

AMINA and the You Can Change This project

Amina strive to ensure that Muslim women from all backgrounds are given the advice and support they need to enable them to live better and safer lives, free from discrimination and abuse.

The violence against women project has three main priorities:

1. To improve support/services available to Muslim women and families experiencing violence against women
2. To increase knowledge and understanding about violence against women
3. Improve mechanisms for women, children and young people to engage with issues around violence against women

To 'mainstream' the needs of Muslim women experiencing violence Amina deliver training which explores violence against women including; domestic abuse, forced marriage, sexual violence, 'honour' based violence and FGM. We also refer to what Islam says about violence against women and establish a clear difference between the religion and the culture that has been fostered by some (Islam does not condone, and is against all forms of violence against women). We also create a setting where participants can explore their stereotypes/misconceptions about Muslim women/Islam; particularly in relation to violence against women.

To increase knowledge and understanding about violence against women has been to launch a national campaign, You Can Change This (www.changethis.org.uk) I think this campaign is a really good example of how to engage a community, particularly a faith community, to speak about violence against women. The aims of the You Can Change This campaign are three-fold. Firstly, this subject is not often discussed openly in the communities we work with – we want to break this silence and really engage the community in calling for change. Secondly we want to challenge damaging attitudes which condone or ignore violence against women and consequently shame women experiencing abuse into silence. And thirdly we want to disprove stereotypes and misrepresentations of Islam which represent the religion as one which condones violence against women.

The two films we have produced feature prominent Muslims speaking about violence against women. Amina believe that these films have the potential to break down barriers both within Muslim communities and in the wider community of Scotland. On a community level because we are showing role models, from within the communities, saying we need change and it's important we talk about these issues. And, in the wider Scottish Community as we are breaking down stereotypes of Islam and Muslims.

Please see links below for films:

<http://youtu.be/gWDqjQYm8pg>

<http://youtu.be/Os1i7fWTalk>