

August 16, 2021

Assalamu Alaykum Dear Afghan Community,

May Allah bring ease to your heart during this difficult time.

There is no easy way to describe the heaviness of our hearts during this time. The current events in Afghanistan leave many of our community members feeling fearful for their families and helpless from current news that threatens their homeland. Many of us have been sitting in front of our screens in disbelief at recent events. As we try to push through our busy work schedules, we have to acknowledge the feelings of fear, helplessness, loss of security, extreme sadness, and anger that arise.

MAS-SSF wants to encourage you to continue connecting with your community. During times of pain and tragedy, we sometimes isolate ourselves to try to feel safe and secure. Studies show that talking about a traumatic event with someone you trust (i.e., a family member, friend, or confidential peer specialist) can increase wellness and overall health during these times when our physical and mental health is most vulnerable. Maintaining a sense of community in any way we can keep us connected and grounded to what we can control. Our hope is maintained in the community that we have available to us and the prayers we make for a better future.

As we grieve our community overseas, we need to ensure that we take care of our own health and strength so that we can continue to support each other. Our community matters, each and every one of us matters. You matter. We cannot emphasize this enough.

It is normal to feel helpless around seeking support during a time when you see others suffering. Seeking support and talking about the effects of this tragedy is not selfish, it makes our community stronger. When one person suffers in silence, our community suffers. We are here to provide you support through every step of grief, sadness, frustration, and anger as we continue to wait for updates.

Although we may not be able to change the situations around us, MAS-SSF is here to support you in any way you need. You are not alone. You are seen. Please do not hesitate to reach out to us for support. Please view the attachment below for a list of our services available. We are working very hard to develop upcoming live, online events and resources to provide resources to the community during this time. Please stay tuned for more information on upcoming events and subscribe to our email list for updates.

“...With hardship comes ease. With hardship comes ease. When your work is done, turn to devotion. And to your Lord turn for everything...” ~Surah 94 (The Soothing): 5-8.

With heartfelt sympathy to my community of Afghans. May Allah give our families and friends sabr in this difficult time.

Gulshan Yusufzai
Executive Director

SUPPORT AND SERVICES AVAILABLE IN 5 LANGUAGES

(English, Dari/Farsi, Pashto, Arabic, and Urdu)

1. Support Services in-person, on the phone, and over the internet

- a. A completely confidential and HIPAA compliant counseling service that gives you the ability to interact with a dedicated peer specialist from virtually anywhere.
- b. Call **916 486 – 8626**, Monday to Friday, 9am – 5pm
- c. Email us at counseling@mas-ssf.org

2. Amala Youth Hopeline

- a. Amala Hopeline aims to provide an accessible, confidential, culturally competent means of peer counseling and resource referral for American Muslim Youth.
- b. **855 – 95 – Amala**, Monday, Wednesday, Friday, Saturday, and Sunday, 6pm – 10pm
- c. Texting Available for youth: 855 – 95 – Amala on Wednesdays and Fridays, 6pm – 10pm

3. Available on MAS-SSF YouTube Channel

- a. How to cope with ongoing stress and examples of self-care strategies
 - i. Check the **Pashto** Version here - https://youtu.be/aYfmIOGzh_s
 - ii. Check the **Dari** Version here - <https://youtu.be/mTCWfdzCDsU>
- b. How to cope with grief
 - i. Check the **Pashto** Version here - <https://youtu.be/VzYIWQSI9Jo>

4. For all other support needed, please reach out to MAS-SSF

- a. Call **916 486 – 8626**, Monday to Friday, 9am – 5pm
- b. Email us at info@mas-ssf.org