

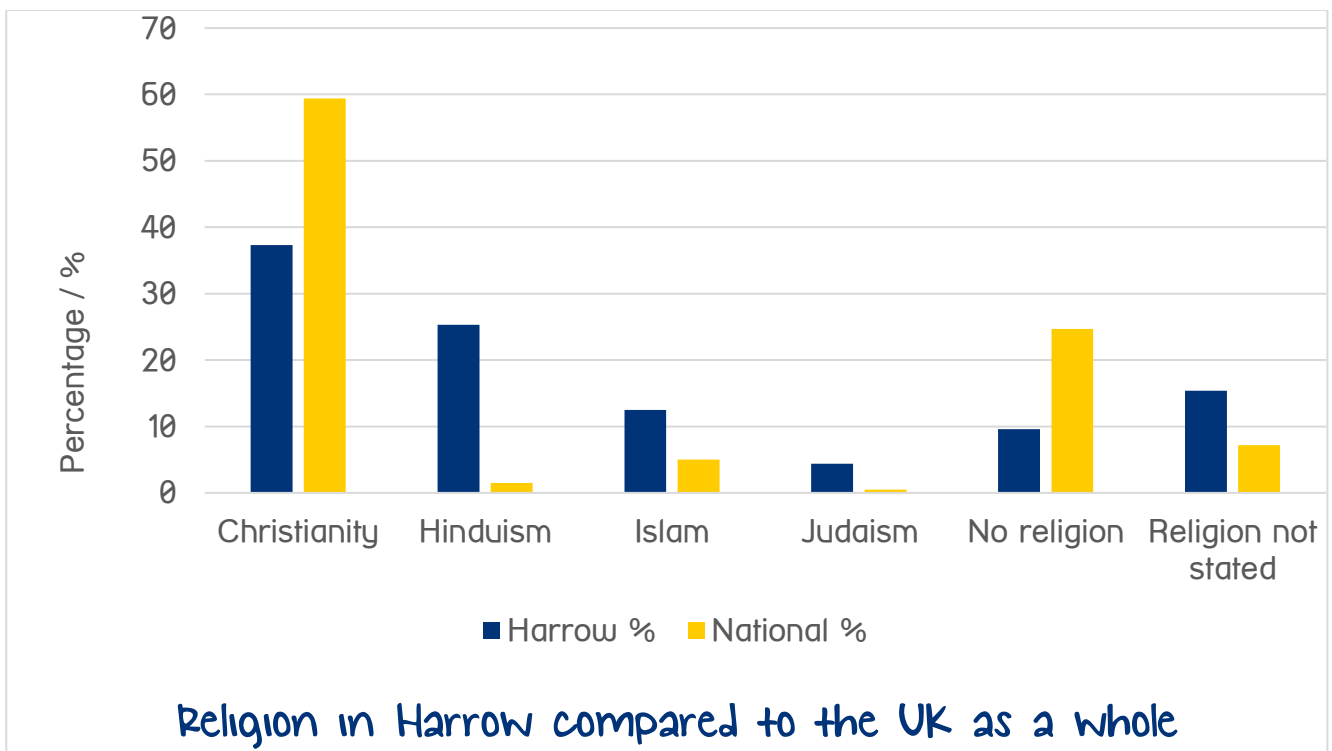
This fact sheet explores the relationship between mental wellbeing, faith and spirituality.

## What is religion?

Religion has a different personal meaning to different people. Rasic et al. (2009) defined religion as ‘an organised system of beliefs, practices, rituals and symbols designed to facilitate closeness to the sacred or the transcendent’. Most official definitions focus on two main elements: a formal system of beliefs and some conception of a divine power (e.g. one or multiple Gods). A person’s religion can be the foundation of how they think about themselves, experience life and make sense of the world (Swinton, 2001).

## Harrow's faith communities

Religious diversity is strong in Harrow with the highest number (and proportion) of Hindu followers in the country (25.3%) and the highest number of Jains (2.2%). Harrow's Jewish community is the sixth largest nationally. 37.3% of residents are Christians and 12.5% are Muslims. Below is a graph comparing the percentage of people following different religions in Harrow with the national figures.



## What is spirituality?

Spirituality is often seen as broader than religion, in that a person may have a spiritual practice without identifying with any particular religion. Definitions of spirituality vary, but generally include the idea of a sense of connection to something bigger than ourselves, and a search for greater meaning in life.

A person's spiritual practice might include following the teachings of a particular faith, living by a certain set of values, activities that develop self-awareness, such as meditation or yoga, and ritual practices such as burning incense or reciting mantras.

## Religion, spirituality and wellbeing

Whether through following a religion or engaging in other spiritual practices, many people find spirituality to be a valuable resource for managing their wellbeing.

Some of the benefits a person might gain through their spiritual practice include:

- ✿ Hope and resilience through applying spiritual teachings to everyday life
- ✿ Peace of mind through contemplative practices such as prayer and meditation
- ✿ Support and understanding from a spiritual community
- ✿ Trusted guidance from a spiritual leader
- ✿ A sense of purpose through volunteer work and being part of a community

## Spirituality within mental health services

Mental health practitioners should always take into consideration a person's religious beliefs and spiritual values when providing support and treatment, whether during counselling, when providing medication or when treating somebody as a hospital in-patient.

### **Faith and Spiritual Support in Hospital**

Chaplaincy teams offer spiritual, religious and pastoral care to patients, families and staff in hospitals across London.

At **Northwick Park Hospital**, the chaplaincy run a faith visitor service for a wide range of religions, as well as providing chapel and prayer room facilities. You can contact them via email at [LNWH-tr.chaplaincy@nhs.net](mailto:LNWH-tr.chaplaincy@nhs.net) or fill in their visit request form and learn more at [www.lnwh.nhs.uk/patients-visitors/your-overnight-stay/chaplaincy/](http://www.lnwh.nhs.uk/patients-visitors/your-overnight-stay/chaplaincy/)

### **Faith and Spiritual Support in Counselling**

You may wish to seek guidance on your mental health from a religious or spiritual leader. There is also the option to receive psychological counselling from someone who shares your faith or spirituality and can therefore support you with this in mind. This may be of particular help if you want to speak to someone neutral outside of your community. Please read our "Counselling" factsheet for more information.

## Organisations that can provide faith-based mental health support

### Inspirited Minds

[www.inspiritedminds.org.uk](http://www.inspiritedminds.org.uk)

Contact via this form: [www.inspiritedminds.org.uk/get-help/](http://www.inspiritedminds.org.uk/get-help/)

Inspirited Minds is a grassroots charity aiming to reduce stigma, raise awareness and provide advice, support and encouragement to people affected by mental health problems from a faith and culturally sensitive perspective, in particular Muslims. You can arrange a telephone, Skype or face-to-face appointment (they are based in London), or access help via email if you prefer.

### Jami UK

[www.jamiuk.org](http://www.jamiuk.org)

Martin B Cohen Centre, Gould Way, Edgware, HA8 9GL

Tel: 020 8458 2223 | Email: [info@jamiuk.org](mailto:info@jamiuk.org)

Jami is a Jewish charity focused on mental illness and its impact on people's lives, including the families and carers of those directly affected. Jami's main focus is on recovery, and all the services it offers have this end goal. Jami believes that recovery from mental ill health is possible through giving people control over their lives by means of real choice and participation. Its services include befriending, hospital visiting, independent living, and services for carers and to help people get into employment.

### Muslim Women's Network Helpline

[www.mwnhelpline.co.uk](http://www.mwnhelpline.co.uk)

The Warehouse, 54-57 Allison Street, Digbeth, Birmingham, B5 5TH

Tel: 0800 999 5786 or 0303 999 5786 (10am-4pm Monday-Friday)

Text: 07415 206 936 (response during operating hours)

Email: [info@mwnhelpline.co.uk](mailto:info@mwnhelpline.co.uk) (response during operating hours)

They also offer a webchat service, 10am-4pm Monday-Friday.

This service specialises in offering support and advice to Muslim women, but will provide help to women of any faith or no faith. The culturally sensitive nature of the helpline would particularly suit Asian women of other faiths. Men who are concerned about women and girls can call the helpline, and it can also provide support to men and boys in need – for example, if they are at risk of forced marriage.

### Muslim Youth Helpline

[www.myh.org.uk](http://www.myh.org.uk)

MYH FREEPOST RTRZ-RXTY-AUZR

Tel: 0808 808 2008 (Mon-Fri 6pm-12am; Sat-Sun 12pm-12am) | Email: [info@myh.org.uk](mailto:info@myh.org.uk)

The Muslim Youth Helpline is a free and confidential service offering support to vulnerable youth in need. Common issues range from relationships, mental health concerns, sexual abuse and religious issues. You can contact them via email, phone, post or webchat (on their website).

## Premier Lifeline

[www.premierlifeline.org.uk](http://www.premierlifeline.org.uk)

Tel: 0300 111 0101 (standard landline rate, open 9am-midnight every day)

Premier Lifeline is a confidential national helpline offering emotional and spiritual support from a Christian perspective. It aims to be a listening ear at the end of your telephone line, providing an anonymous place for you to talk about whatever you wish without fear of judgement or rejection. It is staffed by Christian volunteers who can help you explore both your daily life and your journey of faith.

## Other resources on spirituality and mental health

The Mental Health Foundation's information on spirituality and how it relates to mental health: [www.mentalhealth.org.uk/a-to-z/s/spirituality](http://www.mentalhealth.org.uk/a-to-z/s/spirituality)

Rethink, 'Spirituality, religion and mental illness factsheet':

<https://www.rethink.org/resources/s/spirituality-and-mental-illness-factsheet>

The Royal College of Psychiatrists, 'Spirituality and Mental Health':

<http://www.rcpsych.ac.uk/healthadvice/treatmentwellbeing/spirituality.aspx>

### For health professionals

*Religion and mental health: what should psychiatrists do?* by Walter Koenig, *The Psychiatrist* Jun 2008, 32 (6) 201-203: <http://pb.rcpsych.org/content/32/6/201>

The Royal College of Psychiatrists 'Spirituality and Psychiatry Special Interest Group':

[www.rcpsych.ac.uk/college/specialinterestgroups/spirituality.aspx](http://www.rcpsych.ac.uk/college/specialinterestgroups/spirituality.aspx)

## Faith-specific resources

### Chabad.org on health and wellness

[www.chabad.org/library/article\\_cdo/aid/1677088/jewish/Mental-Health.htm](http://www.chabad.org/library/article_cdo/aid/1677088/jewish/Mental-Health.htm)

Articles exploring mental wellbeing from a Jewish perspective.

### Faith Action

[www.faithaction.net](http://www.faithaction.net)

25 Neville Road, Dagenham, Essex, RM8 3QS

Tel: 0800 804 8829 | Email: [info@faithaction.net](mailto:info@faithaction.net)

A network of faith-based and community organisations serving their community by delivering public services (such as childcare, health and social care, housing and welfare to work). Faith Action empowers these organisations by offering support and training, spreading key information and acting as a link to the government.

### **Faith-based Regeneration Network (FbRN)**

[www.fbrn.org.uk](http://www.fbrn.org.uk)

308 Kennington Lane, London, SE11 5HY

Tel: 020 7840 0138/9

FbRN reaches and supports faith-based organisations operating at community level across the UK, and operates as a key partner for government and voluntary and community organisations at national policy level.

### **Harrow Interfaith**

[www.harrowinterfaith.org](http://www.harrowinterfaith.org)

Tel: 020 8858 9987 |

Harrow Interfaith aims to build understanding and respect among faiths in Harrow. It contributes to religious education and collective worship in schools, as well as encouraging young people in their youth organisations, faith communities, local colleges and universities to participate in interfaith activities. Harrow Interfaith works to solve problems experienced by local faith communities in the practice of their religion.

### **Jubilee Plus**

[www.jubilee-plus.org](http://www.jubilee-plus.org)

c/o Barnabas Community Church, Longden Coleham, Shrewsbury, SY3 7DN

Email: [admin@jubilee-plus.org](mailto:admin@jubilee-plus.org)

A church-based network to help churches engage more effectively with their communities and increase their social action.

### **Maslaha**

[www.maslaha.org](http://www.maslaha.org)

Free Word Centre, 60 Farringdon Road, London, EC1R 3GA

Tel: 0203 701 7640 | Email: [info@maslaha.org](mailto:info@maslaha.org)

Maslaha aims to tackle the immediate social issues affecting the Muslim community and create a better understanding of Islam from a cultural and historical perspective.

### **Mind and Soul**

<https://www.mindandsoulfoundation.org> Premier, 22 Chapter St, London, SW1P 4NP

Tel: 0845 345 0707 or 020 7315 0808 (for emotional support and listening)

Mind and Soul seek to bridge the gap between orthodox Christianity and high quality psychology and psychiatry and provide a place of integration for them.

### **The National Spirituality and Mental Health Forum**

[www.spiritualitymentalhealth.org.uk](http://www.spiritualitymentalhealth.org.uk)

35 Greenacres, Hendon Lane, London, N3 3SF

Email: [brian.bingham@mhspirituality.org.uk](mailto:brian.bingham@mhspirituality.org.uk)

A forum set up to explore the relationship between religion and mental health as well as promote spirituality in mental and social health professionals.

## The Qur'an and Emotional Health

An accessible resource to meet the mental wellbeing needs of Muslim communities through drawing upon the rich heritage of Islamic psychology. The resource also supports health and social care professionals to work more effectively with Muslims and Muslim communities. Contact Mind in Harrow for a printed version of this document.

Please call Mind in Harrow on 020 8426 0929  
for a large print version of this factsheet or a summary translation.



Mind in Harrow's Mental Health Information Service is a part of SWiSH, a consortium of five local charities, offering the local Care Act Information & Advice Service for Harrow residents, funded by the Council. [www.harrowca.org.uk](http://www.harrowca.org.uk)

*This factsheet was produced by Mind in Harrow*

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Registered charity number 1067480