

HOW TO BE

INCLUSIVE TO YOUR MUSLIM FRIENDS AND COLLEAGUES THIS RAMADAN:

Ramadan is a special and sacred month for Muslims. Ramadan is the 9th Month in the Islamic Lunar Calendar. Each day during this month, Muslims fast from sunrise to sunset abstaining from drinking (yes, even water) and eating. Ramadan is a month of spiritual recharge; Muslims spend their time focusing on their spirituality and connection with God. During this month, Muslims are also encouraged to use this time to build positive habits, improve their character, and give back to their community.

Typically, Muslims would wake up before sunrise to eat their “breakfast” and perform the first prayer of the day. At sunset, they break their fast (usually with dates), pray the sunset prayer (4th prayer of the day), and then have their Iftar (post-fasting meal). Many Muslims consider Ramadan to be their favourite month because it is a time to regain their spiritual energy, connect with the community, and re-visit all their yearly goals. In Muslim-majority countries, the work culture shifts during Ramadan to be more mindful of the different goals of Muslims during this month. However, in non-Muslim majority countries, Muslims have been expected to work as usual which can make it difficult for them to reap all the benefits of Ramadan.

Here are some tips and resources for being more considerate and inclusive to your Muslim employees and colleagues during the month of Ramadan. It's important to be mindful of changes to their circadian rhythm and the fact that Muslims want to spend more time focusing on their spirituality during this month.

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1. Don't make comments about how hard you think fasting is.

Instead, if you would like to engage in conversations about Ramadan with them, wish your Muslim colleagues/friends/employees Happy Ramadan and ask them what their Ramadan goals are.

2. If you see your Muslim colleague eating during this month, refrain from asking them why they are not fasting.

Not all Muslims fast each year or throughout the entire month. There are conditions that permit some Muslims not to fast. Muslim women do not fast when they are on their period, are pregnant or breastfeeding. Muslims who are sick, have health conditions, or who are older do not typically fast. If fasting puts anyone at a health risk (due to health conditions, age, etc.), they are permitted not to.

3. Ask your Muslim colleagues/employees how you can help them adjust to their Ramadan-friendly schedule.

Many Muslims would prefer starting later in the day and ending earlier (for example, a 10am-4pm schedule). However, some Muslims would have a different preferred schedule so it's important to have a specific conversation with your colleague/employee to better tailor to their needs

4. You can drink and eat in front of your Muslim colleagues and you do not need to pity them for not being able to drink or eat with you during the month.

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5. If you don't already, **try to create a "reflective" space** that the Muslims in your workplace can **use to complete their prayers** throughout the day.
6. Instead of Happy Hour, **organize an "Iftar (fast breaking meal) Hour"** (virtually during COVID).
7. **Be flexible with deadlines** and make sure to create an open and honest space for communication with your Muslim colleagues/employees so they can let you know whether they need to push a deadline.
8. **Allow your Muslim employees/colleagues some flexibility when booking Eid off.** Ideally, they should take 3 days off since Eid is traditionally 3 days.
9. If you are Muslim, **be open with your employer about the fact that your goals may be slightly different this month** and you want to focus on your spirituality. Tell your employer and colleagues the times you will be offline.