not healthy. Connected to this is the understanding that humans are undoubtedly going to err and make mistakes. The key is that once someone realizes their error, they take steps to rectify it. This connects to a particularly powerful verse in the Qur'an that therapists may use to remind clients that humans are imperfect and that making mistakes is part of the human condition:

> *"…for those who commit sins, and then repent afterwards and believe —*
> *your Lord, thereafter, is Forgiving and Merciful." (Qur'an, 7:153)*

In the context of therapy, this may translate to a therapist supporting a client to do a self-inventory of their characteristics and actions, and then assess how these are or are not aligned with their values and beliefs. This finding connects with Rothman's perspective

that supporting people "toward what is better for them" is a more genuine form of love that the therapist should have for their clients (Rothman, 2018, p. 33).

The results of this study also indicate that an Islamic approach underscores the fundamental belief that it is never too late for a person to make a positive change in their life. Experts cited a particularly salient story narrated in a *Hadith* about a man who had killed 99 people and outlined his journey of repentance and redemption, as well as many Qur'anic verses such as the following:

> *"O My servants who have transgressed against themselves [by sinning],*
> *do not despair of the mercy of Allah. Indeed, Allah forgives all sins.*
> *Indeed, it is He who is the Forgiving, the Merciful." (Qur'an, 39:53)*

An Islamic framework is one of hope, optimism, compassion, and love for humankind. A therapist would therefore be encouraged to embody this optimistic and hopeful outlook while working with their clients, reminding them to not despair, even when they struggle to make changes or achieve their goals. This should not be confused with the encouragement to maintain an optimistic outlook while ignoring or not acknowledging the circumstances of one's life, an approach that could be toxic for both the therapist and client. Rather, the Islamic approach aims to foster a deeper form of optimism that stems from genuine hope and belief that positive change and wellness are possible.

Health & wellness are holistic.

The Islamic understanding of health and wellness is a holistic one, considering all facets of an individual's life. The results indicate that health is key at the individual, family, and community level, and that each of these levels are interlinked. Islam views wellness and illness through a holistic lens, acknowledging the different parts of one's being while emphasizing that they are inextricably linked. An Islamic framework's emphasis on the health of the whole family and community system is important as it indicates that a therapist would be concerned with this as well. A client would likely be encouraged to think beyond themselves and consider the health of their family unit and community at large.

The significance of a healthy soul to one's overall wellbeing is heavily emphasized in the findings, and this is often noted as a gap in Eurocentric approaches to therapy (Badri, 2016; Pargament, 2007; Rothman, 2018; Skinner, 2019). This is

consistent with several other proposed conceptualizations and frameworks that each highlight the critical importance placed on engaging the soul of the client in therapy (Abbas et al., 2017; Abu-Raiya, 2012a; Ansari, 2002; Haque, 2018b; Rothman, 2018; Rothman & Coyle, 2018). As such, a therapist would likely focus on the state of the soul and how this may be impacting the client's wellness, particularly if there are issues with causes that can be traced back to one's soul. Interventions recommended in the context of therapy may also then act at the level of the soul, rather than focusing on symptoms. It is important to understand that the Islamic view is that the soul, heart, mind, and external physical being are all interconnected. Thus, the findings of this study also suggest that an Islamic approach to psychotherapy places great weight on upstream factors that affect health and highly values prevention of illness rather than focusing solely on treatment of symptoms.

Therapy is a means to wellness.

The results of this study reflect an understanding that therapy can be a means to wellness. By extension, it can be understood that the therapist is responsible for supporting and facilitating change for the client. It should be noted that there is no defined label or specific name used for a therapist in Islam. The name or label of this specific role would depend on the cultural context and is not defined within the faith. The results defined clear responsibilities for both the client and therapist in the context of therapy, with change being solely the responsibility of the client. This was referenced in different Islamic psychology frameworks, though the specific roles of client and therapist were not defined clearly (Abu-Raiya, 2012b; Rothman, 2018; Rothman & Coyle, 2018; Carrie York Al-Karam, 2019). The therapist is understood to be someone who may be more knowledgeable in the area of mental health, but ultimately is working alongside and supporting their fellow human being to improve the condition of their life. In some instances, the therapist may also be viewed as a teacher and person of authority to provide guidance to the client. It is clear that therapy is simply one means towards change and betterment. The Islamic paradigm is emphatic that any means to healing is a blessing that is provided by God – be it medication, therapy, or anything else that may provide relief to humankind. This finding is aligned with Dr. Aisha Utz's assertion that "scientific discoveries are only made through the grace and mercy of Allah" (2011, p. 141). Recognizing that all cures and means for wellbeing are from God appears to be a

critical point in an Islamic framework and would encourage a therapist to support their client to seek help and wellness while acknowledging the source of healing.

Strengths

Several aspects of this study may be considered strengths of the research. First, this study appears to be the first application of the Delphi method in the field of Islamic psychology. Further, no studies could be identified that used the Delphi technique to develop an indigenous counselling approach from the ground up, while simultaneously focusing on epistemological and ontological positions. As such, a strength of this study is its choice of method and application, demonstrating a potential method that can be expanded upon for deeper study of Islamic psychology, as well as psychotherapy more broadly.

Second, the application of the Islamic understanding and approach to knowledge is a strength of this study. The expert participants consulted in this study applied standards to evidence and knowledge aligned with *Ahl as-Sunnah wa al-Jama'ah*. They consistently shared evidence when they noticed it was missing for response statements and challenged pieces of evidence that did not seem to relate to the topic. This was hoped for, but not necessarily expected to occur. This level of internal validation allows for stronger confidence that the results and evidence are sound according to Islamic epistemological understandings. Further, observing the increasing convergence in consensus across the rounds was evidence of the strength of the methodology applied, with very few statements failing to reach consensus.

Connected to this, a third strength of this study comes from the diversity of its expert participants. The expert participants represent many intersecting identities and backgrounds. They span different geographic regions and ethnocultural backgrounds and possess a range of credentials and expertise in different Islamic subject areas. While their adherence to the methodology of *Ahl as-Sunnah wa al-Jama'ah* connected them all, they each brought a unique voice and understanding when responding to the questions in this study.

Finally, a significant strength of this study is linked to my personal identity and the immersed nature of this identity in the research itself. As an individual who identifies

as a practicing Muslim and who strives to be a student of knowledge, my familiarity and understanding of the subject facilitated a fairly seamless thematic analysis of the data. This project represents far more than academic research in my journey as a therapist. As mentioned in the introductory chapter, this research stems from both a personal and professional line of inquiry, being deeply connected to my identity. As such, the analysis and writing process has been a significant weight on my shoulders. This required extra care, attention, and rigour when reviewing and analyzing the responses from participants. This was critical in order to ensure that the results were accurately represented, and the evidence included was sound from an Islamic perspective. Claiming that this framework is based on Islamic principles and understandings is significant. Not only am I accountable to the participants to ensure their voices and perspectives are accurately represented, but I am ultimately accountable to my Creator. This sense of accountability and responsibility translated to an immense investment of time and energy into the data review, analysis, and writing process.

Limitations

Given the time and resources available, the greatest limitation to this study is its scope and breadth. The development of a fulsome counselling framework that can be used in practice will require additional time, resources, and engagement. A more comprehensive study would likely involve multiple panels of experts and thus multiple Delphi techniques. It will likely also involve the use of different methodologies better suited to develop specific parts of the framework. For example, scholars with greater expertise in a certain subject may be recruited and the questions may be more specific for each unique panel of experts. In addition, ideally experts with stronger backgrounds in psychology or mental health could also be engaged with the project to develop a framework that is both comprehensive and easily applicable in counselling practice. In the case of the present study, the experts engaged had knowledge of counselling and psychology, but did not identify this as their primary area of expertise or training. This was demonstrated in the responses to the questions related to human development. There were several varying understandings of what was meant by development in the context of the study. In hindsight, further explanation and definitions may have been helpful to the panel. Conversely, it is arguable that further direction could have led the panel to respond in particular ways and avoid certain subjects that may in fact be

relevant. Nonetheless, more intentional recruitment of expert panelists would strengthen the development and refinement of a framework in the future. In addition to this, while the study employed an online and remote Delphi method approach, it may have been beneficial to gather the participants online in one of the rounds of the research study. This opportunity to engage with one another may have been quite fruitful and perhaps could have led to different or richer results.

The use of the Delphi method itself is a limitation to an extent, given its Eurocentric origins. The modification to the Delphi to align with Islamic thought addressed this to a degree, though there is arguably a need to develop a methodology that is more ontologically and epistemologically sound. A future study could explore the development of a research methodology inspired by the process used to achieve *ijmaa'*, or other concepts and practices originating in the Islamic tradition. A more thorough review of research methodologies indigenous to Islamic thought may shed light on a potential approach that has already been used in other fields of study.

Another significant limitation of this study is its exclusion of participants who could not communicate in English, as well as studies not yet translated into English. In the future, a full application of this method should engage with scholars with various language capacities to strengthen the results. This is especially important given that several key scholarly resources and texts are not yet translated into English. Related to this is the use of English terminology by both participants and the researcher, which may have reduced the richness of responses. Fortunately, the encouragement to include evidence allows for the review of original sources (i.e. Qur'an and *Hadith*) in the Arabic language and can be explored further. In addition, participants often chose to use the Islamic terminology in place of English terminology. In hindsight, it may have been beneficial and helpful to explicitly permit or encourage the use of Islamic terminology at the outset of the study.

Finally, the greatest limitation of this study is the need to further develop the framework to provide helping professionals with the theory and strategies they can use in practice with their clients. This requires translational work to transform the principles into deliverables and tangible tools. This study aimed to only develop the beginnings of a framework, which it achieved through the Final Consensus Statement Summary (see Appendix J). This summary offers the groundwork for the development of an

epistemologically and ontologically sound Islamic framework, but is not yet ready to be applied in the context of psychotherapy.

Applications & Future Directions

The results of this study offer the beginnings of a framework for psychotherapy and counselling based upon Islam's understanding of human nature, wellness and unwellness, and change processes. The results at this time have not been formulated into a useable framework as there is a need for further exploration and additional research to articulate a comprehensive framework. Future research may involve multiple modified Delphi techniques with a diverse group of Islamic scholars who specialize in areas of knowledge required to develop a thorough and more complete framework. For example, one Delphi study may focus on the Islamic understanding of human nature entirely with a unique panel of experts, while another Delphi may focus on the Islamic view of health and wellness with a different panel of experts. Ideally, future research will also integrate these research findings with the robust Islamic scholarly literature available in different languages that has existed for centuries and has a great deal to contribute to the development of a framework.

Future studies could also bring together both Islamic scholars and Islamic psychology researchers to collaboratively create a usable, practical, and epistemologically and ontologically sound framework. This deep collaboration is necessary to develop a framework that is both functional and theoretically consistent. In addition, future research would explore the development of potential interventions within the framework. It is suggested that the development of interventions require a review from Islamic scholars to ensure that any adaptation is epistemologically and ontologically sound at its core and in its application in the process of knowledge translation.

The lived experiences of the Muslim community must also not be ignored, although it is more directly related to the field of Muslim psychology rather than Islamic psychology. The research emerging in the field of Muslim psychology critically informs the types of interventions and techniques needed in the counselling profession. This research informs the work of those in the Islamic psychology field and offers an opportunity to apply a truly Islamic framework to psychotherapy in practice in the community. Future research would examine the effectiveness and impact of using this

framework in the Muslim community, as well as their experience of receiving therapy grounded in Islamic principles.

It is hoped that this work may eventually be used as a basis for the development of counselling competencies for Islamic psychotherapy, as well as counsellor training more generally. Cross-cultural competencies and trainings can often reduce entire communities and populations to a few simple facts or ideas. As such, this potential set of competencies and trainings would be more appropriate to describe as being linked to using an Islamic psychotherapeutic framework, as opposed to a guide describing how to work with Muslim communities. It is hoped this study's findings will improve mental health outcomes among clients identifying as Muslim, but it is critical to recognize that this is an Islamic framework for psychotherapy rather than a framework for working with Muslims. As highlighted at the outset of this study, there is a distinct difference between Islamic Psychology and Muslim Psychology, though the two are clearly connected.

Many elements of the framework are applicable to those beyond the Muslim community as well. Just as there is much to learn from other indigenous ways of knowing and healing, I would argue there is much to gain from the Islamic understanding of knowing and healing. How this can be applied within different contexts, with different communities and populations is an area for future exploration. The method and effectiveness of applying this framework with non-Muslim communities is also a recommended area of future research for the field of Islamic psychology.

As a Muslim practitioner, I bring these understandings and beliefs into the room with me with each client, whether they are Muslim or not. How I apply these with a client depends on them, their values, and their goals. However, just as an existentialist brings with them the belief around the importance of the givens of existence, a Muslim may bring with them the belief around the importance of a connection with the Creator. This can be an uncomfortable assertion to make within a secular society where there is an assumed neutrality – secular, nonreligious approaches. The question must be asked if this is truly neutral. As someone whose very being and understanding of existence revolves around a core belief – *tawheed* – the thought of a secular, nonreligious approach is anything but neutral. It posits very real, tangible, and far-reaching perspectives and ideas around the human psyche, health and wellness, and change processes. In my personal lived experience, it can feel unhelpful and counter-productive

at best, and reek of Western supremacy and colonialism at worst. The reality is that one set of values has been defined as neutral and the baseline, and therefore the standard by which we measure all other approaches.

Conclusion

As highlighted in the original literature review, the field of Islamic psychology is flourishing and growing. Over the course of the last few years, there seems to have been an explosion in the field, observed by the increase in publications, books and guides offering proposed conceptualizations and frameworks, as well as training programs across the world. The development of an approach to counselling that is indigenous to Islamic thought and scholarly works is no simple task. It is promising to see growth in this area, particularly during a time of increased social and political hostility towards Islam and Muslim communities across the globe. To witness efforts aimed at developing something true to my faith's rich scholarly tradition is a privilege, as is the opportunity to contribute to that collective effort. My sincere hope is that this work contributes to the eventual development of a comprehensive framework that can be applied by helping professionals across the globe. This is one small step forward, but a step forward, nonetheless.

In the process of writing these results, I submitted part of this thesis to receive feedback through my university's Student Learning Commons. The feedback I received reaffirmed the critical importance of work like this; work that centres the voices, experiences, and knowledge of Muslims and authentically Islamic perspectives. The feedback alleged that my words and assertions would insult others, namely Western and non-Muslim readers. I was encouraged to change my wording and approach to this subject. It was ironic to experience this during the research and writing process, as it demonstrated the censorship, micro and macro aggressions, and fragility that exist within academia and its institutions. This research study and its results represent my strongest possible response to what has long been an academic monopoly on what is considered epistemologically and ontologically acceptable and appropriate.

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Appendix A.

Framework for Evaluating Opinions
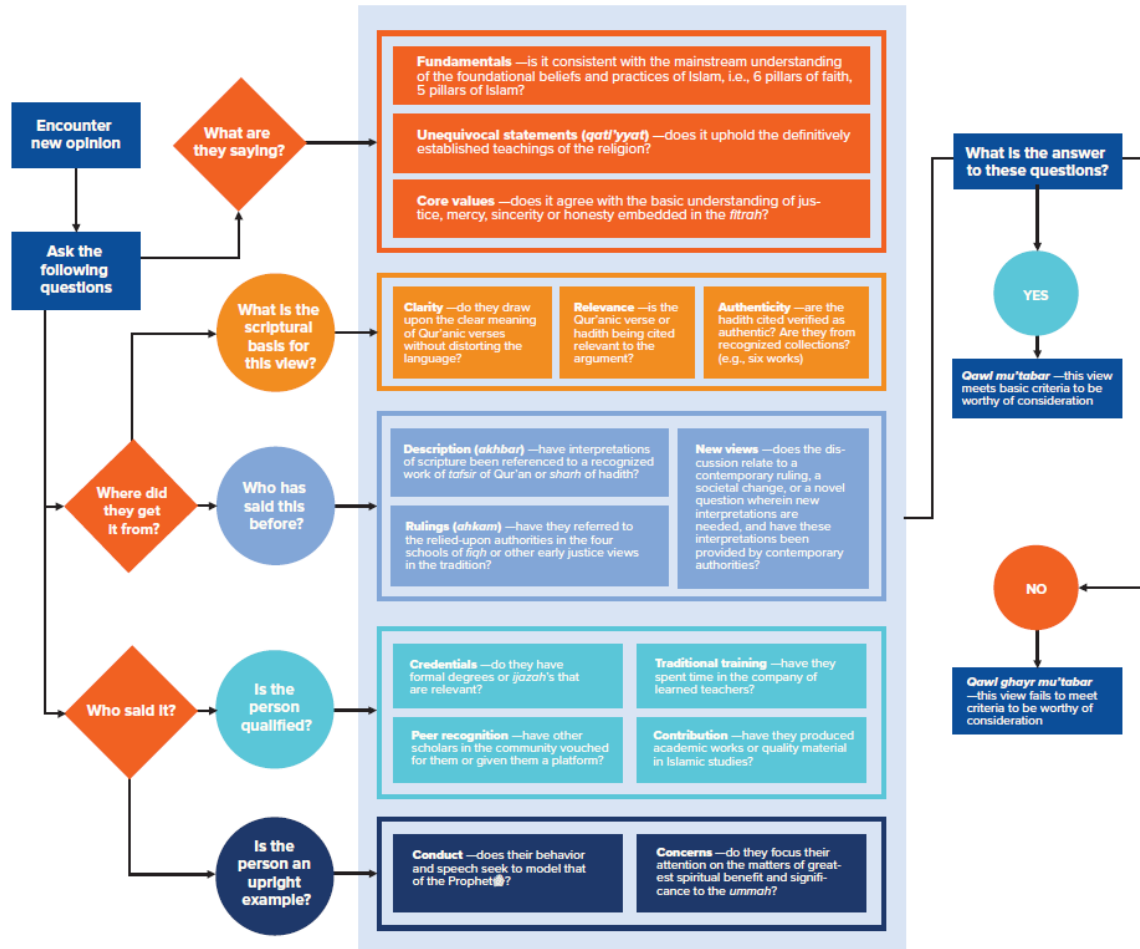
Figure A1. **A conceptualization of a framework for assessing the validity of a viewpoint according to the methodology outlined by Dr. Nazir Khan.**

Source: https://yaqeeninstitute.org/nazir-khan/difference-of-opinion-where-do-we-draw-the-line#Appendix_II

A higher resolution PDF version of this image is available as an accompanying supplementary document. Reproduced with the permission of Dr. Nazir Khan.

File Name: FrameworkForEvaluatingOpinions.pdf

Appendix B.

Letter of Invitation

Re: Developing an Islamic Framework for Counselling
Assalaamu alaykum wa rahmatAllah wa barakathu [---],

Insha'Allah you are doing well. My name is Amanee Elchehimi, and I am currently a Graduate Student in the Faculty of Education at Simon Fraser University. I am conducting a research study for my thesis as part of the requirements of my Master of Arts degree in Counselling Psychology, and I would like to invite you to participate in this study. This study has inclusion criteria which I believe you will meet. The inclusion criteria are as follows:
- Must be an Islamic scholar, teacher, or student of knowledge with familiarity with evidence of Islam's understanding of human psychology and development
- Must be able to participate in two to four rounds of questionnaires
- Must be willing to participate

If you do in fact meet the inclusion criteria listed above and would be willing to participate, please complete the enclosed consent form at your earliest convenience and e-mail it to [---] by January 31st, 2020.

The purpose of this research project is to explore the Islamic conceptualization of psychological wellbeing and healing. Through consultation with scholars, teachers, and students of knowledge, such as yourself, the aim is to begin to develop a framework for counselling based upon Islamic principles and Islam's understanding of human psychology and development.

This will insha'Allah lead to the development of a framework for counsellors and other mental health professionals to be able to support practicing Muslim clients who would like counselling based upon Islamic principles, rather than other theoretical orientations. Long term, the hope is that this research will provide insight into improving mental health care and outcomes for practicing Muslims in our community.

If you are willing to participate in this study, please respond to me by January 31st, 2020, and I will provide you with further information. Please let me know if you have any questions or concerns, and I will respond to the best of my ability.

JazakumAllah Khairun for your time and consideration.
Amanee Elchehimi
[---]

Appendix C.

Consent Form

CONSENT FORM
DEVELOPING AN ISLAMIC FRAMEWORK FOR COUNSELLING

Who is conducting this study?

Principal Investigator:	*Faculty Supervisor:*
Amanee Elchehimi	Dr. Masahiro Minami
Master of Arts, Faculty of Education	Assistant Professor, Faculty of Education
[---]	[---]
[---]	[---]

This research is part of a thesis for the Master of Arts, Counselling Psychology degree. As such, the final thesis will be public, and the results may eventually be published.

Why should you take part in this study?
You are being invited to take part in this research because you are an Islamic scholar, teacher, or student of knowledge. The purpose of the overall project is to begin the development of a framework for counselling based upon Islam's understanding of human psychology and development. The hope is that this will allow therapists to better support clients who identify as practicing Muslims and who wish to receive therapy grounded in Islamic principles. Simon Fraser University and Amanee Elchehimi, the researcher conducting this research study, subscribe to the ethical conduct of research and to the protection at all times of the interests, comfort, and safety of participants.

Your Participation is Voluntary
Your participation is voluntary. You may choose to answer or not answer any of the questions posed during the study. If you decide to participate, you may still choose to withdraw from the study at any time.

What happens in this study?
If you say yes, here is how we will do this study:
- This research will use the Delphi technique, which will use 3 rounds of questionnaires (known as rounds) aiming to achieve consensus. With your permission, the questionnaires will be sent to you via e-mail.
- After receipt of this consent form, the first questionnaire will be e-mailed to you. Simple and specific instructions will be provided for each questionnaire.
- The amount of time required to complete each questionnaire will vary by

participant, though it is anticipated that each round will take approximately 1 to 1.5 hours.
- We request that when answering the questions, you provide evidence from Islamic sources (Qur'an, Hadith, scholarly sources).
- The questions will be open-ended and focus on Islam's understanding of human psychology, development, and healing. The questionnaires are designed to address the following questions:
  - What are the Islamic frameworks and principles for understanding psychological wellbeing and healing?
  - What is Islam's view of humans? Are humans innately good or bad?
  - How do humans come into existence?
  - What is Islam's view of health? What is considered healthy development?
  - What is Islam's view of illness? What is considered unhealthy development?
  - What is Islam's perspective on how people change? What are the ingredients for change?
  - What would the overarching goal of therapy be using an Islamic framework?
  - From an Islamic point of view, what might be the role of the client?
  - From an Islamic point of view, what might be the role of the therapist?
  - From an Islamic point of view, how might you characterize the relationship between the client and therapist?
- You will complete the first round the Delphi process (i.e., the first questionnaire) via e-mail. Once the first questionnaires are completed by all participants, the data will be analyzed. You will receive a summary of the responses from other participants (without any identifying information), as well as your own responses from the first round. You will be asked to reconsider and possibly change your response (if you wish) based on the group's response.
- A second questionnaire will then be sent to you based on the responses in the first round. Again, you will receive your responses and the summary of group responses.
- A third and final questionnaire will then be sent to you with the hope that consensus is achieved at that time.

To produce research outputs for this project, we request your consent to potentially use your interview responses to write scholarly papers and other publications. There are three options for the use of your responses. Ideally, we would like permission to potentially quote you verbatim and acknowledge your contribution by name and

affiliation. You also have the option for your responses to be used verbatim but for your comments not to be attributed to your name and affiliation directly. Or you have the option not to be quoted verbatim and be attributed (i.e., for your responses to broadly inform the case study). Please indicate your choice below.

Is there any way being in this study could be bad for you?
It is not anticipated that there will be any risks from your participation in this case study. Where there are potential risks to you, confidentiality and anonymity will be maintained in the collection, storage and use of interview data. In these cases, the citation of any such interview responses would not be verbatim (i.e., broadly inform research only) or without direct attribution (e.g., Interview with Islamic scholar, date).

What are the benefits of participating in this study?
Although it is not certain there will be individual benefit to you as a participant, the hope is that there will be benefit to the Muslim community at large as a result. There may or may not be direct benefits to you from taking part.

Confidentiality: How will your privacy be maintained?
- Telephone and email are not secure means of communication, therefore confidentiality cannot be guaranteed.
- Your confidentiality will be respected. Information that discloses your identity will not be released without your consent.
- All documents will be identified by a unique participant ID.
- All data from your participation will be stored in the secure SFU cloud, SFU Vault, and on the hard drive of my password-protected computer.
- In current best practices in research, electronic data is to be preserved for future use in open access initiatives. Open access initiatives allow researchers from different universities to share their data upon completion of studies, in an effort to stimulate further use and exploration of existing data sets. Data from this study will be uploaded to an online repository and these files will be stripped of any information that could identify participants (e.g., names, email addresses), to ensure confidentiality.

What if I decide to withdraw my consent to participate?
You may withdraw from this study at any time without giving reasons. If you choose to enter the study and then decide to withdraw at a later time, you may choose for all data collected about you during your participation to be destroyed.

Study Results
The results of this study will be reported in a graduate thesis and may also be published in journal articles and books. The eventual aim is to publish and present on this research in the local and broader community. Specifically, opportunities will be sought to present at Islamic Psychology and Muslim Mental Health conferences and convenings.

After the study is complete, the results will be shared with you. If you would like to receive the final results, please indicate yes or no here.

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No

Who can you contact if you have questions about the study?
If you have any further questions about this study, please feel free to contact Amanee Elchehimi at [---].

Who can you contact if you have complaints or concerns about the study?
If you have any concerns about your rights as a research participant and/or your experiences while participating in this study, you may contact Dr. Jeffrey Toward, Director, Office of Research Ethics [---].

Future Use of Participant Data
The electronic data will be stripped of any identifying information and then preserved for future use in open access initiatives by being uploaded to SFU RADAR, an open repository.

The data collected in this study may be used by the principal investigator as part of a future, larger study similar to this one. Prior to use of this data, we will contact you to seek consent at that time.

Future Contact
We may wish to contact you for follow-up purposes. Please indicate below if you consent to us contacting you in the future.

- ☐ I agree to be contacted by the researchers in the future.

INFORMED CONSENT FORM
DEVELOPING AN ISLAMIC FRAMEWORK FOR COUNSELLING

Taking part in this study is entirely up to you. You have the right to refuse to participate in this study. If you decide to take part, you may choose to pull out of the study at any time without giving a reason and without any negative impact.
- Your signature below indicates that you have received a copy of this consent form for your own records.
- Your signature indicates that you consent to participate in this study.
- You do not waive any of your legal rights by participating in this study.

CHOOSE ONE ONLY
- ☐ I agree to be quoted verbatim and acknowledged by name in any research outputs produced by this project.
- ☐ I agree to be quoted verbatim without direct attribution in any research outputs produced by this project.
- ☐ I agree for my comments to be used to inform the research but without quotation attribution.

Printed Name: _____

Contact E-mail: _____

Contact Phone : _____

Signature : _____

Date : _____

Appendix D.

Round One Questionnaire

Developing an Islamic Framework for Counselling

Delphi Questionnaire – Round One

Instructions on how to complete Delphi Round One:
JazakumAllah Khairun for taking the time to share your knowledge and understanding of the Islamic conceptualization of psychological well being and healing. The first round of this Delphi will ask you a series of questions. Please be as specific in your response as possible and provide clear evidence for each response (E.g. Qur'an, Hadith, sound opinions). Once you have completed the questionnaire, please return it to [---] by March 4th, 2020. You will receive the second questionnaire by March 9th, 2020. Instructions and questions for Delphi Rounds 2 and 3 will build upon each previous round, based upon participant responses.

Please answer the following questions as best as possible.

1) **What is Islam's view of human beings? Are humans considered to be innately good or bad?**

2) **How do humans come into existence? How do they psychologically develop?**

3) **What is Islam's view of health? What is considered healthy development?**

4) **What is Islam's view of illness? What is considered unhealthy development?**

5) **What is the Islamic perspective on how people change? What is necessary and/or sufficient for change to occur?**

6) **What might be the overarching goal of therapy using an Islamic framework? What might be the role of the therapist? The client?**

7) **Other Comments or Perspectives?**

Appendix E.

Round Two Questionnaire

Developing an Islamic Framework for Counselling - *Delphi Round Two*

*JazakumAllah Khairun for completing Round One of this research study! The following questionnaire constitutes Round Two of this process. Please read **all** these instructions carefully as this will be essential in the development of a fulsome framework.*

1) This questionnaire is a summary of the many responses provided by you and the other participants during Round One to the six questions asked. Many responses were similar and have been lumped into one response statement.
2) Round Two of this study asks you to go through each response statement, labelled with a letter (A, B, C….) and rate your level of agreement with each response statement.
3) Please ensure you provide an answer for each response statement under Questions 1 through 6. Please indicate your level of agreement by writing an **X** on the scale, choosing from *Strongly Disagree, Disagree, Neutral, Agree, or Strongly Agree*. You also have an opportunity to add to, remove from, or change the response statement to be more accurate. We ask that you also take the time to provide more daleel/evidence which is necessary to make this a strong Islamic evidence-based framework. Below is an example of how to complete this questionnaire. The **RED** text in this example represents where you will respond in the questionnaire itself.

Example Question: Which book came with the message of Islam?

	Response	Evidence Provided by Participants	Level of Agreement				
			Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
A	The Qur'an	Saad 38:29					X
Is there anything you would ADD, TAKE AWAY, or CHANGE to this response statement? Do you have additional daleel/evidence to provide that would help to make this statement more evidence-based?							

4) You have also been provided with your original Round One questionnaire as an additional attachment so that you can compare the response statements to what you originally provided.
5) If you have any questions or concerns, please do not hesitate to contact me at [---].

1) What is Islam's view of human beings? Are humans considered to be innately good or bad? (A-G)

	Response	Evidence Provided by Participants	Level of Agreement				
			Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
A	Humans are innately good, born innocent and sinless. Humans are born with a pristine, innate disposition known as the fitrah. This fitrah is pure and inherently good. Humans have inclinations towards altruism, goodness, kindness, mercy, justice, and compassion. No one is born a killer, hateful, spiteful, or with any evil disposition. All these qualities stem from the core belief in one God, who created everything and who we submit to.	"So, direct your face toward the religion, inclining to truth. [Adhere to] the fitrah of Allah upon which He has created [all] people. No change should there be in the creation of Allah. That is the correct religion, but most of the people do not know" (Qur'an, Ar-Rum, 30:30). "No child is born but upon the fitrah. It is his parents who make him a Jew or a Christian or a Polytheist" (Sahih Muslim). "Every child is born on the nature [inclining towards God] (al-fitrah)" (Sahih Muslim).					
	Is there anything you would ADD, TAKE AWAY, or CHANGE to this response statement? Do you have additional daleel/evidence to provide that would help to make this statement more evidence-based?						

	Response	Evidence Provided by Participants	Level of Agreement				
			Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
B	Humans are the most honoured of Allah's creation, with a high status and lofty purpose. This differentiates humans from animals.	"Indeed, We have honoured the children of Adam, carried them on land and sea, granted them good and lawful provisions, and privileged them far above many of Our creatures" (Qur'an, Al-Isra, 17:70) "We have certainly created man in the best of stature" (Qur'an, At-Tin, 95:4). "[Humans are] completed in intellectual capacity and understanding and capability in comportment, knowledge, and eloquence in communication" (Fakhr ad-Din ar-Razi in Mafatih al-Ghuyub).					

Is there anything you would ADD, TAKE AWAY, or CHANGE to this response statement?
Do you have additional daleel/evidence to provide that would help to make this statement more evidence-based?

	Response	Evidence Provided by Participants	Level of Agreement				
			Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
C	Humans are created to do Allah's work and use knowledge and fear of Him to bring justice to the earth.	None provided.					

Is there anything you would ADD, TAKE AWAY, or CHANGE to this response statement?
Do you have additional daleel/evidence to provide that would help to make this statement more evidence-based?

	Response	Evidence Provided by Participants	Level of Agreement				
			Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
D	God does not compel nor bid human beings to do evil. This concept is known as 'al-mujabbarah' and is counter to normative Islamic theology.	Ibn Taymiyyah's Minhaj As-Sunnah An-Nabawiyyah, Volume 3, Page 75: 'God does not compel humans' actions meaning that He does not force humans to act against their good nature"					

Is there anything you would ADD, TAKE AWAY, or CHANGE to this response statement?
Do you have additional daleel/evidence to provide that would help to make this statement more evidence-based?

	Response	Evidence Provided by Participants	Level of Agreement				
			Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
E	Humans are forgetful and can develop envy, hatred, anger, rebellion, selfishness, and become negligent. These influences inspired by shaytan and the environment.	None provided.					

Is there anything you would ADD, TAKE AWAY, or CHANGE to this response statement?
Do you have additional daleel/evidence to provide that would help to make this statement more evidence-based?

	Response	Evidence Provided by Participants	Level of Agreement				
			Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
F	Humans have desires and tendencies that can lead them to transgress and cross boundaries. Examples include the desire to live, to rest, to acquire material objects, to have relationships, and to reproduce.	"Beautified for people is the love of that which they desire - of women and sons, heaped-up sums of gold and silver, fine branded horses, and cattle and tilled land. That is the enjoyment of worldly life, but Allah has with Him the best return" (Qur'an, Al Imran, 3:14). "And [by] the soul and He who proportioned it. And inspired it [with discernment of] its wickedness and its righteousness, He has succeeded who purifies it, and he has failed who instills it [with corruption]" (Qur'an, As-Shams, 91:7-10).					

Is there anything you would ADD, TAKE AWAY, or CHANGE to this response statement?
Do you have additional daleel/evidence to provide that would help to make this statement more evidence-based?

	Response	Evidence Provided by Participants	Level of Agreement				
			Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
G	Life is a test. Humans have the capacity to be good or bad and are assigned an angel and a devil.	None provided.					

Is there anything you would ADD, TAKE AWAY, or CHANGE to this response statement?
Do you have additional daleel/evidence to provide that would help to make this statement more evidence-based?

2) How do humans come into existence? How do they psychologically develop? (A-H)

	Response	Evidence Provided by Participants	Level of Agreement				
			Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
A	Humans come into existence by the expressed decree of God, starting as dust and beginning with the creation of Adam and Eve. After this, each human is born through biological conception by the command of God as nothing exists except by His will.	"And certainly, did We create man from an extract of clay. Then We placed him as a sperm-drop in a firm lodging. Then We made the sperm-drop into a clinging clot, and We made the clot into a lump [of flesh], and We made [from] the lump, bones, and We covered the bones with flesh; then We developed him into another creation. So blessed is Allah, the best of creators "(Qur'an, Surat Al-Mu'minun:12-14) "O People, if you should be in doubt about the Resurrection, then [consider that] indeed, We created you from dust, then from a sperm-drop, then from a clinging clot, and then from a lump of flesh, formed and unformed - that We may show you. And We settle in the wombs whom We will for a specified term, then We bring you out as a child, and then [We develop you] that you may reach your [time of] maturity. And among you is he who is taken in [early] death, and among you is he who is returned to the most decrepit [old] age so that he knows, after [once having] knowledge, nothing. And you see the earth barren, but when We send down upon it rain, it quivers and swells and grows [something] of every beautiful kind" (Qur'an, Surah Al Hajj: 5)					
	Is there anything you would ADD, TAKE AWAY, or CHANGE to this response statement? Do you have additional daleel/evidence to provide that would help to make this statement more evidence-based?						

			Level of Agreement				
	Response	Evidence Provided by Participants	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
B	Humans are born upon a natural instinct – fitrah, with traits from both parents. A person's psychology is also impacted by the way each human chooses to use their inborn traits and talents.	Ali said, We were in a funeral in the graveyard of Gharqad when Allah's Messenger (SAW) came to us and we sat around him. He had a stick with him. He lowered his head and began to scratch the earth with his stick, and then said: There is not one amongst you whom a seat in Paradise or Hell has not been allotted and about whom it has not been written down whether he would be an evil person or a blessed person. A person said: Allah's Messenger, should we not then depend upon our destiny and abandon our deeds? Thereupon he said: Acts of everyone will be facilitated in that which has been created for him so that whoever belongs to the company of the blessed will have good works made easier for him and whoever belongs to the unfortunate ones will have evil acts made easier for him. He then recited this verse (from the Qur'an): "Then, who gives to the needy and guards against evil and accepts the excellent (the truth of Islam and the path of righteousness it prescribes), We shall make easy for him the easy end and who is miserly and considers himself above need, We shall make easy for him the difficult end"					
	Is there anything you would ADD, TAKE AWAY, or CHANGE to this response statement? Do you have additional daleel/evidence to provide that would help to make this statement more evidence-based?						

C	Response	Evidence Provided by Participants	Level of Agreement				
			Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
C	Every human is born obedient to the Creator, and as they develop, they learn to do otherwise as a result of external influences. Humans are affected by parents, family, their friends, and their environment. They both affect and get affected by things and people around them. As a child grows, friends/companions become more significant in their development. Islam emphasizes the need to choose friends wisely from an early age as one is influenced by them. In addition, role models must be chosen wisely, and should be individuals who are morally upright.	Abu Hurairah (RA) narrated that the Messenger of Allah (SAW) said, "No one is born except they are upon al-fitrah (instinct). Hus parents turn him into a Jew or Christian or Magian" (agreed upon). The Prophet (SAW) said: "One of you is influenced by his companions – so be careful whom you taken as a friend."					

Is there anything you would ADD, TAKE AWAY, or CHANGE to this response statement?
Do you have additional daleel/evidence to provide that would help to make this statement more evidence-based?

	Response	Evidence Provided by Participants	Level of Agreement				
			Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
D	Humans develop and grow through hardships, tests, trials, and tribulations.	None provided.					

Is there anything you would ADD, TAKE AWAY, or CHANGE to this response statement?
Do you have additional daleel/evidence to provide that would help to make this statement more evidence-based?

	Response	Evidence Provided by Participants	Level of Agreement				
			Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
E	The psychological development of humans is shaped by how they are raised, a process known as Tarbiyyah. Tarbiyyah includes holistic rearing of the physical being, including the spiritual and intellectual state. Muslims are instructed to supplicate to God from the very beginning of parenthood – as well to ask God for the wellbeing and success of a child and family.	Dr. Husna Dialameh in Al-Fikr at-Tarbawi al-Islami 'Inda al-Imam Ja'far as-Sadiq (Page 29)					

Is there anything you would ADD, TAKE AWAY, or CHANGE to this response statement?
Do you have additional daleel/evidence to provide that would help to make this statement more evidence-based?

	Response	Evidence Provided by Participants	Level of Agreement				
			Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
F	Children need nurturing without much need for structure before the age of 7 – they only need to be loved and protected. At the age of 7, they are conscious enough to learn structure and follow instructions carefully. This is a formative stage, where instructions about things that are good (e.g. manners, prayer) need to be emphasized. At the age of 10, they are ready to understand and know that consequences exist. After the age of 10, development varies from person to person. In the mid-teens and beyond, a young person may be given serious responsibilities. In their 20s, humans are in their physical prime. In their 30s and 40s, this is the time for spiritual growth. Most Prophets were sent around this age.	None Provided.					
	Is there anything you would ADD, TAKE AWAY, or CHANGE to this response statement? Do you have additional daleel/evidence to provide that would help to make this statement more evidence-based?						

	Response	Evidence Provided by Participants	Level of Agreement				
			Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
G	Islam places significant emphasis on how a parent should behave with their child, highlighting that that the ultimate influence in a child's development is the family, and particularly parents. If parents damage their children early on in life, the child will not grow to be able to function or positively contribute to society later.	One example of this is in the Hadith of Anas (a youngster who would help the Prophet). He said I helped the Prophet for seven to nine years with various chores and he never scolded me…he never said: 'why did you do this?' or 'why didn't you do that?' In other narrations it stated that the Prophet never used profanities, he never tore anyone down, he never reprimanded them, nor was he abusive. In other narrations it stated that the Prophet never used profanities, he never tore anyone down, he never reprimanded them, nor was he abusive. The Prophet warned against harshness – hate and every negative behavior, specifically during this critical period. One day a Companion came to the Prophet and said to him, 'I have ten children – I have never once kissed any of them!' The Prophet, may Allah praise him, said: "The one who shows no mercy [to their children] - will be given no mercy by God."					

Is there anything you would ADD, TAKE AWAY, or CHANGE to this response statement?
Do you have additional daleel/evidence to provide that would help to make this statement more evidence-based?

	Response	Evidence Provided by Participants	Level of Agreement				
			Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
H	It can be said that there are three critical stages of development based on the saying of the companions: لاعبه سبعاً ثم أدبه سبعاً ثم صاحبه سبعاً Meaning: Show loving care and leniency to your child throughout the first seven years [guide by being an example to your child], afterwards - and for the next seven years, have a direct hand in mentoring your child…correct him if he errs [through love and care] - direct them, teach them and be there for them. After that, and for the next seven years, accompany them for seven years – correcting them and directing them through a friendly relationship.	What is cited in the response.					

Is there anything you would ADD, TAKE AWAY, or CHANGE to this response statement?
Do you have additional daleel/evidence to provide that would help to make this statement more evidence-based?

3) What is Islam's view of health? What is considered healthy development? (A-E)

	Response	Evidence Provided by Participants	Level of Agreement				
			Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
A	All Islamic laws aim to achieve five goals – preservation of one's faith, one's body, one's mind, one's family, and one's wealth. Healthy development pertains to the goals of Islam, which include preservation of body, mind, and faith. This includes the preservation of faith, which provides the fundamentals for living well in society.	In a narration, it states: لا تزولُ قدما عبدٍ يومَ القيامةِ حتى يُسألَ عن شبابِه فيما أبلاه ، وعن عُمُرِه فيما أفناه ، وعن مالِه من أين اكتسبّه وفيما أنفقَه ، وعن عِلمِه ماذا عمل فيه Meaning: On the Day of Resurrection one would be asked about his youth, and what he did with it, and about his life and what and he did in it.					

Is there anything you would ADD, TAKE AWAY, or CHANGE to this response statement?
Do you have additional daleel/evidence to provide that would help to make this statement more evidence-based?

	Response	Evidence Provided by Participants	Level of Agreement				
			Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
B	The human body is a trust and gift, ultimately belonging to Allah (SWT). Each human is responsible for taking care of this trust, neither neglecting nor indulging the body. Further, there is a direct relationship between physical wellness and healthy development and spiritual wellness. Healthy development includes protection from harmful substances, such as intoxicants that alter one's state of mind and harm the body.	"And do not pursue that of which you have no knowledge. Indeed, the hearing, the sight and the heart - about all those [one] will be questioned" (Qur'an, Surah Al-Isra, 17:36) "Your body has a right over you, and your eyes have a right over you" (Sahih Bukhari #5199) "Surely excessive sleeping begets excessive oral consumption, and excessive oral consumption leads to excessive fullness of the stomach, and both of these then become weighty on the person pertaining to their obedience of God" (Imam Ja'far as-Sadiq in Misbah as-Shar'iyah, Page. 45)					
Is there anything you would ADD, TAKE AWAY, or CHANGE to this response statement? Do you have additional daleel/evidence to provide that would help to make this statement more evidence-based?							

	Response	Evidence Provided by Participants	Level of Agreement				
			Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
C	We should strive towards healing, health, and wellbeing. Weakness and sickness are not vilified, but rather we are encouraged to maintain and care for our health according to what is in our control. In fact, sickness can bring Muslims closer to Allah (SWT). The vulnerability inspires surrender and humility which are indicative of spiritual health. Muslims should never intentionally harm themselves and should stay away from all things that may affect their health negatively.	"The strong/healthy believer is better and more beloved to Allah than a weak believer – though in all believers there is good" (Sahih Muslim). The Prophet (SAW) instructed us to seek healing, as Allah (SWT) has provided a cure for every sickness.					

Is there anything you would ADD, TAKE AWAY, or CHANGE to this response statement?

Do you have additional daleel/evidence to provide that would help to make this statement more evidence-based?

	Response	Evidence Provided by Participants	Level of Agreement				
			Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
D	For healthy development, parents must nurture their children with love, adoration, safety, and fairness, while preparing them to face the challenges in today's society. This requires a parent to ensure their child is raised according to Islamic values. This includes knowing and fearing Allah, following His path, and using their mental and physical capacities to better their life and the lives of others.	None provided.					

Is there anything you would ADD, TAKE AWAY, or CHANGE to this response statement?
Do you have additional daleel/evidence to provide that would help to make this statement more evidence-based?

	Response	Evidence Provided by Participants	Level of Agreement				
			Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
E	For healthy development, young people should be kept engaged and guided by adults around them. Adults should remain connected with one another, collaborating and caring to avoid loneliness which can also be a source of spiritual illness.	None provided.					

Is there anything you would ADD, TAKE AWAY, or CHANGE to this response statement?
Do you have additional daleel/evidence to provide that would help to make this statement more evidence-based?

4) What is Islam's view of illness? What is considered unhealthy development? (A-F)

	Response	Evidence Provided by Participants	Level of Agreement				
			Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
A	Illness can be of a mental, physical, emotional, or spiritual nature. Spiritual illnesses are of the most concern and most critical to wellbeing.	The Prophet (SAW) said, "Know that there is a piece of flesh in the body, if it is rectified, the whole body is rectified, but if it rots the whole body rots, and that is the heart" (Sahih Bukhari).					
	Is there anything you would ADD, TAKE AWAY, or CHANGE to this response statement? Do you have additional daleel/evidence to provide that would help to make this statement more evidence-based?						

	Response	Evidence Provided by Participants	Level of Agreement				
			Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
B	Emotional and spiritual illnesses exist within the heart. They occur when a person cannot find happiness because their heart is unable to connect with Allah (SWT) and is filled with diseases, such as envy, hatred, anger, or resentment. It may manifest through a sense of loss and meaningful purpose in life.	"…For indeed, it is not the eyes that are blinded, but blinded are the hearts which are within the chests" (Surah Al Hajj, 22:46). "In their hearts is disease, so Allah has increased their disease; and for them is a painful punishment because they [habitually] used to lie" (Surah Al Baqarah, 2:10)					
	Is there anything you would ADD, TAKE AWAY, or CHANGE to this response statement? Do you have additional daleel/evidence to provide that would help to make this statement more evidence-based?						

	Response	Evidence Provided by Participants	Level of Agreement				
			Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
C	In Islam, illness is not considered evil, as it can lead to growth and spiritual cleansing if one endures it with patience. Illness is a test and only comes by the permission of Allah (SWT). The purpose of these tests may be to confirm one's claim of faith, remind humans of their weakness, and purifies a person, raising their rank with Allah (SWT). Patience and gratitude are critical when facing illness	"And We will surely test you with something of fear and hunger and a loss of wealth and lives and fruits, but give the good news to those who are patient" (Qur'an, Surah Al Baraqara, 2:155). Regarding having a fever, the Prophet (SAW) per Sahih Muslim, #4575 even said not to curse or revile it. It is narrated that Imam Ali bin al-Husayn supplicated as given in Fi Zilal as-Sahifah as-Sajjadiyyah Sharh ash-Shaykh Muhammad Jawad Mughniyyah, page 405, "O God! Praise belongs to You that You created then gave proportion, decreed and ordained, give death and cause life, and made sickness and heal." "He [God] who created death and life, so that He may test you as to which of you is better in deeds. And He is the All-Mighty, the Most-Forgiving" (Qur'an, Surat Al-Mulk, 67:2). The Prophet (SAW) said "It is okay, purification [for you]. God willing" (Sahih Bukhari #3616)					
Is there anything you would ADD, TAKE AWAY, or CHANGE to this response statement? Do you have additional daleel/evidence to provide that would help to make this statement more evidence-based?						

	Response	Evidence Provided by Participants	Level of Agreement				
			Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
D	Allah (SWT) has created illness and He has created the cure for illness, which humans should seek. Medication and other ways of healing are just means – Allah (SWT) is the one who provides healing.	"And when I am ill, it is He who cures me" (Qur'an, Surah Ash-Shu'ara, 26:80)					
	Is there anything you would ADD, TAKE AWAY, or CHANGE to this response statement? Do you have additional daleel/evidence to provide that would help to make this statement more evidence-based?						

	Response	Evidence Provided by Participants	Level of Agreement				
			Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
E	Islam requires us to stay away from all things that lead to illness, and practice moderation in all aspects of life (e.g. relationships, food, drink, activity, etc.).	None provided.					
	Is there anything you would ADD, TAKE AWAY, or CHANGE to this response statement? Do you have additional daleel/evidence to provide that would help to make this statement more evidence-based?						

	Response	Evidence Provided by Participants	Level of Agreement				
			Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
F	From an Islamic perspective, unhealthy development and illness might be defined as when a person gives into negativity. Negativity that cripples you is considered 'unhealthy'. Unhealthy development is also when a person is extremely fearful of the unknown, as the Islamic perspectives requires us to put our trust in Allah (SWT).	The Seerah [biography] of Prophet Muhammad mentions that the Prophet went through dire circumstances but was strong through faith.					
Is there anything you would ADD, TAKE AWAY, or CHANGE to this response statement? Do you have additional daleel/evidence to provide that would help to make this statement more evidence-based?							

5) What is the Islamic perspective on how people change? What is necessary and/or sufficient for change to occur? (A-F)

	Response	Evidence Provided by Participants	Level of Agreement				
			Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
A	In Islam, we believe that every individual has the capacity to change. As such, change begins with one's own self. Change requires that a person must have the willpower and motivation to change. A person must have determination and commitment to make a change. Once a person has this internal will and intention, Allah (SWT) will help a person to change and increase them in guidance and support. Similarly, a person is not misguided towards a negative change until that person takes a conscious step towards misguidance.	"Verily, Allah will not change the (good) condition of a people as long as they do not change their state (of goodness) themselves (by committing sins and by being ungrateful and disobedient to Allah)" (Qur'an, Surat Al-Ra'd, 13:11). "...their Lord will guide them because of their faith" (Qur'an, Surat Yunus, 10:9).					
	Is there anything you would ADD, TAKE AWAY, or CHANGE to this response statement? Do you have additional daleel/evidence to provide that would help to make this statement more evidence-based?						

		Response	Evidence Provided by Participants	Level of Agreement				
				Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
B		In Islam, it is understood that a person will not change unless they recognize that they have some type of shortcoming to rectify. This awareness and acknowledgement is achieved through self-inventory, a practice known as *muhasabah*. After people recognize their wrongs, the next step to change is feeling remorseful. From remorse stems repentance. With sincere repentance and an intention to change, a person must continue with a strong desire to not repeat the same steps which led to prior mistakes and transgressions. From an Islamic perspective, change is influenced by many factors, including one's upbringing, friends, role models, etc. Positive change is able to be sustained with the help of environmental influences, such as friends and family. The better the environment, the better the chance of sustaining a change.	Imam Yahya bin Hamzah adh-Dhammari in Kitab Tasfiyyah al-Qulub, page 322 described this self-inventory as reading one's own heart, actions of the tongue and the physical limbs to evaluate every form of disobedience. As ibn Qudamah al-Maqdisi stated in Mukhtasar Minhaj al-Qasidin, page 278, remorse is produced by that person having knowledge that they were behaving as reprobate between themselves and people and between themselves and their Beloved meaning God. The greatest example of change exists within the Seerah [Prophetic Biography]. The people of [the tribe of] Quraish were known to have many vile characteristics. They were cutthroat when it came to competition, and business…they were not philanthropic, and were indifferent to others – they deemed the poor to be poor by the will of God…and if God wanted their condition to change, He would have changed it. They had a very poor attitude towards women and children. With the advent of Islam – the Prophet established a framework of faith within the					

		people. He made them aware that every action one performed in this life had a consequence. Along with this, the Prophet enforced the concept of proper etiquette and moral values. He said: "Be aware that God is ever watchful over all that you do – He is aware of you and what you do wherever you may be and treat people well." Once faith took root in the hearts of the people of Quraish and the other tribes, lasting change was visible. Kindness, generosity, charity, taking care of the less fortunate, sick and elderly became a norm within society. The Prophet, upon arriving in the city of Madinah, took the lessons he had taught and made them a reality. The people of Makkah who had fled from their city arrived in Madinah with no homes, or money. So, the Prophet drew up a bond known as Al-Mo'aa'khat, which refers to 'a bond of brotherhood'. Each of the arriving Makkan Companions was bonded in 'brotherhood' to a person in Madinah who took care of their needs, looked after them and helped them out.					

Is there anything you would ADD, TAKE AWAY, or CHANGE to this response statement?
Do you have additional daleel/evidence to provide that would help to make this statement more evidence-based?

	Response	Evidence Provided by Participants	Level of Agreement				
			Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
C	The primary driver for change in Islam is the prospect of the Hereafter and being held accountable in front of Allah (SWT). It is recognized that Allah (SWT) provides humans with everything, including life, body, health, education, children, jobs, homes, cars, etc. These are means by which we should do good in the world, rather than abuse these gifts. We will be held accountable for how we use these gifts and blessings.	"Then as for one whose scales are heavy [with good deeds], He will be in a pleasant life. But as for one whose scales are light, his refuge will be an abyss. And what can make you know what that is? It is a fire, intensely hot" (Qur'an, Surat Al-Qari'ah, 101:6-11).					

Is there anything you would ADD, TAKE AWAY, or CHANGE to this response statement?
Do you have additional daleel/evidence to provide that would help to make this statement more evidence-based?

	Response	Evidence Provided by Participants	Level of Agreement				
			Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
D	From an Islamic perspective, it is never too late to change. The door back to Allah (SWT) is always open 24/7 and so change can always begin and is always possible no matter how significant the shortcoming or mistake.	None provided.					

Is there anything you would ADD, TAKE AWAY, or CHANGE to this response statement?
Do you have additional daleel/evidence to provide that would help to make this statement more evidence-based?

	Response	Evidence Provided by Participants	Level of Agreement				
			Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
E	Positive and negative change both exist from an Islamic perspective. A positive change is one that brings a person closer to Allah (SWT) and a negative change is one that distances a person from Allah (SWT). The primary reason for negative change is societal influence and excessive love of worldly positions and possessions.	None provided.					

Is there anything you would ADD, TAKE AWAY, or CHANGE to this response statement?
Do you have additional daleel/evidence to provide that would help to make this statement more evidence-based?

	Response	Evidence Provided by Participants	Level of Agreement				
			Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
F	In order for change to be permanent, one has to believe in it – not just as an ideal, but also as something that they can practically apply. Within an Islamic framework, sudden change is not the aim. Sudden change does not yield results. Once one is convinced, and actual steps are taken by the individual, a change in behavior will result.	An example of this is in the prohibition of intoxicating beverages. Makkans were renowned for their drinking culture…its prohibition was not revealed overnight; it took a long period and was deemed unlawful in the third year after the migration of the Prophet to the city of Madinah.					
Is there anything you would ADD, TAKE AWAY, or CHANGE to this response statement? Do you have additional daleel/evidence to provide that would help to make this statement more evidence-based?							

6) What might be the overarching goal of therapy using an Islamic framework? What might be the role of the therapist? The client? (A-O)

	Response	Evidence Provided by Participants	Level of Agreement				
			Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
A	In Islam, therapy would aim to restore balance in the soul. This balance is achieved through servitude – 'ubudiyyah. Thus, the aim is to restore a healthy life with tranquility and peace of the heart and mind. This would mean the person: • Realizes the purpose of life and their role in this life • Finds Allah (SWT) in all aspects of life, and realizing the blessings that He has blessed the person with. • Understands justice in this world and the hereafter, with a focus on accountability. • Surrenders their will to Allah (SWT) and accepts what has been given to the person and what has been taken away. • Restores peace with oneself and with others.	None provided.					
Is there anything you would ADD, TAKE AWAY, or CHANGE to this response statement? Do you have additional daleel/evidence to provide that would help to make this statement more evidence-based?							

	Response	Evidence Provided by Participants	Level of Agreement				
			Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
B	Many mental illnesses stem from spiritual illnesses which can affect someone psychologically. As such, holistic therapy would involve guidelines from Qur'an and Sunnah, as the Creator – Allah (SWT) knows the creation best.	None provided.					

Is there anything you would ADD, TAKE AWAY, or CHANGE to this response statement?
Do you have additional daleel/evidence to provide that would help to make this statement more evidence-based?

	Response	Evidence Provided by Participants	Level of Agreement				
			Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
C	In an Islamic framework, therapy would support a person to connect better with their Creator as a means of healing. In other words, the goal is to mend the relationship between the creation and Creator.	None provided.					

Is there anything you would ADD, TAKE AWAY, or CHANGE to this response statement?
Do you have additional daleel/evidence to provide that would help to make this statement more evidence-based?

	Response	Evidence Provided by Participants	Level of Agreement				
			Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
D	The overarching aim in therapy would be to support people to take a true self-inventory. A therapist would help facilitate this by creation a safe, confidential space for the person.	None provided.					

Is there anything you would ADD, TAKE AWAY, or CHANGE to this response statement?
Do you have additional daleel/evidence to provide that would help to make this statement more evidence-based?

	Response	Evidence Provided by Participants	Level of Agreement				
			Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
E	A client needs to have humility, confidence in the confidentiality of therapy, and willingness to engage with the therapist.	None provided.					

Is there anything you would ADD, TAKE AWAY, or CHANGE to this response statement?
Do you have additional daleel/evidence to provide that would help to make this statement more evidence-based?

	Response	Evidence Provided by Participants	Level of Agreement				
			Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
F	A therapist should support a client to realize that the perception of others is insignificant.	None provided.					

Is there anything you would ADD, TAKE AWAY, or CHANGE to this response statement?
Do you have additional daleel/evidence to provide that would help to make this statement more evidence-based?

	Response	Evidence Provided by Participants	Level of Agreement				
			Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
G	A therapist should help a patient to see their own strengths and gifts. They should help a patient understand that they are not a loser, as losing is a misperception.	None provided.					

Is there anything you would ADD, TAKE AWAY, or CHANGE to this response statement?
Do you have additional daleel/evidence to provide that would help to make this statement more evidence-based?

	Response	Evidence Provided by Participants	Level of Agreement				
			Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
H	A therapist should help the patient to develop a routine, spiritually and physically.	None provided.					

Is there anything you would ADD, TAKE AWAY, or CHANGE to this response statement?
Do you have additional daleel/evidence to provide that would help to make this statement more evidence-based?

	Response	Evidence Provided by Participants	Level of Agreement				
			Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
I	A therapist should help a patient identify better companions and environments to be in.	None provided.					

Is there anything you would ADD, TAKE AWAY, or CHANGE to this response statement?
Do you have additional daleel/evidence to provide that would help to make this statement more evidence-based?

	Response	Evidence Provided by Participants	Level of Agreement				
			Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
J	A therapist should teach the patient ways to protect their soul, which will also lead to protecting their physical being.	None provided.					

Is there anything you would ADD, TAKE AWAY, or CHANGE to this response statement?
Do you have additional daleel/evidence to provide that would help to make this statement more evidence-based?

	Response	Evidence Provided by Participants	Level of Agreement				
			Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
K	A therapist should guide a patient to humility and love of Allah (SWT) because spiritual illness can come from a sense of entitlement and a lack of love for Allah. When one loves Allah, they would love Allah's decisions and not try to challenge it mentally, which causes mental tiredness.	None provided.					

Is there anything you would ADD, TAKE AWAY, or CHANGE to this response statement?
Do you have additional daleel/evidence to provide that would help to make this statement more evidence-based?

	Response	Evidence Provided by Participants	Level of Agreement				
			Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
L	Salah should be used as a means in therapy. Salah comes from the word silah which in English means connection or relationship. Thus, salah can help build a strong connection with Allah, and subsequently all things in the universe, including humans, animals, plants, and the environment.	None provided.					
	Is there anything you would ADD, TAKE AWAY, or CHANGE to this response statement? Do you have additional daleel/evidence to provide that would help to make this statement more evidence-based?						

	Response	Evidence Provided by Participants	Level of Agreement				
			Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
M	The therapist should focus on supporting the client to have a healthy life as a social being with different relationships. The most important relationship is between the person and their Creator.	None provided.					
	Is there anything you would ADD, TAKE AWAY, or CHANGE to this response statement? Do you have additional daleel/evidence to provide that would help to make this statement more evidence-based?						

	Response	Evidence Provided by Participants	Level of Agreement				
			Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
N	The patient must have patience, as well as confidence and trust in the therapist.	None provided.					
	Is there anything you would ADD, TAKE AWAY, or CHANGE to this response statement? Do you have additional daleel/evidence to provide that would help to make this statement more evidence-based?						

	Response	Evidence Provided by Participants	Level of Agreement				
			Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
O	A faith-based approach uses logical steps and reasoning, while incorporating faith. A therapist would therefore use methods found in the Prophetic tradition to support the client to see the need for positive change. The goal is to have lasting change.	None provided.					
	Is there anything you would ADD, TAKE AWAY, or CHANGE to this response statement? Do you have additional daleel/evidence to provide that would help to make this statement more evidence-based?						

7) Other Comments or Perspectives?

Appendix F.

Round Three Questionnaire

Developing an Islamic Framework for Counselling

Delphi Round Three

JazakumAllah Khairun for completing Rounds 1 & 2 of this research study! The following questionnaire constitutes the third and final round of this research project.

*Please read **<u>all</u>** these instructions carefully as this will be essential in the development of a fulsome framework.*

1) All statements that reached consensus (70% agreement or higher) are now in the attached document entitled *Consensus Statements after Delphi Round Two.* Many of you provided additional feedback on wording, as well as evidence for those consensus statements, which has now also been incorporated. JazakumAllah Khairun! You are **<u>not</u>** required to review this document, but it is there if you wish to see it.

2) The Round Three questionnaire only includes those statements which did **NOT** reach consensus (a total of 13) in Round Two, and any **NEW** responses (a total of 3) that were provided by participants. **<u>There are only 16 questions in this round</u>**.

3) Round Three of this study asks you to go through the remaining response statements, labelled with its original letter, and rate your level of agreement with each response statement.

4) Please indicate your level of agreement by choosing from *Strongly Disagree, Disagree, Neutral, Agree, or Strongly Agree*. Like the last round, you also have an opportunity to add further comments though this is not required. If you choose, you can add to, remove from, or change the response statement to be more accurate. If you are able to, please also take the time to provide more daleel/evidence which is necessary to make this a strong Islamic evidence-based framework.

5) If you have any questions or concerns, please do not hesitate to contact me at [---].

1) **What is Islam's view of human beings? Are humans considered to be innately good or bad? (A-G)**

   All statements for Question #1 reached consensus in Round Two. Please move on to Question 2.

2) How do humans come into existence? How do they psychologically develop?

	Response	Evidence Provided by Participants	Level of Agreement				
			Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
B	Although human beings are born with a fitrah (natural instinct), a human's development can be affected by a variety of internal *(e.g. personal traits and characteristics)* and external influences *(e.g. parents, bad friends)*.	1) "Every newborn is born in a state of Fitrah – the parents would influence the child taking them away from the innate state of Fitrah" (Tirmidhi 2138). 2) Hadith of the man who killed 99 people and was instructed by a scholar to choose a different environment where he would find good people to surround him (Bukhari and Muslim) 3) Ali (RA) said, "We were in a funeral in the graveyard of Gharqad when Allah's Messenger (SAW) came to us and we sat around him. He had a stick with him. He lowered his head and began to scratch the earth with his stick, and then said: 'There is not one amongst you whom a seat in Paradise or Hell has not been allotted and about whom it has not been written down whether he would be an evil person or a blessed person'. A person said: 'Allah's Messenger, should we not then depend upon our destiny and abandon our deeds?' Thereupon the Prophet (SAW) said: 'Acts of everyone will be facilitated in that which has been created for him so that whoever belongs to the company of the blessed will have good works made easier for him and whoever belongs to the unfortunate ones will have evil acts made easier for him'. He then recited this verse (from the Qur'an): "Then, who gives to the needy and guards against evil and accepts the excellent (the truth of Islam and the path of righteousness it prescribes), We shall make easy for him the easy					

			end and who is miserly and considers himself above need, We shall make easy for him the difficult end"					

Is there anything you would ADD, TAKE AWAY, or CHANGE to this response statement?
Do you have additional daleel/evidence to provide that would help to make this statement more evidence-based?

	Response	Evidence Provided by Participants	Level of Agreement				
			Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
H	It can be said that there are three critical stages of development based on the saying of the companions: لاعبه سبعاً ثم أدبه سبعاً ثم صاحبه سبعاً Meaning: Show loving care and leniency to your child throughout the first seven years [guide by being an example to your child], afterwards - and for the next seven years, have a direct hand in mentoring your child…correct him if he errs [through love and care] - direct them, teach them and be there for them. After that, and for the next seven years, accompany them for seven years – correcting them and directing them through a friendly relationship.	There is no authentic Hadith regarding the organizing of parenting in three or four stages. There is however a popular saying attributed to either Ali (RA) Abdul Malik Bin Marwan (Rahimahu Allah), which says: "Nurture your children for seven years, discipline/structure them for seven years and teach them for seven years. Afterward, leave them to their design".					

Is there anything you would ADD, TAKE AWAY, or CHANGE to this response statement?
Do you have additional daleel/evidence to provide that would help to make this statement more evidence-based?

	Response	Evidence Provided by Participants	Level of Agreement				
			Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
I	Human development can be understood using the different states of the nafs of the human being. Humans begin at nafs al-ammara-bi soo'. They then move towards nafs al-lawwama, and finally advance to the nafs al-mutmainna. This highest level of development represents a person who is at peace and has established a strong relationship with his or her Creator.	The Qur'an describes the nafs, or self, as operating out of the three states, nafs al-ammara-bi soo'(commanding self [to do bad all the time [when it does bad); {Qur'an 12:53} nafs al-lawwama (accusatory self; {75:2} and nafs al-mutmainna (peaceful self) Qur'an: {89:27}.					

Is there anything you would ADD, TAKE AWAY, or CHANGE to this response statement?

Do you have additional daleel/evidence to provide that would help to make this statement more evidence-based?

3) What is Islam's view of health? What is considered healthy development?

	Response	Evidence Provided by Participants	Level of Agreement				
			Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
A	All Islamic laws aim to achieve five goals – preservation of faith, life, the mind, family, and wealth. From an Islamic perspective, holistic health would involve achieving a balance in these five areas.	In a narration, it states: لا تزولُ قدما عبدٍ يومَ القيامةِ حتى يُسألَ عن شبابِه فيما أبلاه ، وعن عُمُرِه فيما أفناه ، وعن مالِه من أين اكتسبَّه وفيما أنفقَّه ، وعن عِلمِه ماذا عمل فيه Meaning: On the Day of Resurrection one would be asked about his youth, and what he did with it, and about his life and what and he did in it.					

Is there anything you would ADD, TAKE AWAY, or CHANGE to this response statement?
Do you have additional daleel/evidence to provide that would help to make this statement more evidence-based?

	Response	Evidence Provided by Participants	Level of Agreement				
			Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
D	Parents should show love and affection towards their children and make them feel safe and cared for. These are critical ingredients that support healthy human development.	There are many proofs for this – one of which the Hadith of Al-Aqra' bin Haabis, who never showed love to his children – and the prophet said to him, 'The one who shows no mercy/love will not be shown any by Allah.' Adab Mufrad 71.					

Is there anything you would ADD, TAKE AWAY, or CHANGE to this response statement?
Do you have additional daleel/evidence to provide that would help to make this statement more evidence-based?

	Response	Evidence Provided by Participants	Level of Agreement				
			Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
F	Healthy development requires balance, without extremes in any regard. This requires one to focus on spiritual development, as well as physical and mental development.	The Prophet (SAW) said "By Him in Whose Hand is my life, if your state of mind remains the same as it is in my presence and you are always busy in remembrance (of Allah), the angels will shake hands with you in your beds and in your roads; but Hanzalah, time should be devoted (to the worldly affairs) and time should be devoted to your spiritual affairs" (Hadith, Sahih Muslim).					
Is there anything you would ADD, TAKE AWAY, or CHANGE to this response statement? Do you have additional daleel/evidence to provide that would help to make this statement more evidence-based?							

4) What is Islam's view of illness? What is considered unhealthy development? (A-F)

	Response	Evidence Provided by Participants	Level of Agreement				
			Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
F	Giving into negativity or being pessimistic is considered unhealthy from an Islamic perspective. As Muslims, we should endeavour to maintain an optimistic outlook.	The Prophet (SAW) said: Whoever says it is over – giving into negativity – is the source of the problems, or is the worst one within that community (Muslim 2623). The Seerah [biography] of Prophet Muhammad mentions that the Prophet went through dire circumstances, but was strong through faith.					
Is there anything you would ADD, TAKE AWAY, or CHANGE to this response statement? Do you have additional daleel/evidence to provide that would help to make this statement more evidence-based?							

5) What is the Islamic perspective on how people change? What is necessary and/or sufficient for change to occur? All response statements to question #5 reached consensus in Round Two, but one new response was added.

G	Response	Evidence Provided by Participants	Level of Agreement				
			Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
G	Change is influenced by many factors, including one's upbringing, friends, role models, etc. Positive change can be sustained with the help of environmental influences, such as friends and family. The better the environment, the better the chance of sustaining a change. The worse the environment, the more likely a negative change will take place.	• Example of Abu Bakr – many of the people he brought to Islam were friends, which is evidence of the impact of good friends.					

Is there anything you would ADD, TAKE AWAY, or CHANGE to this response statement?
Do you have additional daleel/evidence to provide that would help to make this statement more evidence-based?

6) What might be the overarching goal of therapy using an Islamic framework? What might be the role of the therapist? The client? (A-O)

	Response	Evidence Provided by Participants	Level of Agreement				
			Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
B	Some mental illnesses stem from spiritual illnesses which can affect someone psychologically. However, Islam acknowledges that mental illnesses, like physical illness, can have causes beyond a person's control and may not be linked to spiritual illnesses. Holistic therapy would involve both seeking treatment and turning to the Qur'an and Sunnah for guidance.	"And when I am ill, it is He who cures me" (Qur'an, Surah Ash-Shu'ara, 26:80) "And whoever turns away from My remembrance - indeed, he will have a depressed life, and We will gather him on the Day of Resurrection blind." 20/124					

Is there anything you would ADD, TAKE AWAY, or CHANGE to this response statement?
Do you have additional daleel/evidence to provide that would help to make this statement more evidence-based?

	Response	Evidence Provided by Participants	Level of Agreement				
			Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
D	A therapist should facilitate a safe, confidential space for the person to be able to speak.	None provided.					

Is there anything you would ADD, TAKE AWAY, or CHANGE to this response statement?
Do you have additional daleel/evidence to provide that would help to make this statement more evidence-based?

	Response	Evidence Provided by Participants	Level of Agreement				
			Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
E	A client needs to have humility, confidentiality, and willingness to engage with the therapist.	None provided.					
	Is there anything you would ADD, TAKE AWAY, or CHANGE to this response statement? Do you have additional daleel/evidence to provide that would help to make this statement more evidence-based?						

	Response	Evidence Provided by Participants	Level of Agreement				
			Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
F	A therapist should support a client to focus on Allah (SWT), rather than the opinions and perceptions of people. Islam places significant emphasis on respecting the rights and needs of other people, so long as this is within Islamic law.	Qur'an 49:13 Qur'an 15:97-98					
	Is there anything you would ADD, TAKE AWAY, or CHANGE to this response statement? Do you have additional daleel/evidence to provide that would help to make this statement more evidence-based?						

	Response	Evidence Provided by Participants	Level of Agreement				
			Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
G	A therapist should help a patient to see their own strengths, gifts, and blessings, including the blessing of iman.	"Look at those below you (in possession/riches) and do not look at those above you; that is more helpful for you in realizing the blessings of Allah upon you" (Hadith) Qur'an, 59:9					
Is there anything you would ADD, TAKE AWAY, or CHANGE to this response statement? Do you have additional daleel/evidence to provide that would help to make this statement more evidence-based?							

	Response	Evidence Provided by Participants	Level of Agreement				
			Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
J	A therapist should teach the patient ways to protect their soul, which will also lead to protecting their physical being.	None provided.					
Is there anything you would ADD, TAKE AWAY, or CHANGE to this response statement? Do you have additional daleel/evidence to provide that would help to make this statement more evidence-based?							

	Response	Evidence Provided by Participants	Level of Agreement				
			Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
K	A therapist should guide a patient to humility and love of Allah (SWT). When one loves Allah, they would love Allah's decisions and not try to challenge it mentally, which causes mental tiredness.	None provided.					

Is there anything you would ADD, TAKE AWAY, or CHANGE to this response statement?
Do you have additional daleel/evidence to provide that would help to make this statement more evidence-based?

	Response	Evidence Provided by Participants	Level of Agreement				
			Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
O	A faith-based approach uses logical steps and reasoning, while incorporating faith. A therapist would therefore use methods found in the Prophetic tradition to support the client to see the need for positive change. The goal is to have lasting change.	None provided.					

Is there anything you would ADD, TAKE AWAY, or CHANGE to this response statement?
Do you have additional daleel/evidence to provide that would help to make this statement more evidence-based?

7) Other Comments or Perspectives?

Appendix G.

Round Two Consensus Statement Summary

1) What is Islam's view of human beings? Are humans considered innately good or bad?

	Consensus Statement	Evidence for Response	% Consensus
A	Humans are innately good, born innocent and sinless. Humans are born with a pristine, innate disposition known as the fitrah. This fitrah is pure and inherently good. Humans have inclinations towards altruism, goodness, kindness, mercy, justice, and compassion. No one is born a killer, hateful, spiteful, or with any evil disposition. All these qualities stem from the core belief in one God, who created everything and who we submit to.	• Qur'an, Surah Ar-Rum, 30:30 • "No child is born but upon the fitrah. It is his parents who make him a Jew or a Christian or a Polytheist." (Hadith, Sahih Muslim) • "Every child is born on the nature [inclining towards God] (al-fitrah)." (Hadith, Sahih Muslim) • "Every child is born in a state of fitrah, then his parents make him into a Jew or a Christian or a Zoroastrian." (Hadith, Sahih Bukhari and Muslim) • "Allah, may He be blessed and exalted, says: 'I created all of My slaves as hunafa' (sing. haneef, i.e., believing in monotheism), but the devils diverted them from their belief.'" (Ta'weel Mukhtalaf al-Hadith (p. 200)).	100%
B	Humans are among the most honoured of Allah's creation, with a high status and lofty purpose.	• Qur'an, Surah Al-Isra, 17:70 • Qur'an, Surah At-Tin, 95:4 • Qur'an, Surah As-Sad, 38:75 • Qur'an, Surah Al-Baqarah, 2:151 • Qur'an, Surah Al-Baqarah, 2:129 • Qur'an, Surah Ali-Imran, 3:164 • "[Humans are] completed in intellectual capacity and understanding and capability in comportment, knowledge, and eloquence in communication" (Fakhr ad-Din ar-Razi in Mafātīḥ al-Ghayb).	100%

	Consensus Statement	Evidence for Response	% Consensus
C	Humans are created to worship and live by Allah's commands and use knowledge and fear of Him to bring justice to the earth.	• Qur'an, Surah Al-Baqarah, 2:31 • Qur'an, Surah Adh-Dhariyat, 51:56	83%
D	Life is a test. Human beings are given a choice of how to act, and whether to do good or evil. God does not compel nor bid human beings to do evil. Humans can be influenced by the devil.	• Qur'an, Surah Al-Araf, 7:28-29 • Qur'an, Surah Al-Araf, 7:33 • Qur'an, Surah Al-Kahf, 18:29 • Qur'an, Surah Al-Insan, 76: 1-3 • Qur'an, Surah Al-Mulk, 67:2 • Qur'an, Surah Al-Kahf, 18:7 • Qur'an, Surah Al-Infitar, 82:10-11 • Qur'an, Surah Al-Qaf, 50:27 • Qur'an, Surah An-Nas, 114:1-6 • "There is no one among you but a companion from among the jinn has been assigned to him." They said, "Even you, O Messenger of Allah?' He said, "Even me, but Allah helped me with him, and he became Muslim (or: and I am safe from him), so he only enjoins me to do that which is good." (Hadith, Sahih Muslim, 2814) • Ibn Taymiyyah: "God does not compel humans' actions meaning that He does not force humans to act against their good nature." (Minhaj As-Sunnah An-Nabawiyyah, Volume 3, Page 75)	100%
E	Humans are forgetful and can be negatively influenced by their environment. As such, humans can develop negative traits, such as envy, hatred, anger, rebellion, selfishness, and negligence.	• Quran, Surah Al-Maarij, 70:19-22 • Qur'an, Surah At-Taha, 20:115 • Qur'an, Surah Al-Adiyat, 100:6-8 • Qur'an, Surah Al-Nisa, 4:119-120 • "One of you would be influenced by the company they keep, so be careful who you take as a friend." (Hadith, Sunan Abu Dawood, 4833)	100%

	Consensus Statement	Evidence for Response	% Consensus
F	Humans have desires and tendencies that can lead them to transgress and cross boundaries. Examples include the desire to live, to rest, to acquire material objects, to have relationships, and to reproduce.	• Qur'an, Surah Ali-Imran, 3:14 • Qur'an, Surah Ash-Shams, 91:7-10	100%
G	Response G now combined with Response D, so G has been eliminated.	• Response G now combined with Response D, so G has been eliminated.	N/A

2) How do humans come into existence? How do they psychologically develop?

	Consensus Statement	Evidence for Response	% Consensus
A	Humans come into existence by the expressed decree of God, starting as dust and beginning with the creation of Adam and Eve. After this, each human is born through biological conception by the command of God as nothing exists except by His will.	• Qur'an, Surah Al-Mu'minun, 23:12-14 • Qur'an, Surah Al-Hajj, 22:5 • Qur'an, Surah An-Nisa, 4:1 • Qur'an, Surah Al-Rahman, 55:14	100%
B	Consensus NOT reached in Round #2	Consensus NOT reached in Round #2	67%
C	Every human is born obedient to the Creator, and as they develop, they learn to do otherwise as a result of external influences. Humans are affected by parents, family, their friends, and their environment. They both affect and get affected by things and people around them. The psychological development of humans is shaped by how they are raised, a process known as Tarbiyyah. As a child grows, companions become more significant in their development. Islam emphasizes the need to choose friends and role models wisely from an early age as one is influenced by them.	• "No one is born except they are upon al-fitrah (instinct). His parents turn him into a Jew or Christian or Magian" (Hadith, Sahih Muslim and Bukhari. • "One of you is influenced by his companions – so be careful whom you take as a friend." (Hadith, Sunan Abu Dawud) • Dr. Husna Dialameh in Al-Fikr at-Tarbawi al-Islami 'Inda al-Imam Ja'far as-Sadiq (Page 29)	100%
D	Humans develop and grow through hardships, tests, trials, and tribulations.	• Qur'an, Surah Al-Fajr, 89:15-16 • Qur'an, Surah Al-Balad, 90:4 • Qur'an, Surah Al-An'aam, 6:165 • Qur'an, Surah Al Baqarah, 2:155-157	83%

	Consensus Statement	Evidence for Response	% Consensus
		• Qur'an, Surah Al-Ankaboot, 29:2-3 • Qur'an, Surah Muhammad, 47:31	
E	Response E now combined with Response C, so E has been eliminated	Response E now combined with Response C, so E has been eliminated	83%
F	Children need nurturing without much need for structure before the age of 7 – they only need to be loved and protected. At the age of 7, they are conscious enough to learn structure and follow instructions carefully. This is a formative stage, where instructions about things that are good (e.g. manners, prayer) need to be emphasized. At the age of 10, they are ready to understand and know that consequences exist. After the age of 10, development varies from person to person. In the mid-teens and beyond, a young person may be given serious responsibilities. In their 20s, humans are in their physical prime. In their 30s and 40s, this is the time for spiritual growth. Most Prophets were sent around this age.	• There is no authentic narration or ayat that reference this, but there are sayings of the sahabah. • Ali (RA) OR Abdul Malik bin Marwan (Rahimahu Allah) said: "Nurture your children for seven years, discipline/structure them for seven years and teach them for seven years. Afterward, leave them to their design." • Omar ibn Al Khattab (RA) said: "Show loving care and leniency to your child throughout the first seven years [guide by being an example to your child], afterwards - and for the next seven years, have a direct hand in mentoring your child…correct him if he errs [through love and care] - direct them, teach them and be there for them. After that, and for the next seven years, accompany them for seven years – correcting them and directing them through a friendly relationship."	83%

	Consensus Statement	Evidence for Response	% Consensus
G	Islam places significant emphasis on how a parent should be with their child, highlighting the critical influence of families on child development. Islam warns against harshness so that children may be able to grow and develop into healthy, functioning individuals. It is important to note that children of parents who have been harsh and abusive can still excel and develop into strong, resilient individuals as they may turn to Allah (SWT) for healing and hope.	• Anas (RA) narrated that: "the Messenger of Allah (SAW) was one of the best of men in character.... I swear by Allah, I served him for seven or nine years, and he never said to me about a thing which I had done: Why did you do such and such? Nor about a thing which I left: why did not do such and such?" (Hadith, Sunan Abi Dawud, 4773) • "Al-Aqra' b. Habis saw Allah's Apostle (SAW) kissing Hasan. He said: I have ten children, but I have never kissed any one of them, whereupon Allah's Messenger (SAW) said: He who does not show mercy (towards his children), no mercy would be shown to him." (Hadith, Sahih Muslim 2318a). • Narrated `Abdullah bin `Amr: The Prophet (SAW) never used bad language neither a "Fahish nor a Mutafahish. He used to say, "The best amongst you are those who have the best manners and character." (Hadith, Sahih Bukhari, No. 56 (B) Vol. 8) • Qur'an, Surah Al Kahf, 18:82 • Example of Prophet Ibrahim (AS) and the abuse and vilification he endured at the hands of his own father. • Qur'an, Surah Al Kahf, 18:28	100%
H	Consensus NOT reached in Round #2	Consensus NOT reached in Round #2	67%
I	NEW Response Provided in Round #2	NEW Response Provided in Round #2	N/A

3) What is Islam's view of health? What is considered healthy development?

	Consensus Statement	Evidence for Response	% Consensus
A	Consensus NOT reached in Round #2	Consensus NOT reached in Round #2	67%
B	The human body is a trust and gift, ultimately belonging to Allah (SWT). Each human is responsible for taking care of this trust, neither neglecting nor indulging the body. Further, there is a direct relationship between physical wellness and healthy development and spiritual wellness. Healthy development includes protection from harmful substances, such as intoxicants that alter one's state of mind and harm the body.	• Qur'an, Surah Al-Isra, 17:36 • "Your body has a right over you, and your eyes have a right over you." (Hadith, Sahih Bukhari #5199) • "Surely excessive sleeping begets excessive oral consumption, and excessive oral consumption leads to excessive fullness of the stomach, and both of these then become weighty on the person pertaining to their obedience of God." (Imam Ja'far as-Sadiq in Misbah as-Shar'iyah, Page. 45)	100%
C	We should strive towards healing, health, and wellbeing. Weakness and sickness are not vilified, but rather we are encouraged to maintain and care for our health according to what is in our control. In fact, sickness can bring Muslims closer to Allah (SWT). The vulnerability inspires surrender and humility which are indicative of spiritual health. Muslims should never intentionally harm themselves and should stay away from all things that may affect their health negatively.	• "The strong/healthy believer is better and more beloved to Allah than a weak believer – though in all believers there is good" (Hadith, Sahih Muslim). • "A headache that a believer suffers or a thorn he steps on or anything that harms him would raise him in ranks before Allah on the Day of Resurrection and these would efface sins from his record" (Hadith, Targheeb, 3434)	100%

	Consensus Statement	Evidence for Response	% Consensus
D	Consensus NOT reached in Round #2	Consensus NOT reached in Round #2	67%
E	Connection is key for healthy development. Young people should be engaged with and guided by adults around them. Adults should remain connected with one another, collaborating and caring to avoid loneliness which can also be a source of spiritual illness.	• The Prophet (SAW) used to ride with the youth. He used to talk to them, sit with them and give them advice. He used to engage them and keep them company. He used to give them responsibilities according to the capacities they exhibit. Hence, he gave Ali the flag in the battle of Khaibar, sent Mus'ab Bin Omair as an ambassador to Al Madinah and assign Usam Bin Zaid the command of an army as a teenager.	83%
F	NEW Response Provided in Round #2	NEW Response Provided in Round #2	N/A

4) What is Islam's view of illness? What is considered unhealthy development?

	Consensus Statement	Evidence for Response	% Consensus
A	Illness can be of a mental, physical, emotional, or spiritual nature. Spiritual illnesses are of the most concern and most critical to wellbeing.	• "Know that there is a piece of flesh in the body, if it is rectified, the whole body is rectified, but if it rots the whole body rots, and that is the heart" (Hadith, Sahih Bukhari). • Qur'an, Surah Al-Hajj, 22:46	100%
B	Spiritual illnesses exist within the heart. They occur when a person cannot find happiness because their heart is unable to connect with Allah (SWT) and is filled with diseases, such as envy, hatred, anger, or resentment. It may manifest through a sense of loss and meaningful purpose in life. Some, but not all, emotional or mental illnesses are due to a lack of connection with Allah (SWT).	• Qur'an, Surah Al-Hajj, 22:46	83%
C	In Islam, illness is understood to only come by the permission of Allah (SWT), and is believed to be good for those who obey the commandments of Allah. For a believer, there are many spiritual aspects to sickness as an individual may seek forgiveness, practice patience, and receive great rewards. A person can also achieve rida', which is to be content with God's will. Illness can also be a test, which may serve to confirm one's claim of faith, remind humans of their weakness, and purify and spiritually cleanse a person, raising their rank with Allah (SWT).	• Qur'an, Surah Al-Baqarah, 2:155 • It was narrated that Abu Hurairah said: • "Mention of fever was made in the presence of the Messenger of Allah (SAW), and a man cursed it. The Prophet (SAW) said: 'Do not curse it, for it erases sin as fire removes filth from iron.'" (Hadith, Vol. 4, Book 31, Hadith 3469) • Qur'an, Surah Al Mulk, 67:2 • "How wonderful is the affair of the believer, for his affairs are all good, and this applies to no one but the believer. If something good happens to him, he is thankful for it and that is good for him. If	83%

	Consensus Statement	Evidence for Response	% Consensus
		something bad happens to him, he bears it with patience and that is good for him." (Hadith, Sahih Muslim, 2999)	
D	Allah (SWT) has created illness and He has created the cure for illness. Humans should seek treatment and medicine while recognizing that these are simply means to the cure. It is Allah (SWT) who ultimately provides healing.	• Qur'an, Surah Ash-Shu'ara, 26:80 • Qur'an, Surah Al-Anbiyah, 21:83 • "Indeed, the one who allows people to get sick, He created the medication, there-fore, seek healing." (Hadith, Abu Dawood, 3855) • "Allah does not send down any disease, but He also sends down the cure" (Hadith, Sunan Ibn Majah, Vol. 4, Book 31, Hadith 3439)	100%
E	Islam requires us to stay away from all things that lead to illness, and practice moderation in all aspects of life.	• Qur'an, Surah Al-A'raf, 7:31 • "One third for your food, one third for your drink and one third for your breath." (Hadith, At-Tirmidhi, 516) • Qur'an, Surah An-Nisa, 4:29 • "If you hear of the sickness / infectious disease/ plague in a land do not enter it, and if you are there do not leave from it." (Hadith, Sahih Muslim, 2218) • "There should be neither harming nor reciprocating harm." (Hadith, al-Haakim, 2/57-58) • Qur'an, Surah Al-Baqarah, 2:195	83%
F	Consensus NOT reached in Round #2	Consensus NOT reached in Round #2	67%

5) What is the Islamic perspective on how people change? What is necessary and/or sufficient for change to occur?

	Consensus Statement	Evidence for Response	% Consensus
A	Every individual has the capacity to change and change begins with one's own self. Change requires willpower, motivation, and commitment to change. Once a person has this intention and will, Allah (SWT) will help a person to change and increase them in guidance and support. Similarly, a person is not misguided towards a negative change until that person takes a conscious step towards misguidance.	• Qur'an, Surah Ar-Rad, 13:11 • Qur'an, Surah Yunus, 10:9	83%
B	A person will not change unless they recognize that their situations needs to change or be rectified. This awareness and acknowledgement can be achieved through self-inventory, a practice known as *muhasabah*. This requires an understanding that every action in life has consequences. After a person recognizes what needs to change, the next step is to feel remorseful and then repent. With sincere repentance and an intention to change, a person must maintain a strong desire to not repeat the same steps which led to prior mistakes and transgressions.	• Examples from the Seerah with the people of Quraish and their journey towards change. • As ibn Qudamah al-Maqdisi stated in Mukhtasar Minhaj al-Qasidin, page 278, remorse is produced by that person having knowledge that they were behaving as reprobate between themselves and people and between themselves and their Beloved meaning God. • Imam Yahya bin Hamzah adh-Dhammari in Kitab Tasfiyyah al-Qulub, page 322 described this self-inventory as reading one's own heart, actions of the tongue and the physical limbs to evaluate every form of disobedience. • Qur'an, Surah An-Nisa, 4:1	83%

C	The primary driver for change is the prospect of the Hereafter and being held accountable in front of Allah (SWT). Allah (SWT) provides humans with everything, including life, body, health, education, children, jobs, homes, cars, etc. These are means by which we should do good in the world, rather than abuse these gifts. We will be held accountable for how we use these gifts and blessings.	• Qur'an, Surah Al-Qari'ah, 101:6-11 • Qur'an, Surah At-Taubah, 8:53 • Qur'an, Surah At-Takathur, 102:1-8	100%
D	It is never too late to change. The path back to Allah (SWT) is always available, so change is always possible no matter how significant the shortcoming or mistake.	• Qur'an, Surah Ar-Room, 30:41 • "Allah accepts the repentance of anyone of us as long as they do not utter the death rattle." (Hadith, Tirmidhi, 3537) • The verses of the Qur'an that say that Allah forgives the repentant are numerous.	83%
E	From an Islamic perspective, positive and negative change can both occur. A positive change is one that brings a person closer to Allah (SWT) and a negative change is one that distances a person from Allah (SWT).	• "Righteousness is good character and sin is something you do and feel uncomfortable and you feel afraid to be exposed." (Hadith, Sahih Muslim, 185) • Qur'an, Surah Al-Baqarah, 2:4-5 • Qur'an, Surah At-Taha, 20:124 • Qur'an, Surah Ar-Room, 30:41	83%

F	For change to be permanent, a person must believe this change is possible, and that is what is best for them and most pleasing to Allah (SWT). Sudden changes are not always ideal, rather sustainable change is preferred. Once an individual firmly accepts this and takes the necessary steps, change is possible and more sustainable.	• An example of this is in the prohibition of intoxicating beverages. Makkans were renowned for their drinking culture. Its prohibition was not revealed overnight; it took a long period and was deemed unlawful in the third year after the migration of the Prophet to the city of Madinah.	83%
G	NEW Response Provided in Round #2	NEW Response Provided in Round #2	N/A

6) What might be the overarching goal of therapy using an Islamic framework? What might be the role of the therapist? The client?

	Consensus Statement	Evidence for Response	% Consensus
A	In Islam, therapy would aim to restore balance in the soul. This balance is achieved through servitude – 'ubudiyyah. Thus, the aim is to restore a healthy life with tranquility and peace of the heart and mind. This would mean the person: • Realizes the purpose of life and their role in this life • Finds Allah (SWT) in all aspects of life and sees the blessings in life. • Understands justice in this world and the hereafter, with a focus on accountability. • Surrenders their will to Allah (SWT) and accepts what has been given to the person and what has been taken away. • Restores peace with oneself and with others.	• Qur'an, Surah Al-Mulk, 67:2 • Qur'an, Surah Ali-Imran, 3:14 • "The real patience is at the first stroke of a calamity." (Hadith, Sahih Bukhari, 1302). • A daughter of the Prophet (SAW) sent a message to him that her son was at his last breath and requested him to come to her. The Messenger of Allah (SAW) sent back the informer saying: "To Allah belongs what He takes and what He gives, and everything has a limited period (in this world). So, ask her to endure patiently, and expect the reward of Allah." (Hadith, Sahih Bukhari & Muslim) • "Look at those who are beneath you and do not look at those who are above you, for it is more suitable that you should not consider as less the blessing of Allah." (Hadith, Sunan Ibn Majah)	100%
B	Consensus NOT reached in Round #2	Consensus NOT reached in Round #2	67%
C	In an Islamic framework, therapy would support a person to connect better with their Creator as a means of healing. In other words, the goal is to mend the relationship between the creation and Creator.	• Qur'an, Surah Muhammad, 47:2 • Qur'an, Surah Al-Jinn, 73:1-2 • Qur'an, Surah Taha, 20:124	83%
D	Consensus NOT reached in Round #2	Consensus NOT reached in Round #2	50%

	Consensus Statement	Evidence for Response	% Consensus
E	Consensus NOT reached in Round #2	Consensus NOT reached in Round #2	67%
F	Consensus NOT reached in Round #2	Consensus NOT reached in Round #2	50%
G	Consensus NOT reached in Round #2	Consensus NOT reached in Round #2	67%
H	A therapist should help the patient to develop a routine, spiritually and physically.	• One of the goals of 5 prayers in Islam is to establish that physical routine to establish a good spiritual connection to Allah. The prophet taught his companions to say "awrad" or "regular verbal prayers" as mean of remembrance of Allah on regular basis to establish a similar goal, among others.	83%
I	A therapist should help a patient identify better companions and environments to be in.	• The Prophet (SAW) said, 'The example of a good pious companion and an evil one is that of a person carrying musk and another blowing a pair of bellows. The one who is carrying musk will either give you some perfume as a present, or you will buy some from him, or you will get a good smell from him, but the one who is blowing a pair of bellows will either burn your clothes or you will get a bad smell from him." (Hadith, Sahih Bukhari, 5534) • Hadith of the man who killed 99 people – he was told to change his environment.	83%
J	Consensus NOT reached in Round #2	Consensus NOT reached in Round #2	67%
K	Consensus NOT reached in Round #2	Consensus NOT reached in Round #2	67%

	Consensus Statement	Evidence for Response	% Consensus
L	Salah (Prayer) should be used as a means in therapy. Salah comes from the word silah which in English means connection or relationship. Thus, salah can help build a strong connection with Allah, and subsequently all things in the universe, including humans, animals, plants, and the environment.	• "When the Messenger of God used to go though a tough hardship, he used to rush to pray." (Hadith, Abu Dawood, 1319) • Qur'an, Surah Al-Baqarah, 2:45 • Qur'an, Surah Al-Ankaboot, 29:45	83%
M	The therapist should focus on supporting the client to have a healthy life as a social being with different relationships. The most important relationship is between the person and their Creator.	• Qur'an, Surah Al-Mudatthir, 74:1-3 • Qur'an, Surah Al-Isra, 17:23	83%
N	The patient must have patience, as well as confidence and trust in the therapist.	• Qur'an, Surah An-Nisa, 4:59	83%
O	Consensus NOT reached in Round #2	Consensus NOT reached in Round #2	67%

Appendix H.

Revised Round Three Statements

Code	ORIGINAL Round 2 Statement	REVISED Round 3 Statement	Consensus %
2B	Humans are born upon a natural instinct – fitrah, with traits from both parents. A person's psychology is also impacted by the way each human chooses to use their inborn traits and talents.	Although human beings are born with a fitrah (natural instinct), a human's development can be affected by a variety of internal (e.g. personal traits and characteristics) and external influences (e.g. parents, bad friends).	Yes – 100%
2H	It can be said that there are three critical stages of development based on the saying of the companions: لاعبه سبعاً ثم أدبه سبعاً ثم صاحبه سبعاً Meaning: Show loving care and leniency to your child throughout the first seven years [guide by being an example to your child], afterwards - and for the next seven years, have a direct hand in mentoring your child…correct him if he errs [through love and care] - direct them, teach them and be there for them. After that, and for the next seven years, accompany them for seven years – correcting them and directing them through a friendly relationship.	It can be said that there are three critical stages of development based on the saying of the companions: لاعبه سبعاً ثم أدبه سبعاً ثم صاحبه سبعاً Meaning: Show loving care and leniency to your child throughout the first seven years [guide by being an example to your child], afterwards - and for the next seven years, have a direct hand in mentoring your child…correct him if he errs [through love and care] - direct them, teach them and be there for them. After that, and for the next seven years, accompany them for seven years – correcting them and directing them through a friendly relationship.	No – 67%

Code	ORIGINAL Round 2 Statement	REVISED Round 3 Statement	Consensus %
3A	All Islamic laws aim to achieve five goals – preservation of one's faith, one's body, one's mind, one's family, and one's wealth. Healthy development pertains to the goals of Islam, which include preservation of body, mind, and faith. This includes the preservation of faith, which provides the fundamentals for living well in society.	All Islamic laws aim to achieve five goals – preservation of faith, life, the mind, family, and wealth. From an Islamic perspective, holistic health would involve achieving a balance in these five areas.	Yes – 83%
3D	For healthy development, parents must nurture their children with love, adoration, safety, and fairness, while preparing them to face the challenges in today's society. This requires a parent to ensure their child is raised according to Islamic values. This includes knowing and fearing Allah, following His path, and using their mental and physical capacities to better their life and the lives of others.	Parents should show love and affection towards their children and make them feel safe and cared for. These are critical ingredients that support healthy human development.	Yes – 100%
4F	From an Islamic perspective, unhealthy development and illness might be defined as when a person gives into negativity. Negativity that cripples you is considered 'unhealthy'. Unhealthy development is also when a person is extremely fearful of the unknown, as the Islamic perspectives requires us to put our trust in Allah (SWT).	Giving into negativity or being pessimistic is considered unhealthy from an Islamic perspective. As Muslims, we should endeavour to maintain an optimistic outlook.	Yes – 100%

Code	ORIGINAL Round 2 Statement	REVISED Round 3 Statement	Consensus %
6B	Many mental illnesses stem from spiritual illnesses which can affect someone psychologically. As such, holistic therapy would involve guidelines from Qur'an and Sunnah, as the Creator – Allah (SWT) knows the creation best.	Some mental illnesses stem from spiritual illnesses which can affect someone psychologically. However, Islam acknowledges that mental illnesses, like physical illness, can have causes beyond a person's control and may not be linked to spiritual illnesses. Holistic therapy would involve both seeking treatment and turning to the Qur'an and Sunnah for guidance.	Yes – 100%
6D	The overarching aim in therapy would be to support people to take a true self-inventory. A therapist would help facilitate this by creation a safe, confidential space for the person.	A therapist should facilitate a safe, confidential space for the person to be able to speak.	Yes – 100%
6E	A client needs to have humility, confidence in the confidentiality of therapy, and willingness to engage with the therapist.	A client needs to have humility, confidentiality, and willingness to engage with the therapist.	Yes – 83%
6F	A therapist should support a client to realize that the perception of others is insignificant.	A therapist should support a client to focus on Allah (SWT), rather than the opinions and perceptions of people. Islam places significant emphasis on respecting the rights and needs of other people, so long as this is within Islamic law.	Yes – 83%

Code	ORIGINAL Round 2 Statement	REVISED Round 3 Statement	Consensus %
6G	A therapist should help a patient to see their own strengths and gifts. They should help a patient understand that they are not a loser, as losing is a misperception.	A therapist should help a patient to see their own strengths, gifts, and blessings, including the blessing of iman.	Yes – 100%
6J	A therapist should teach the patient ways to protect their soul, which will also lead to protecting their physical being.	A therapist should teach the patient ways to protect their soul, which will also lead to protecting their physical being.	Yes – 100%
6K	A therapist should guide a patient to humility and love of Allah (SWT) because spiritual illness can come from a sense of entitlement and a lack of love for Allah. When one loves Allah, they would love Allah's decisions and not try to challenge it mentally, which causes mental tiredness.	A therapist should guide a patient to humility and love of Allah (SWT). When one loves Allah, they would love Allah's decisions and not try to challenge it mentally, which causes mental tiredness.	Yes – 100%
6O	A faith-based approach uses logical steps and reasoning, while incorporating faith. A therapist would therefore use methods found in the Prophetic tradition to support the client to see the need for positive change. The goal is to have lasting change.	A faith-based approach uses logical steps and reasoning, while incorporating faith. A therapist would therefore use methods found in the Prophetic tradition to support the client to see the need for positive change. The goal is to have lasting change.	Yes – 100%

Appendix I.

New Round Three Statements

Code	NEW Round 3 Statements	Consensus %
2I	Human development can be understood using the different states of the nafs of the human being. Humans begin at nafs al-ammara-bi soo'. They then move towards nafs al-lawwama, and finally advance to the nafs al-mutmainna. This highest level of development represents a person who is at peace and has established a strong relationship with his or her Creator.	No – 50%
3F	Healthy development requires balance, without extremes in any regard. This requires one to focus on spiritual development, as well as physical and mental development.	Yes – 100%
5G	Change is influenced by many factors, including one's upbringing, friends, role models, etc. Positive change can be sustained with the help of environmental influences, such as friends and family. The better the environment, the better the chance of sustaining a change. The worse the environment, the more likely a negative change will take place	Yes – 100%

Appendix J.

Final Consensus Statement Summary

1) What is Islam's view of human beings? Are humans considered innately good or bad?

	Consensus Statement	Evidence for Response	% Consensus
A	Humans are innately good, born innocent and sinless. Humans are born with a pristine, innate disposition known as the fitrah. This fitrah is pure and inherently good. Humans have inclinations towards altruism, goodness, kindness, mercy, justice, and compassion. No one is born a killer, hateful, spiteful, or with any evil disposition. All these qualities stem from the core belief in one God, who created everything and who we submit to.	• Qur'an, Surah Ar-Rum, 30:30 • "No child is born but upon the fitrah. It is his parents who make him a Jew or a Christian or a Polytheist." (Hadith, Sahih Muslim) • "Every child is born on the nature [inclining towards God] (al-fitrah)." (Hadith, Sahih Muslim) • "Every child is born in a state of fitrah, then his parents make him into a Jew or a Christian or a Zoroastrian." (Hadith, Sahih Bukhari and Muslim) • "Allah, may He be blessed and exalted, says: 'I created all of My slaves as hunafa' (sing. haneef, i.e., believing in monotheism), but the devils diverted them from their belief.'" (Ta'weel Mukhtalaf al-Hadith, p. 200)	100%
B	Humans are among the most honoured of Allah's creation, with a high status and lofty purpose.	• Qur'an, Surah Al-Isra, 17:70 • Qur'an, Surah At-Tin, 95:4 • Qur'an, Surah As-Sad, 38:75 • Qur'an, Surah Al-Baqarah, 2:151 • Qur'an, Surah Al-Baqarah, 2:129 • Qur'an, Surah Ali-Imran, 3:164 • "[Humans are] completed in intellectual capacity and understanding and capability in comportment, knowledge, and eloquence in communication" (Fakhr ad-Din ar-Razi in Mafātīḥ al-Ghayb).	100%

	Consensus Statement	Evidence for Response	% Consensus
C	Humans are created to worship and live by Allah's commands and use knowledge and fear of Him to bring justice to the earth.	• Qur'an, Surah Al-Baqarah, 2:31 • Qur'an, Surah Adh-Dhariyat, 51:56	83%
D	Life is a test. Human beings are given a choice of how to act, and whether to do good or evil. God does not compel nor bid human beings to do evil. Humans can be influenced by the devil.	• Qur'an, Surah Al-Araf, 7:28-29 • Qur'an, Surah Al-Araf, 7:33 • Qur'an, Surah Al-Kahf, 18:29 • Qur'an, Surah Al-Insan, 76: 1-3 • Qur'an, Surah Al-Mulk, 67:2 • Qur'an, Surah Al-Kahf, 18:7 • Qur'an, Surah Al-Infitar, 82:10-11 • Qur'an, Surah Al-Qaf, 50:27 • Qur'an, Surah An-Nas, 114:1-6 • "There is no one among you but a companion from among the jinn has been assigned to him." They said, "Even you, O Messenger of Allah?' He said, "Even me, but Allah helped me with him, and he became Muslim (or: and I am safe from him), so he only enjoins me to do that which is good." (Hadith, Sahih Muslim, 2814) • Ibn Taymiyyah: "God does not compel humans' actions meaning that He does not force humans to act against their good nature." (Minhaj As-Sunnah An-Nabawiyyah, Volume 3, Page 75)	100%
E	Humans are forgetful and can be negatively influenced by their environment. As such, humans can develop negative traits, such as envy, hatred, anger, rebellion, selfishness, and negligence.	• Quran, Surah Al-Maarij, 70:19-22 • Qur'an, Surah At-Taha, 20:115 • Qur'an, Surah Al-Adiyat, 100:6-8 • Qur'an, Surah Al-Nisa, 4:119-120 • "One of you would be influenced by the company they keep, so be careful who you take as a friend." (Hadith, Sunan Abu Dawood, 4833)	100%

	Consensus Statement	Evidence for Response	% Consensus
F	Humans have desires and tendencies that can lead them to transgress and cross boundaries. Examples include the desire to live, to rest, to acquire material objects, to have relationships, and to reproduce.	• Qur'an, Surah Ali-Imran, 3:14 • Qur'an, Surah Ash-Shams, 91:7-10	100%
G	Response G now combined with Response D, so G has been eliminated.	• Response G now combined with Response D, so G has been eliminated.	N/A

2) How do humans come into existence? How do they psychologically develop?

	Consensus Statement	Evidence for Response	% Consensus
A	Humans come into existence by the expressed decree of God, starting as dust and beginning with the creation of Adam and Eve. After this, each human is born through biological conception by the command of God as nothing exists except by His will.	• Qur'an, Surah Al-Mu'minun, 23:12-14 • Qur'an, Surah Al-Hajj, 22:5 • Qur'an, Surah An-Nisa, 4:1 • Qur'an, Surah Al-Rahman, 55:14	100%
B	Although human beings are born with a fitrah (natural instinct), a human's development can be affected by a variety of internal (e.g. personal traits and characteristics) and external influences (e.g. parents, bad friends).	• "Every newborn is born in a state of Fitrah – the parents would influence the child taking them away from the innate state of Fitrah." (Hadith, Tirmidhi) • "One of you is influenced by his companions – so be careful whom you take as a friend." (Hadith, Sunan Abu Dawud)	100%
C	Every human is born obedient to the Creator, and as they develop, they learn to do otherwise as a result of external influences. Humans are affected by parents, family, their friends, and their environment. They both affect and get affected by things and people around them. The psychological development of humans is shaped by how they are raised, a process known as Tarbiyyah. As a child grows, companions become more significant in their development. Islam emphasizes the need to choose friends and role models wisely from an early age as one is influenced by them.	• "No one is born except they are upon al-fitrah (instinct). His parents turn him into a Jew or Christian or Magian." (Hadith, Sahih Muslim and Bukhari) • "One of you is influenced by his companions – so be careful whom you take as a friend." (Hadith, Sunan Abu Dawud) • Dr. Husna Dialameh in Al-Fikr at-Tarbawi al-Islami 'Inda al-Imam Ja'far as-Sadiq (Page 29)	100%

	Consensus Statement	**Evidence for Response**	**% Consensus**
D	Humans develop and grow through hardships, tests, trials, and tribulations.	• Qur'an, Surah Al-Fajr, 89:15-16 • Qur'an, Surah Al-Balad, 90:4 • Qur'an, Surah Al-An'aam, 6:165 • Qur'an, Surah Al Baqarah, 2:155-157 • Qur'an, Surah Al-Ankaboot, 29:2-3 • Qur'an, Surah Muhammad, 47:31	83%
E	Response E now combined with Response C, so E has been eliminated.	Response E now combined with Response C, so E has been eliminated	N/A
F	Children need nurturing without much need for structure before the age of 7 – they only need to be loved and protected. At the age of 7, they are conscious enough to learn structure and follow instructions carefully. This is a formative stage, where instructions about things that are good (e.g. manners, prayer) need to be emphasized. At the age of 10, they are ready to understand and know that consequences exist. After the age of 10, development varies from person to person. In the mid-teens and beyond, a young person may be given serious responsibilities. In their 20s, humans are in their physical prime. In their 30s and 40s, this is the time for spiritual growth. Most Prophets were sent around this age.	• There is no authentic narration or ayat that reference this, but there are sayings of the sahabah. • Ali (RA) OR Abdul Malik bin Marwan (Rahimahu Allah) said: "Nurture your children for seven years, discipline/structure them for seven years and teach them for seven years. Afterward, leave them to their design." • Omar ibn Al Khattab (RA) said: "Show loving care and leniency to your child throughout the first seven years [guide by being an example to your child], afterwards - and for the next seven years, have a direct hand in mentoring your child…correct him if he errs [through love and care] - direct them, teach	83%

	Consensus Statement	**Evidence for Response**	**% Consensus**
		them and be there for them. After that, and for the next seven years, accompany them for seven years – correcting them and directing them through a friendly relationship."	
G	Islam places significant emphasis on how a parent should be with their child, highlighting the critical influence of families on child development. Islam warns against harshness so that children may be able to grow and develop into healthy, functioning individuals. It is important to note that children of parents who have been harsh and abusive can still excel and develop into strong, resilient individuals as they may turn to Allah (SWT) for healing and hope.	• Anas (RA) narrated that: "the Messenger of Allah (SAW) was one of the best of men in character.... I swear by Allah, I served him for seven or nine years, and he never said to me about a thing which I had done: Why did you do such and such? Nor about a thing which I left: why did not do such and such?" (Hadith, Sunan Abi Dawud, 4773) • "Al-Aqra' b. Habis saw Allah's Apostle (SAW) kissing Hasan. He said: I have ten children, but I have never kissed any one of them, whereupon Allah's Messenger (SAW) said: He who does not show mercy (towards his children), no mercy would be shown to him." (Hadith, Sahih Muslim 2318a) • Narrated `Abdullah bin `Amr: The Prophet (SAW) never used bad language neither a "Fahish nor a Mutafahish. He used to say, "The best amongst you are those who have the best manners and	100%

	Consensus Statement	Evidence for Response	% Consensus
		character." (Hadith, Sahih Bukhari, No. 56 (B) Vol. 8) • Qur'an, Surah Al Kahf, 18:82 • Example of Prophet Ibrahim (AS) and the abuse and vilification he endured at the hands of his own father. • Qur'an, Surah Al Kahf, 18:28	

3) What is Islam's view of health? What is considered healthy development?

	Consensus Statement	Evidence for Response	% Consensus
A	All Islamic laws aim to achieve five goals – preservation of faith, life, the mind, family, and wealth. From an Islamic perspective, holistic health would involve achieving a balance in these five areas.	• In a narration, it states: لا تزولُ قدما عبدٍ يومَ القيامةِ حتى يُسألَ عن شبابِه فيما أبلاه ، وعن عُمُرِه فيما أفناه ، وعن مالِه من أين اكتسبَه وفيما أنفقَه وعن عِلمِه ماذا عمل فيه Meaning: On the Day of Resurrection one would be asked about his youth, and what he did with it, and about his life and what and he did in it. • Hadith of Ammar, wherein the Prophet (SAW) told him to take the necessary means to preserve his faith and his life. • The fact that we are forbidden from consuming intoxicants is in effect the preservation of one's intellect and being told not to squander it is in effect the preservation of one's wealth.	83%
B	The human body is a trust and gift, ultimately belonging to Allah (SWT). Each human is responsible for taking care of this trust, neither neglecting nor indulging the body. Further, there is a direct relationship between physical wellness and healthy development and spiritual wellness. Healthy development includes protection from harmful substances, such as intoxicants that alter one's state of mind and harm the body.	• Qur'an, Surah Al-Isra, 17:36 • "Your body has a right over you, and your eyes have a right over you." (Hadith, Sahih Bukhari #5199) • "Surely excessive sleeping begets excessive oral consumption, and excessive oral consumption leads to excessive fullness of the stomach, and both of these then become weighty on the person pertaining to their obedience of God." (Imam Ja'far as-Sadiq in Misbah as-Shar'iyah, Page. 45)	100%

	Consensus Statement	Evidence for Response	% Consensus
C	We should strive towards healing, health, and wellbeing. Weakness and sickness are not vilified, but rather we are encouraged to maintain and care for our health according to what is in our control. In fact, sickness can bring Muslims closer to Allah (SWT). The vulnerability inspires surrender and humility which are indicative of spiritual health. Muslims should never intentionally harm themselves and should stay away from all things that may affect their health negatively.	• "The strong/healthy believer is better and more beloved to Allah than a weak believer – though in all believers there is good" (Hadith, Sahih Muslim). • "A headache that a believer suffers or a thorn he steps on or anything that harms him would raise him in ranks before Allah on the Day of Resurrection and these would efface sins from his record" (Hadith, Targheeb, 3434)	100%
D	Parents should show love and affection towards their children and make them feel safe and cared for. These are critical ingredients that support healthy human development.	• There are many proofs for this – one of which the Hadith of Al-Aqra' bin Haabis, who never showed love to his children – and the prophet said to him, "The one who shows no mercy/love will not be shown any by Allah." (Hadith, Adab Mufrad 71)	100%
E	Connection is key for healthy development. Young people should be engaged with and guided by adults around them. Adults should remain connected with one another, collaborating and caring to avoid loneliness which can also be a source of spiritual illness.	• The Prophet (SAW) used to ride with the youth. He used to talk to them, sit with them and give them advice. He used to engage them and keep them company. He used to give them responsibilities according to the capacities they exhibit. Hence, he gave Ali the flag in the battle of Khaibar, sent Mus'ab Bin Omair as an ambassador to Al Madinah and assign Usam Bin Zaid the command of an army as a teenager.	83%

	Consensus Statement	Evidence for Response	% Consensus
F	Healthy development requires balance, without extremes in any regard. This requires one to focus on spiritual development, as well as physical and mental development.	• The Prophet (SAW) said "By Him in Whose Hand is my life, if your state of mind remains the same as it is in my presence and you are always busy in remembrance (of Allah), the angels will shake hands with you in your beds and in your roads; but Hanzalah, time should be devoted (to the worldly affairs) and time should be devoted to your spiritual affairs." (Hadith, Sahih Muslim) • The Prophet (SAW) established a bond of brotherhood between Salman and Abu Darda'. Salman paid a visit to Abu ad-Darda and found Um Ad-Darda' dressed in shabby clothes and asked her why she was in that state." She replied, "Your brother, Abu Ad-Darda is not interested in the luxuries of this world." In the meantime Abu Ad-Darda came and prepared a meal for him (Salman), and said to him, "(Please) eat for I am fasting." Salman said, "I am not going to eat, unless you eat." So Abu Ad-Darda' ate. When it was night, Abu Ad-Darda' got up (for the night prayer). Salman said (to him), "Sleep," and he slept. Again Abu- Ad-Darda' got up (for the prayer), and Salman said (to him), "Sleep." When it was the last part of the night, Salman said to him, "Get up now (for the prayer)." So both of them offered their prayers	100%

	Consensus Statement	Evidence for Response	% Consensus
		and Salman said to Abu Ad-Darda': "Your Lord has a right on you; and your soul has a right on you; and your family has a right on you; so you should give the rights of all those who have a right on you). Later on Abu Ad-Darda' visited the Prophet (SAW) and mentioned that to him. The Prophet, said, "Salman has spoken the truth." (Hadith, Sahih Bukhari)	

4) What is Islam's view of illness? What is considered unhealthy development?

	Consensus Statement	Evidence for Response	% Consensus
A	Illness can be of a mental, physical, emotional, or spiritual nature. Spiritual illnesses are of the most concern and most critical to wellbeing.	• "Know that there is a piece of flesh in the body, if it is rectified, the whole body is rectified, but if it rots the whole body rots, and that is the heart." (Hadith, Sahih Bukhari) • Qur'an, Surah Al-Hajj, 22:46	100%
B	Spiritual illnesses exist within the heart. They occur when a person cannot find happiness because their heart is unable to connect with Allah (SWT) and is filled with diseases, such as envy, hatred, anger, or resentment. It may manifest through a sense of loss and meaningful purpose in life. Some, but not all, emotional or mental illnesses are due to a lack of connection with Allah (SWT).	• Qur'an, Surah Al-Hajj, 22:46	83%
C	In Islam, illness is understood to only come by the permission of Allah (SWT) and is believed to be good for those who obey the commandments of Allah. For a believer, there are many spiritual aspects to sickness as an individual may seek forgiveness, practice patience, and receive great rewards. A person can also achieve rida', which is to be content with God's will. Illness can also be a test, which may serve to confirm one's claim of faith, remind humans of their	• Qur'an, Surah Al-Baqarah, 2:155 • It was narrated that Abu Hurairah said: "Mention of fever was made in the presence of the Messenger of Allah (SAW), and a man cursed it. The Prophet (SAW) said: 'Do not curse it, for it erases sin as fire removes filth from iron.'" (Hadith, Vol. 4, Book 31, Hadith 3469) • Qur'an, Surah Al Mulk, 67:2 • "How wonderful is the affair of the believer, for his affairs are all good, and this applies to no one but the believer. If something good happens to	83%

	Consensus Statement	**Evidence for Response**	**% Consensus**
	weakness, and purify and spiritually cleanse a person, raising their rank with Allah (SWT).	him, he is thankful for it and that is good for him. If something bad happens to him, he bears it with patience and that is good for him." (Hadith, Sahih Muslim, 2999)	
D	Allah (SWT) has created illness and He has created the cure for illness. Humans should seek treatment and medicine while recognizing that these are simply means to the cure. It is Allah (SWT) who ultimately provides healing.	• Qur'an, Surah Ash-Shu'ara, 26:80 • Qur'an, Surah Al-Anbiyah, 21:83 • "Indeed, the one who allows people to get sick, He created the medication, there-fore, seek healing." (Hadith, Abu Dawood, 3855) • "Allah does not send down any disease, but He also sends down the cure." (Hadith, Sunan Ibn Majah, Vol. 4, Book 31, Hadith 3439)	100%
E	Islam requires us to stay away from all things that lead to illness, and practice moderation in all aspects of life.	• Qur'an, Surah Al-A'raf, 7:31 • "One third for your food, one third for your drink and one third for your breath." (Hadith, At-Tirmidhi, 516) • Qur'an, Surah An-Nisa, 4:29 • "If you hear of the sickness / infectious disease/ plague in a land do not enter it, and if you are there do not leave from it." (Hadith, Sahih Muslim, 2218) • "There should be neither harming nor reciprocating harm." (Hadith, al-Haakim, 2/57-58) • Qur'an, Surah Al-Baqarah, 2:195	83%
F	Giving into negativity or being pessimistic is considered	• The Prophet (SAW) said: Whoever says it is over – giving	100%

	Consensus Statement	Evidence for Response	% Consensus
	unhealthy from an Islamic perspective. As Muslims, we should endeavour to maintain an optimistic outlook.	into negativity – is the source of the problems or is the worst one within that community (Muslim 2623). • The Seerah [biography] of Prophet Muhammad mentions that the Prophet went through dire circumstances but was strong through faith.	

5) What is the Islamic perspective on how people change? What is necessary and/or sufficient for change to occur?

	Consensus Statement	Evidence for Response	% Consensus
A	Every individual has the capacity to change and change begins with one's own self. Change requires willpower, motivation, and commitment to change. Once a person has this intention and will, Allah (SWT) will help a person to change and increase them in guidance and support. Similarly, a person is not misguided towards a negative change until that person takes a conscious step towards misguidance.	• Qur'an, Surah Ar-Rad, 13:11 • Qur'an, Surah Yunus, 10:9	83%
B	A person will not change unless they recognize that their situations needs to change or be rectified. This awareness and acknowledgement can be achieved through self-inventory, a practice known as *muhasabah*. This requires an understanding that every action in life has consequences. After a person recognizes what needs to change, the next step is to feel remorseful and then repent. With sincere repentance and an intention to change, a person must maintain a strong desire to not repeat the same steps which led to prior mistakes and transgressions.	• Examples from the Seerah with the people of Quraish and their journey towards change. • As ibn Qudamah al-Maqdisi stated in Mukhtasar Minhaj al-Qasidin, page 278, remorse is produced by that person having knowledge that they were behaving as reprobate between themselves and people and between themselves and their Beloved meaning God. • Imam Yahya bin Hamzah adh-Dhammari in Kitab Tasfiyyah al-Qulub, page 322 described this self-inventory as reading one's own heart, actions of the tongue and the physical limbs to evaluate every form of disobedience. • Qur'an, Surah An-Nisa, 4:1	83%

	Consensus Statement	**Evidence for Response**	**% Consensus**
C	The primary driver for change is the prospect of the Hereafter and being held accountable in front of Allah (SWT). Allah (SWT) provides humans with everything, including life, body, health, education, children, jobs, homes, cars, etc. These are means by which we should do good in the world, rather than abuse these gifts. We will be held accountable for how we use these gifts and blessings.	• Qur'an, Surah Al-Qari'ah, 101:6-11 • Qur'an, Surah At-Taubah, 8:53 • Qur'an, Surah At-Takathur, 102:1-8	100%
D	It is never too late to change. The path back to Allah (SWT) is always available, so change is always possible no matter how significant the shortcoming or mistake.	• Qur'an, Surah Ar-Room, 30:41 • "Allah accepts the repentance of anyone of us as long as they do not utter the death rattle." (Hadith, Tirmidhi, 3537) • The verses of the Qur'an that say that Allah forgives the repentant are numerous.	83%
E	From an Islamic perspective, positive and negative change can both occur. A positive change is one that brings a person closer to Allah (SWT) and a negative change is one that distances a person from Allah (SWT).	• "Righteousness is good character and sin is something you do and feel uncomfortable and you feel afraid to be exposed." (Hadith, Sahih Muslim, 185) • Qur'an, Surah Al-Baqarah, 2:4-5 • Qur'an, Surah At-Taha, 20:124 • Qur'an, Surah Ar-Room, 30:41	83%
F	For change to be permanent, a person must believe this change is possible, and that is what is best for them and most pleasing to Allah (SWT). Sudden changes	• An example of this is in the prohibition of intoxicating beverages. Makkans were renowned for their drinking culture. Its prohibition was	83%

	Consensus Statement	Evidence for Response	% Consensus
	are not always ideal, rather sustainable change is preferred. Once an individual firmly accepts this and takes the necessary steps, change is possible and more sustainable.	not revealed overnight; it took a long period and was deemed unlawful in the third year after the migration of the Prophet to the city of Madinah.	
G	Change is influenced by many factors, including one's upbringing, friends, role models, etc. Positive change can be sustained with the help of environmental influences, such as friends and family. The better the environment, the better the chance of sustaining a change. The worse the environment, the more likely a negative change will take place.	• Example of Abu Bakr – many of the people he brought to Islam were friends, which is evidence of the impact of good friends. • "Man follows his friend's religion, so be careful who you take for friends." (Hadith, Riyad As-Salahin)	100%

6) What might be the overarching goal of therapy using an Islamic framework? What might be the role of the therapist? The client?

	Consensus Statement	Evidence for Response	% Consensus
A	In Islam, therapy would aim to restore balance in the soul. This balance is achieved through servitude – 'ubudiyyah. Thus, the aim is to restore a healthy life with tranquility and peace of the heart and mind. This would mean the person: • Realizes the purpose of life and their role in this life • Finds Allah (SWT) in all aspects of life and sees the blessings in life. • Understands justice in this world and the hereafter, with a focus on accountability. • Surrenders their will to Allah (SWT) and accepts what has been given to the person and what has been taken away. • Restores peace with oneself and with others.	• Qur'an, Surah Al-Mulk, 67:2 • Qur'an, Surah Ali-Imran, 3:14 • "The real patience is at the first stroke of a calamity." (Hadith, Sahih Bukhari, 1302) • A daughter of the Prophet (SAW) sent a message to him that her son was at his last breath and requested him to come to her. The Messenger of Allah (SAW) sent back the informer saying: "To Allah belongs what He takes and what He gives, and everything has a limited period (in this world). So, ask her to endure patiently, and expect the reward of Allah." (Hadith, Sahih Bukhari & Muslim) • "Look at those who are beneath you and do not look at those who are above you, for it is more suitable that you should not consider as less the blessing of Allah." (Hadith, Sunan Ibn Majah)	100%
B	Some mental illnesses stem from spiritual illnesses which can affect someone psychologically. However, Islam acknowledges that mental illnesses, like physical illness, can have causes beyond a person's control and may not be linked to spiritual illnesses. Holistic therapy would involve both seeking treatment and turning to the Qur'an and Sunnah for guidance.	• "And when I am ill, it is He who cures me." (Qur'an, Surah Ash-Shu'ara, 26:80) • "And whoever turns away from My remembrance - indeed, he will have a depressed life, and We will gather him on the Day of Resurrection blind." (Qur'an, Surah Ta-ha, 20:124)	100%

	Consensus Statement	Evidence for Response	% Consensus
C	In an Islamic framework, therapy would support a person to connect better with their Creator as a means of healing. In other words, the goal is to mend the relationship between the creation and Creator.	• Qur'an, Surah Muhammad, 47:2 • Qur'an, Surah Al-Jinn, 73:1-2 • Qur'an, Surah Taha, 20:124	83%
D	A therapist should facilitate a safe, confidential space for the person to be able to speak.	• The Hadith in Sunan Abi Dawud and others of "Gatherings are a trust" relates to confidentiality. • There is evidence for this - the Prophet, may Allah praise him, would receive people who would speak to him one to one - asking for help, and he would do this in privacy. There is also a weak narration that mentions: 'Complete your affairs in secrecy - for every one who is blessed would be envied by others.'	100%
E	A client needs to have humility, confidentiality, and willingness to engage with the therapist.	• The Prophet (SAW) only made it compulsory to give counsel if another person does ask. In the Sahih Hadith, He (SAW) said: "The rights of a believer upon another believer are six: among them is this '...and if he seeks your counsel, counsel him." (Hadith, Sahih Bukhari & Muslim)	83%
F	A therapist should support a client to focus on Allah (SWT), rather than the opinions and perceptions of people. Islam places significant emphasis on respecting the rights and needs of other people, so long as this is within Islamic law.	• Qur'an, 15:97-98	83%

	Consensus Statement	**Evidence for Response**	**% Consensus**
G	A therapist should help a patient to see their own strengths, gifts, and blessings, including the blessing of iman.	• "Look at those who are beneath you and do not look at those who are above you, for it is more suitable that you should not consider as less the blessing of Allah." (Hadith, Sunan Ibn Majah) • Qur'an, Surah Al-Hashr, 59:9	100%
H	A therapist should help the patient to develop a routine, spiritually and physically.	• One of the goals offer 5 prayers in Islam is to establish that physical routine to establish a good spiritual connection to Allah. The Prophet taught his companions to say "awrad" or "regular verbal prayers" as a means of remembrance of Allah on regular basis to establish a similar goal, among others.	83%
I	A therapist should help a patient identify better companions and environments to be in.	• The Prophet (SAW) said, 'The example of a good pious companion and an evil one is that of a person carrying musk and another blowing a pair of bellows. The one who is carrying musk will either give you some perfume as a present, or you will buy some from him, or you will get a good smell from him, but the one who is blowing a pair of bellows will either burn your clothes or you will get a bad smell from him." (Hadith, Sahih Bukhari, 5534) • Hadith of the man who killed 99 people – he was told to change his environment.	83%
J	A therapist should teach the patient ways to protect their	• The Prophet (SAW) would often say to his companions 'Shall I not give you advice',	100%

	Consensus Statement	Evidence for Response	% Consensus
	soul, which will also lead to protecting their physical being.	'Shall I not inform you…', 'Shall I not guide you'? He was keen on conveying the goodness to his Ummah and taught them every goodness and guided them to every good thing. • Qur'an, Surah Al Baqarah, 2:195 • Qur'an, Surah Luqman, 31: 12-19 • Qur'an, Surah Al Asr • Qur'an, Surah Al Balad, 90:17	
K	A therapist should guide a patient to humility and love of Allah (SWT). When one loves Allah, they would love Allah's decisions and not try to challenge it mentally, which causes mental tiredness.	• This is based on the example of our Prophet, may Allah praise him, who was a role model for Muslims. He was humble and had a genuine desire to guide mankind to that which was good. As well, it is based on the concept of submission, wherein if one is afflicted, they are to be patient. • Story of Nuh (AS) in the Qur'an, Surah Hud	100%
L	Salah (Prayer) should be used as a means in therapy. Salah comes from the word silah which in English means connection or relationship. Thus, salah can help build a strong connection with Allah, and subsequently all things in the universe, including humans, animals, plants, and the environment.	• "When the Messenger of God used to go through a tough hardship, he used to rush to pray." (Hadith, Abu Dawood, 1319) • Qur'an, Surah Al-Baqarah, 2:45 • Qur'an, Surah Al-Ankaboot, 29:45	83%
M	The therapist should focus on supporting the client to have a healthy life as a social being with different relationships. The most important	• Qur'an, Surah Al-Mudatthir, 74:1-3 • Qur'an, Surah Al-Isra, 17:23	83%

	Consensus Statement	Evidence for Response	% Consensus
	relationship is between the person and their Creator.		
N	The patient must have patience, as well as confidence and trust in the therapist.	• Qur'an, Surah An-Nisa, 4:59	83%
O	A faith-based approach uses logical steps and reasoning, while incorporating faith. A therapist would therefore use methods found in the Prophetic tradition to support the client to see the need for positive change. The goal is to have lasting change.	• Qur'an, Surah An-Nahl, 16:126	100%