

THE PARTNERSHIP OF MEN & WOMEN IN ISLAM



DISCUSSION GUIDE

REVIVE PACK

QURAN & HADITH | TALKING POINTS | ACTIVITIES | RESOURCES

TABLE OF CONTENTS

03 Introduction

04 Social Media Pitting Us Against One Another

06 Islam: A Middle Way for Both Men and Women

07 Men & Women In the Quran and Sunnah

09 Equality Vs Equity

10 Examples of Working Together from the Seerah

12 Activities

17 Resources

Introduction



There have always been differences between men and women due to obvious reasons rooted in their biology. This, in turn, naturally causes differences in their lived experiences, which both are quick to point out to each other. While debates and discussions on who has it worse have always taken place, there is a new factor expanding the divide between men and women: social media.



Social Media: Pitting Us Against One Another



We've known the harmful effects of social media for a while now, whether it's low self-esteem, body image issues, cyberbullying, or even insomnia. But there's another aspect of it that's both apparent yet insidious: a battle between the sexes. Whether it's a podcast reel about how women are disloyal "gold-diggers" or a TikTok about how all men are misogynists and therefore "trash," there are a lot of toxic ideas that float around these spaces. Being exposed to these ideas enough times online will make it easy for anyone to subconsciously and even consciously adopt them. Studies, including [one from Princeton University](#), suggest that social media is causing women to become more politically left-wing while causing men to become more right-wing. But why?

Amplification of Extremes

Social media algorithms reward outrage, so that content that shames or causes anger or fear gets more visibility and traction.

Example: On platforms like TikTok and Instagram, clips with titles like "Why Muslim women today are not marriage material" or "Modern Muslim men are toxic" often go viral, even if they're not representative of the majority.

Echo Chambers & Confirmation Bias The algorithm also picks up very quickly on what content you like. It will then predominantly show you stuff you agree with, creating an echo chamber where you believe far more people think like you do than what might actually be the case. Example: A woman who follows pages about Muslim feminism may be fed constant reminders of male privilege or abuse cases, while a man following so-called traditionalist pages might only see posts about "disobedient" wives or Western corruption.





Misrepresentation & Stereotyping

Bite-sized content found on social media is often devoid of nuance. So, in the case of men and women, both sexes are frequently misrepresented or reduced to stereotypes. Being generalized in this way breeds resentment.

Example: Men are portrayed as emotionally unavailable, immature, or oppressive. Women are seen as materialistic, hyper-independent, or too “westernized.”

RedPill Movement

Platforms like YouTube and Reddit have allowed misogynistic ideologies (e.g., red pill, manosphere) to spread worldwide and even into Muslim discourse. Some Muslim men use frameworks to interpret Islam in ways that promote control rather than compassion.

Example: A well-known UK Muslim influencer said it was a bad idea to marry to widows, when doing so is actually encouraged in the sunnah. Another group of podcast brothers suggested that women wearing coats over their abayas or carrying a backpack on their shoulders were being immodest.

Feminist Backlash & Generalizations

Some Muslim feminists in calling out misogyny will make sweeping statements labeling *all* Muslim men as the problem.

Example: Making statements like “Muslim men don’t know how to love” or “they only want to control us” can push away emotionally healthy men and cause further division.



Challenge:

Go through your social media platforms and unfollow any accounts that regularly promote harmful or unfair ideas about the opposite gender.

Islam: A Middle Way for Both Men and Women



While social media is pushing Muslim men and women into opposite directions, what is the Quran telling us?

وَكَذَلِكَ جَعَلْنَاكُمْ أُمَّةً وَسَطًا لِتَكُونُوا شُهَدَاءَ عَلَى النَّاسِ وَيَكُونَ الرَّسُولُ عَلَيْكُمْ شَهِيدًا

“And thus We have made you a medium (just) nation that you may be the bearers of witness to the people and (that) the Messenger may be a bearer of witness to you;” [Quran 2:143]

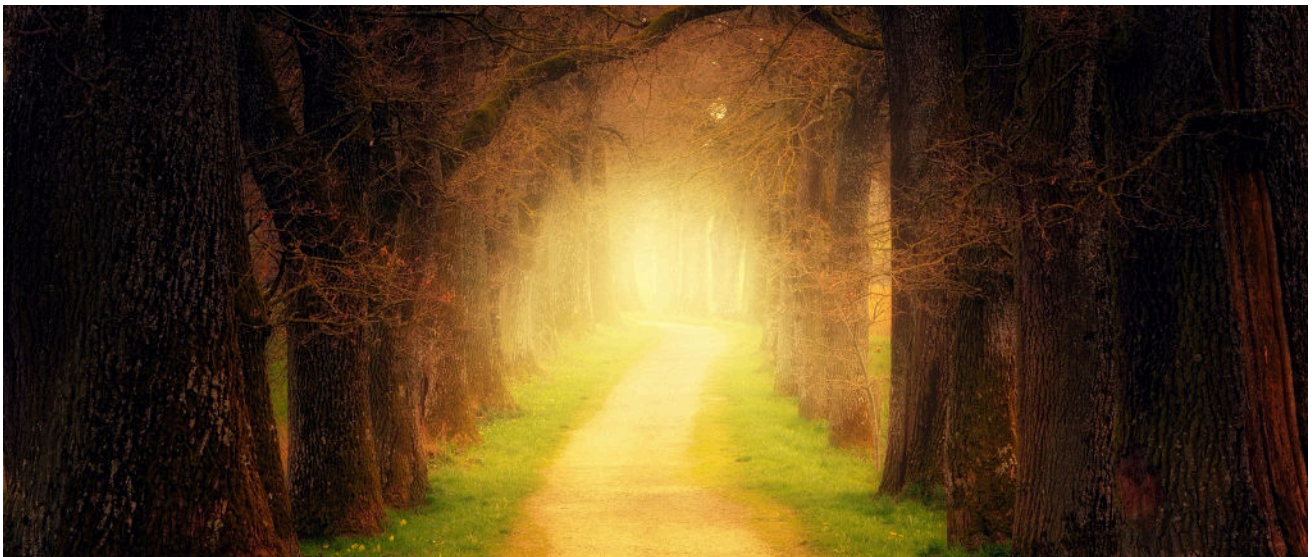
The Arabic word “wasat” refers to moderate, balanced, and just. Allah tells us that the Muslim community, made up of both men and women, do not take to extremes. Instead, they are a moderate and just nation that are an example to the world just as the Prophet ﷺ is an example to them.

Men and women in Islam are on the same side as partners within one team working together for the sake of Allah.

وَالْمُؤْمِنُونَ وَالْمُؤْمِنَاتُ بَعْضُهُمْ أَوْلِيَاءُ بَعْضٍ يَأْمُرُونَ بِالْمَعْرُوفِ وَيَنْهَوْنَ عَنِ الْمُنْكَرِ وَيُقِيمُونَ الصَّلَاةَ وَيُؤْتُونَ الزَّكَاةَ وَيُطِيعُونَ اللَّهَ وَرَسُولَهُ أُولَئِكَ سَيَرْحَمُهُمُ اللَّهُ إِنَّ اللَّهَ عَزِيزٌ حَكِيمٌ

“The believing men and believing women are allies of one another. They enjoin what is right and forbid what is wrong and establish prayer and give zakah and obey Allah and His Messenger. Those - Allah will have mercy upon them. Indeed, Allah is Exalted in Might and Wise.” [9:71]

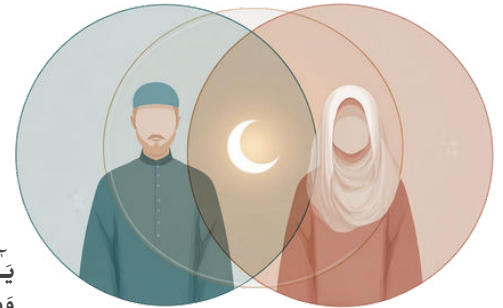
The term “awliya” is a rich word that means more than just allies. Its meaning includes an intimate companion and a protective friend, highlighting the beneficial symbiotic relationship women and men should have with one another.





1. Both Are Created from a Single Soul

The Quran emphasizes that men and women share a single origin, highlighting equality in creation and human dignity.



يَا أَيُّهَا النَّاسُ اتَّقُوا رَبَّكُمُ الَّذِي خَلَقَكُمْ مِنْ نَفْسٍ وَاحِدَةٍ وَخَلَقَ مِنْهَا زَوْجَهَا وَبَثَّ مِنْهُمَا رِجَالًا كَثِيرًا
وْنِسَاءً وَاتَّقُوا اللَّهَ الَّذِي تَسَاءَلُونَ بِهِ وَالْأَرْحَامَ إِنَّ اللَّهَ كَانَ عَلَيْكُمْ رَقِيبًا

"O mankind, fear your Lord, who created you from a single soul and created from it its mate and dispersed from both of them many men and women." [Quran 4:1]

The Prophet ﷺ said, "Women are the twin halves of men." [Sunan Abi Dawood]

This hadith highlights the fundamental equality and shared humanity of men and women.

2. Spiritual and Moral Equality

Women and men are equal in the eyes of Allah in terms of their moral and spiritual responsibilities and their potential for reward and punishment. This verse lists both genders side by side in virtues and assures both equal spiritual reward for their righteous actions.

إِنَّ الْمُسْلِمِينَ وَالْمُسْلِمَاتِ وَالْمُؤْمِنِينَ وَالْمُؤْمِنَاتِ وَالْقَانِتِينَ وَالْقَانِتَاتِ وَالصَّادِقِينَ وَالصَّادِقَاتِ وَالصَّابِرِينَ وَالصَّابِرَاتِ
وَالْخَشِيعِينَ وَالْخَشِيعَاتِ وَالْمُتَصَدِّقِينَ وَالْمُتَصَدِّقَاتِ وَالصَّامِينَ وَالصَّامَاتِ وَالْحَافِظِينَ فُرُوجَهُمْ وَالْحَافِظَاتِ وَالذَّاكِرِينَ اللَّهَ
كَثِيرًا وَالذَّاكِرَاتِ أَعَدَّ اللَّهُ لَهُمْ مَغْفِرَةً وَأَجْرًا عَظِيمًا

"Indeed, the Muslim men and Muslim women, the believing men and believing women, the obedient men and obedient women, the truthful men and truthful women, the patient men and patient women, the humble men and humble women, the charitable men and charitable women, the fasting men and fasting women, the men who guard their private parts and the women who do so, and the men who remember Allah often and the women who do so - for them Allah has prepared forgiveness and a great reward." [Quran 33:35]

Women, like men, are seen as morally and spiritually accountable individuals. Women are full participants in acts of worship and have a personal relationship with Allah.



إِنَّ الْمُسْلِمِينَ وَالْمُسْلِمَاتِ وَالْمُؤْمِنِينَ وَالْمُؤْمِنَاتِ وَالْقَانِتِينَ وَالْقَانِتَاتِ وَالصَّادِقِينَ وَالصَّادِقَاتِ وَالصَّابِرِينَ وَالصَّابِرَاتِ وَالْخَاشِعِينَ وَالْخَاشِعَاتِ وَالْمُتَصَدِّقِينَ وَالْمُتَصَدِّقَاتِ وَالصَّيِّمِينَ وَالصَّيِّمَاتِ وَالْحَافِظِينَ وَالْحَافِظَاتِ وَالذَّاكِرِينَ اللَّهَ كَثِيرًا وَالذَّاكِرَاتِ أَعَدَّ اللَّهُ لَهُمْ مَغْفِرَةً وَأَجْرًا عَظِيمًا

"Whoever does righteousness, whether male or female, while he is a believer — We will surely cause him to live a good life and We will surely give them their reward..." [16:97]

3. Complementary Roles and Responsibilities

Although Allah assigns different roles to men and women in some contexts, these are framed within a system of mutual obligation and protection.

الرِّجَالُ قَوَّامُونَ عَلَى النِّسَاءِ بِمَا فَضَّلَ اللَّهُ بَعْضَهُمْ عَلَى بَعْضٍ وَبِمَا أَنْفَقُوا مِنْ أَمْوَالِهِمْ

Men are the caretakers of women, as men have been provisioned by Allah over women and tasked with supporting them financially. And righteous women are devoutly obedient and, when alone, protective of what Allah has entrusted them with." [4:34]

The word 'qawwam' means a protector or maintainer – one who upholds the responsibility of another. Imam Al-Qurtubi explains that it describes a functional leadership capacity because of the duty a man has to financially support his wife. He says in his tafsir of the Quran:

"Qawwam means one who stands over the affairs of another, guiding and correcting. It implies protection, support, and leadership, not tyranny or abuse." In Islam, marriage is a mutual contract with rights and duties for both spouses. The Prophet ﷺ advised both men and women about their responsibilities:

"Each of you is a shepherd, and each of you is responsible for his flock... A man is a shepherd over the people of his house, and a woman is a shepherd over the house of her husband and his children..." [Sahih Al-Bukhari]

Discussion Point:

What are the qualities of a shepherd?
How does that apply to a marital relationship?





While everyone's soul carries equal weight in the sight of Allah regardless of their gender, their earthly responsibilities are laid out in a more equitable fashion rather than a strictly equal one.

For example, women have a 28-day hormonal cycle and give birth to children, and as a result, they are not obligated to financially provide for their families. Whereas men have a 24-hour hormonal cycle and do not have the bodies to carry a baby. Therefore, Allah has made it incumbent upon them to financially maintain their families, barring any extenuating circumstances.

Where **equality** means everything is 1 to 1, so that each individual gets the exact same task and treatment,

Men & Women: $50 + 50 = 100\%$

Equity means that men and women are tasked and treated in a way that is fair to them, given their particular circumstances.

Women: $60 + 40 = 100\%$

Men: $75 + 25 = 100\%$

Challenge: Do a deep dive into these concepts by perusing Dr. Jamal Badawi's book *Gender Equity in Islam*.

Mutual Love and Compassion

The relationship between a husband and wife is framed as one of tranquility, love, and mercy.

وَمِنْ آيَاتِهِ أَنْ خَلَقَ لَكُمْ مِنْ أَنْفُسِكُمْ أَزْوَاجًا لِتَسْكُنُوا إِلَيْهَا وَجَعَلَ بَيْنَكُمْ مَوَدَّةً وَرَحْمَةً إِنَّ فِي ذَلِكَ لَآيَاتٍ لِقَوْمٍ يَعْقِلُونَ

"And among His signs is that He created for you from yourselves mates that you may find tranquility in them; and He placed between you affection and mercy..." Marriage is viewed as a partnership built on emotional and spiritual connection, comfort, and protection.

هُنَّ لِبَاسٍ لَكُمْ وَأَنْتُمْ لِبَاسٍ لِهِنَّ

"Your spouses are a garment for you as you are for them."

Discussion Point:

What are the qualities of a garment? How does that apply to a marital relationship?

Reflect on the fact that the first relationship between a man and a woman was that of husband and wife.



1. Shared Responsibility & Protection in Adversity

The Battle of Uhud Nusaybah bint Ka'b & the Male Companions

Nusaybah bint Ka'b al-Mziniyah (Umm Umarah) fought alongside the Prophet ﷺ during the Battle of Uhud. When many fled, she defended him with a sword and shield, sustaining serious injuries. The Prophet ﷺ praised Nusaybah and acknowledged her bravery alongside the male companions.



2. Consultation

Umm Salamah and The Prophet

During the Treaty of Hudaibiyyah, many male companions were devastated when they couldn't perform Umrah due to the terms of the peace treaty that was negotiated with the Quraysh. When they refused to perform their ritual sacrifice, the Prophet ﷺ consulted his wife Umm Salamah for advice.

She suggested he quietly lead by example by performing the sacrifice himself first. Her advice worked, causing others to follow suit and then return with him to Madinah. This incident shows that the Prophet ﷺ equally valued the opinions of both the men *and* women around him.

3. Intellectual Collaboration Between Genders

Education in the Mosque: Men and Women Together

The Prophet ﷺ taught both men and women in the masjid, sometimes together and sometimes in separate sessions.

Women, like Aisha bint Abi Bakr, later became teachers of male scholars, including Urwah ibn al-Zubayr, al-Qasim ibn Muhammad, and others.

Aisha narrated over 2,000 hadiths, many related to fiqh and family life. Male companions sought her knowledge and rulings without hesitation.

One incident during the caliphate of Umar ibn Al-Khattab clearly illustrates the intellectual collaborations between women and men. According to an account by Ibn Kathir, Umar was speaking out against the trend of demanding very high mahrs, and so he proclaimed that brides should not ask for more than 400 dirhams. To this, a woman in the congregation objected, citing the following ayah:



وَإِنْ أَرَدْتُمْ أَسْتَبْدَالَ زَوْجٍ مَكَانَ زَوْجٍ وَءَاتَيْتُمْ إِحْدَهُنَّ قِنْطَارًا فَلَا تَأْخُذُوا مِنْهُ شَيْئًا

"And if you have given one of them a heap of gold (qintār) as a mahr, do not take back anything from it..." [4:20]

She made the point that if Allah had not set an upper limit for mahr, a married woman's right, then Umar could not either. The Khalifa Umar ibn Al-Khattab did not rebuke her, but humbly accepted her correction, saying, "The woman is right and Umar is wrong." This also demonstrates how openly women were allowed to speak in the masjid.

4. Leadership Roles in Public Life

The Madina Marketplace and Al-Shifa bint Abdullah

Al-Shifa bint Abdullah was a literate woman and skilled administrator. Under Umar ibn al-Khattab, she was appointed to supervise the marketplace of Madina, working with male merchants and enforcing Islamic ethics.

5. Joint Effort in Community Welfare and Charity

The Charity of the Two Zaynabs

Both male and female companions were active in relief efforts, such as feeding the poor, freeing slaves, and supporting widows and orphans.

We are familiar with the generosity of Zayd ibn Harithah, Umar ibn Al-Khattab, Uthman ibn Affan, and Abd al-Rahman ibn Awf. However, women like Zaynab bint Abu Muawaiyah, the wife of Abdullah ibn Masud, and Zaynab bint Jahsh, the wife of the Prophet ﷺ, were also well-known for their sadaqah and helped distribute charity.

The Takeaway

These examples demonstrate that men and women at the time of the Prophet ﷺ worked together, whether in battle, teaching, advising, governance, charity, or other ventures. They were not enemies but allies who worked together with mutual respect, the appropriate Islamic boundaries, and a shared sense of duty.





The Assumption Wall

1

Topic: “What We Assume About the Opposite Gender in Islam”

OBJECTIVE

To help Muslim men and women identify, reflect on, and challenge assumptions they hold about each other—religiously, culturally, or socially—and replace them with authentic understanding based on Islam and lived experience.

OVERVIEW

Type: Reflection + Dialogue + Visual Display

Duration: 60–90 minutes **Setting:** In-person or virtual (adaptable for Zoom, Miro, Jamboard)

Size: 10–30 participants

Facilitators: 1–2 trained moderators

INSTRUCTIONS

1. Introduction (10 min)

Facilitator opens with a brief reflection: “We all carry assumptions—many inherited from culture, media, or limited interaction. Islam teaches us to verify, listen, and think well of others (ḥusn al-ẓann).”

Share verses/hadith that caution against suspicion and unfair generalizations, e.g.:

“O you who believe, avoid much suspicion. Indeed, some suspicion is sin.”
[Quran 49:12]

2. Write Assumptions (15–20 min)





Each participant receives sticky notes or digital input access.

Prompt:

“Write down 1–3 assumptions you’ve heard or held about the opposite gender within your Muslim community.”

Examples people might write:

- “Muslim men don’t care about women’s emotional needs.”
- “Muslim women demand too much mahr.”
- “Men are controlling.”
- “Women nag too much.”

Participants post their notes on a shared “Assumption Wall” (physically on a board or digitally on Jamboard/Miro).

No names; keep it anonymous and safe.

3. Group Categorization & Discussion (20–25 min)

Facilitator reads out some notes and invites the group to:

- Group similar assumptions
- Encourage gentle challenge, not debate
- Discuss:
 - “Where might this come from—Islam or culture?”
 - “Is this assumption always true?”
 - “What’s missing in this view?”
 - “How can we challenge or reframe this with compassion?”

4. Reframe the Narrative (15 min) Each person selects 1–2 assumptions and writes a corrective statement on a new note or digital card:

“Instead of assuming _____, I now realize that _____.”



- ✗ “Muslim men don’t want to talk about emotions.”
- ✓ “Many Muslim men struggle to express emotions because they were taught not to – but some deeply care and want to be understood.”

Add these to a “Truth Wall” or “Understanding Wall.”

5. Faith Reflection & Du’a (10 min)

Facilitator ends with a reminder: “Assumptions divide hearts. Allah calls us to listen, reflect, and walk with empathy.”

Make du’a for:

- Clearer understanding
- Unity in the ummah
- Blessings for both genders to support one another in faith





Building Together: Shared Values Workshop

2

OBJECTIVE

To help Muslim men and women explore shared Islamic values and goals through collaborative problem-solving, fostering mutual respect and understanding.

OVERVIEW

Type: Group challenge + discussion Duration: 90–120 minutes Setting: In-person or virtual breakout rooms Group Size: 12–24 (balanced gender participation) Facilitators: 1–2 moderators to guide and observe group dynamics.

INSTRUCTIONS:

1. Icebreaker: “What We Value” (15 min)

In mixed small groups (3–5 people), participants answer:

“What value from Islam do you think we need more of in our community?”

Examples: mercy, honesty, modesty, justice, cooperation, trust, etc.

Each group makes a short list of 5 shared values and chooses one to highlight.

2. Team Challenge: “Design a Muslim Community Space” (30–40 min)

Each small team is tasked with co-designing an ideal Muslim community space that serves both men and women, while:





- Upholding Islamic values
- Meeting real community needs (e.g. youth, elderly, mental health, prayer, learning)

Each team must:

- Agree on shared values
- Decide how space is divided/shared
- Choose who teaches, who leads, who supports
- Consider both genders' concerns, contributions, and comfort

This naturally leads to respectful negotiation, compromise, and mutual recognition of each other's perspectives.

3. Presentation + Feedback (20–30 min)

Each group presents their design and explains:

- How they honored both genders
- What values guided their decisions
- What challenges they faced in reaching agreement

Facilitator then opens a short feedback session:

- What was surprising?
- What felt difficult?
- What felt hopeful?
- What did you learn about how the opposite gender thinks?
- What assumptions did you let go of?

4. Faith Anchoring + Takeaways (10–15 min)

Facilitator shares relevant hadith or Quranic reminders:

“The best of you are those who are best to their families...”

“The believers, men and women, support one another in what is right...”
(Qur'an 9:71)



Behind the Curtain: Anonymous Q&A

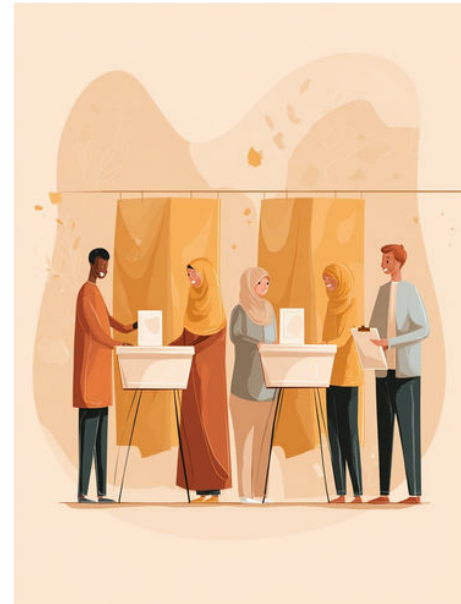
3

OBJECTIVE

To allow Muslim men and women to ask honest, sensitive, or difficult questions of each other anonymously—encouraging empathy, clarity, and the breaking down of assumptions or stereotypes.

OVERVIEW

Type: Anonymous dialogue + group discussion
 Duration: 60–90 minutes Setting: In-person or online
 Group Size: 10–30 people (balanced gender participation)
 Facilitators: 1–2 neutral moderators (trusted and knowledgeable in Islamic ethics and gender sensitivity)



INSTRUCTIONS:

1. Setup for Anonymity (5–10 min)

In person: Provide index cards, pens, and separate collection boxes for men and women.

Online: Use anonymous tools like Slido, Google Forms, or Mentimeter.

Participants are told:

“This is your chance to ask honest, respectful questions you’ve always wanted to ask the opposite gender—but anonymously.”

No names. No judgment. Just curiosity and sincere intent.



2. Question Submission (10–15 min)

Each participant writes 1–2 anonymous questions they would like to ask members of the opposite gender.

Examples:

- “Why do some Muslim men avoid emotional conversations?”
- “Why do some Muslim women feel unheard in religious spaces?”
- “How can we support each other better as siblings in faith?”
- Cards are mixed and sorted by the facilitator.

3. Live Response Round (30–40 min)

Facilitator reads selected anonymous questions aloud to a mixed-gender panel or to the full group.

Men answer questions posed by women.

Women answer questions posed by men.

Participants respond with honesty and humility, not defensiveness.

Ground rules:

- No interrupting
- No personal attacks
- Islamic adab must guide all responses

4. Debrief Discussion (15–20 min)

After several rounds, open the floor:

- What surprised you?
- Did your perspective shift?
- What questions do you wish had been asked?
- What is one thing you can do differently now?



5. Faith Reflection & Dua (5–10 min)

Close with a reminder of mutual accountability and brotherhood/sisterhood:

“Do not ridicule one another... perhaps they are better than you.”

(Quran 49:11)

“The believers are like a building, each part strengthening the other.” (Hadith)

Offer a collective du'a for mutual respect, wisdom, and compassion.



Thinking Critically About Social Media Revive Pack

masnational.org/smrevive

Social Media and the Gender Ideology Divide

<https://spia.princeton.edu/events/social-media-and-gender-ideology-divide>

Likes and Shares Teach People to Express More Outrage Online

<https://news.yale.edu/2021/08/13/likes-and-shares-teach-people-express-more-outrage-online>

Gender Role in Islam: Equity or Equality?

<https://www.whyislam.org/roles/>

Men vs. Women in Islam by Ammar AlShukry

<https://www.youtube.com/shorts/xpTINcH-OWs>

A Noble Husband & Wife: Ibrahim & Sara

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xMKP21BTWic>

"Men Need Respect, Women Need Love" by Yasmin Mogahid

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8FDDGe69pWc>

Social Media & Gender Wars

<https://societytoday.org/social-media-and-gender-wars-andrew-tate-and-the-manosphere-influence-on-young-men/>

Nusaybah bint Ka'b

<https://yaqeeninstitute.org/watch/series/nusaybah-bint-kaab-ra-the-woman-warrior-the-firsts>

Umm Salamah

<https://yaqeeninstitute.org/watch/series/umm-salama-ra-a-legacy-of-wisdom-part-2>

Aisha bint Abu Bakr

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zFzO5vOavEU>

Zaynab bint Abu Muawiyah

<https://www.arabnews.com/node/385802>

Zaynab bint Jahsh

<https://yaqeeninstitute.org/watch/series/zaynab-bint-jahsh-ra-the-longest-arm-the-fists>