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HUSSEIN MOHAMED KHALIL MOUSTAFA
MUHAMMAD ZESHAN RAZA • GHULAM HUSSAIN
ELMI ABDUKADIR • ASHRAF EL-MOURSY RAGHEB
MOHSEN MOHAMMED AL HARBI • ASHRAF ALI
OSAMA ADNAN YOUSSEF ABU KWAIK
MOHAMMAD OMAR FARUK • MUSE NUR AWALE
LINDA ARMSTRONG • HAROON MAHMOOD
OZAIR KADIR • MUHAMMAD ABDUS SAMAD
MUHAMMAD HAZIQ MOHD-TARMIZI

Newtown News, Haratua / May 2019

Brought to you by the Newtown Community & Cultural Centre

Kia ora, Newtown!

Content warning: This edition centres around the March 15th mosque killings.
Please take care of yourself and your friends, whānau and Muslim communities.

This guide was written & illustrated by Maeril | @itsmaeril - Translated in English for The Middle Eastern Feminist



Kia ora, a-salaam a'laikum,

I'm writing this a month and a day after the massacres happened in Christchurch. Honestly, it's still hard to think of the right words, or indeed any words. It's also hard to type them - I spent last night in the after hours clinic getting my finger bandaged up, having made the mistake of trying to chop vegetables while crying, listening to the testimonies of Muslim people who were in the mosques. My aroha and solidarity goes out to them. So, I'm going to let the cover with all the names of those who died speak for itself, and include this comic which gives us some idea of what we can do if witnessing an Islamophobic attack (or any other kind of bigoted attack).

We all need to take action to keep our diverse community safe. I'm pretty conflict-averse, but I'm setting myself the challenge of intervening if I see or hear racism or harassment. What are you going to do to make sure the March 15th atrocity never happens again?

Ngā mihi mahana,
Ellie - ellie@newtowncommunity.org.nz

*Cover art by E Cullen, design by Sara Marandi, sub-editing by Mhairi McGregor.
Thanks also for the ongoing support of our amazing local businesses!
Please support them back!*



Baobab Cafe

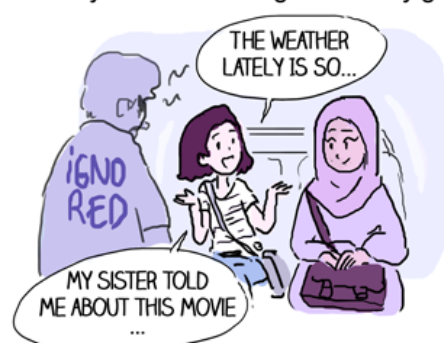


THE
RAMEN
SHOP

- 1 Engage conversation.**
Go to them, sit beside them and say hello.
Try to appear calm, collected and welcoming.
IGNORE THE ATTACKER.



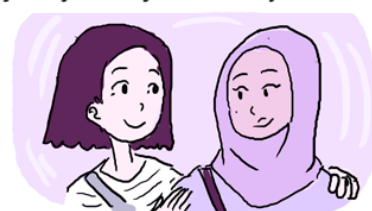
- 2 Pick a random subject and start discussing it.**
It can be anything: a movie you liked, the weather, saying you like something they wear and asking where they got it...



- 3 Keep building the safe space.**
Keep eye contact with them and don't acknowledge the attacker's presence : the absence of response from you two will push them to leave the area shortly.



- 4 Continue the conversation until the attacker leaves & escort them to a safe place if necessary.**
Bring them to a neutral area where they can recollect themselves; respect their wishes if they tell you they're ok and just want to go.



Notorious NEWtowner

Ibrahim Omer is both a proud Muslim and a proud Newtowner. Ibrahim and Ellie had a kōrero jammed in between Ibrahim's work appointments...

Ibrahim arrived in Aotearoa in 2008 as a refugee: "I had escaped Eritrea and was in Sudan, where I was detained for five months. They'd decided to deport me. I wouldn't be alive now if they had." Thankfully, the UN intervened to find Ibrahim a safe new home, which happened to be Aotearoa: "I didn't know much about New Zealand, but my first question was, 'Is it safe?' The answer was, 'One of the safest places in the world!' I immediately knew it was the place for me. Ever since I've been a proud Wellingtonian."

We are so lucky that Ibrahim joined us here. He has thrown himself head first into the Aotearoa community. He is now a union organiser for E Tū Union, a Living Wage activist, on the board for ChangeMakers (a refugee-background community support NGO) and an active Newtown community member - a very busy human! "I feel good coming home from work at 9 or 10pm, knowing I've made a difference in someone's life. I sleep well", he tells me.



Although Wellington is very much home ("I can't see myself living anywhere else!"), a few weeks before the Christchurch mosque attack, Ibrahim found himself questioning how welcome he really was. He did an interview about how refugee-background communities weren't consulted about where newly-arriving refugees should be homed - and the backlash was intense: "I got thousands of hateful, racist comments, calling me all sorts of disgusting names, telling me to go back to where I came from. I love this country, but after I read all of that, I questioned whether I had a place here."

Weeks later, when the Christchurch terror attack happened, Ibrahim was shaken further: "I was lost. We lost 50 precious lives and I wondered how New Zealand would react. Would we be divided? But all the messages of support lifted my spirits. March 15th has changed me and it's changed Aotearoa - but the legacy can still be positive. The country has come together and grieved with the Muslim community. Now we are all determined to fight racism and make sure we change for the better. Since the attack we've seen unity, solidarity and aroha - and we want to keep it that way. Tangata whenua responses have been some of the most supportive. I'm a beginner but I really want to learn more about Māori values."

Having personal experience, Ibrahim believes that racism is rooted in ignorance. His advice for Newtowners to be actively anti-racist is: "Learn. Talk to people. Make friends with us! Have more community dinners. Learn about the Treaty. Support businesses run by former refugees and migrants. Say hello and make sure people feel safe. Volunteer with refugee support organisations". He also says Newtown is the perfect place for all of this to happen: "I love Newtown for the sense of community and the caring people who live here. I couldn't ask for a better place to live. I want to do what I can to make it even better."

Ibrahim leaves me with a strong feeling of responsibility, one which I'm glad to bear with him. I hope you will too: **"Every Newtowner, and every Kiwi, has a role to play in making this land safe, inclusive and diverse. Kia kaha."**

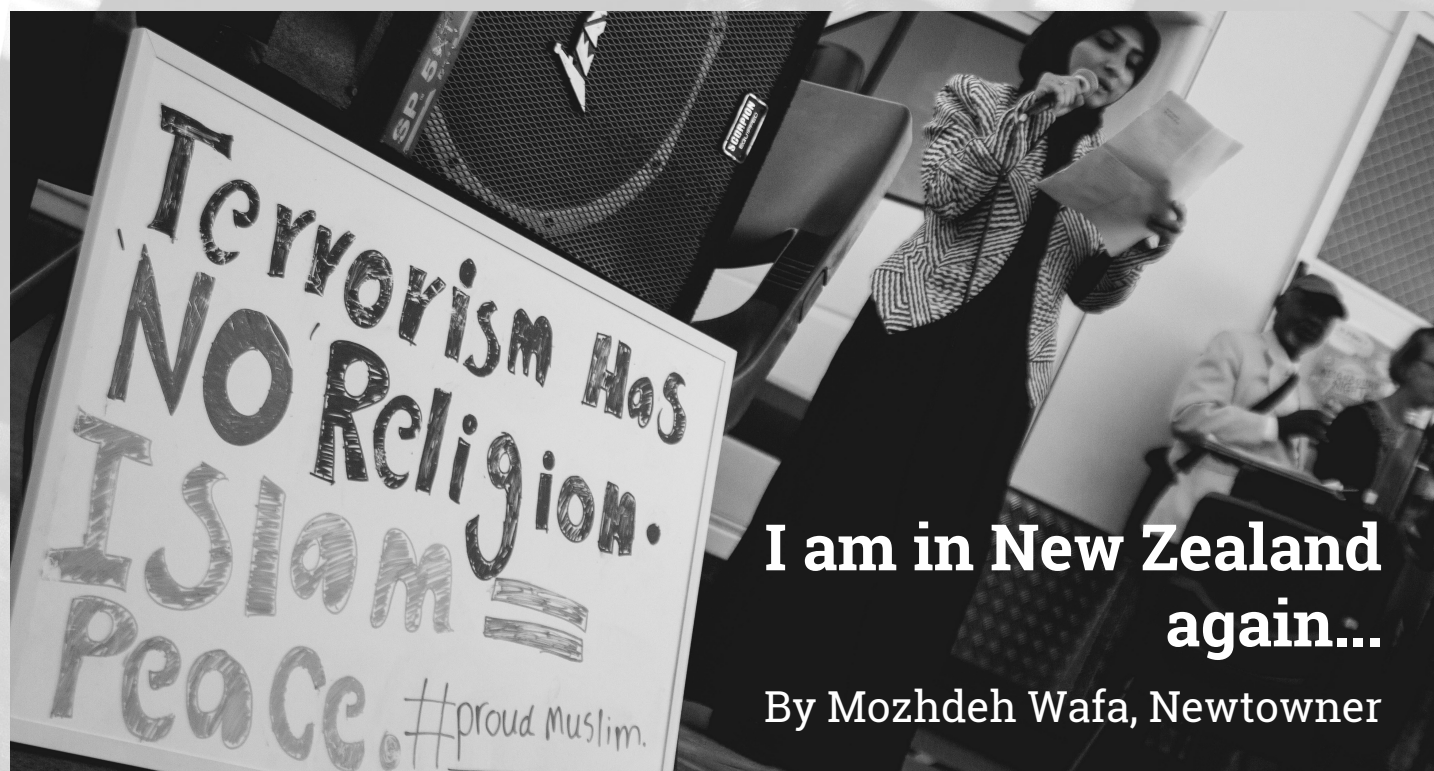
I think that March 15th opened everyone's eyes to the racism that has existed in New Zealand for a long time. This includes the name of the Crusaders rugby team and other disgusting racist company names down in Christchurch. You don't always pay attention to details like that until something makes you see it.

I had experienced some racism and Islamophobia before this. When I first came to New Zealand, I didn't have enough English to understand what was happening - but since then, I can remember incidents where people were aggressive or inappropriate towards me, my friends and family. As a woman wearing a headscarf, people have always looked at me as I walked down the street. I did feel uncomfortable, but not all the time.

After the incident, I feel like my trust in New Zealand has been shaken. Sadly, people who have these kind of racist views could be anywhere. They could be my neighbours. A group of kids and other women wearing headscarves and I were walking home through Newtown maybe a week after the attack. We'd been at a women's support group to deal with what happened. A man with a dog said, "Bite them!" to his dog and pushed it at us. I was scared for my daughter.

The biggest thing I think you can do to support Muslim communities is to step in if you see a racist incident happening. Say, "That's not okay" to the person who is using racist or Islamophobic language and stand with the person who's experiencing it. Give help or advice to them. Another thing you can do is get to know the people in the Muslim community before judging them. People think that we are all the same, but just like every community, everyone in it is different.

I already see people who are supporting us, opening their arms and saying, "You are not a stranger in New Zealand". People who have smiled at me in the street instead of staring. I went to the mosque on the day of the human chain of protection - it was so beautiful. People who don't share my religion were standing outside with linked arms on this really hot day, to make sure we were safe. I said thank you to every person I saw outside, and I said to myself, "Thank God. I am in New Zealand again".



**I am in New Zealand
again...**

By Mozhdeh Wafa, Newtowner

To my white friends and loved ones

A letter from Kassie Hartendorp (Ngāti Raukawa) - originally written on 28th March 2019, as a personal Facebook post.

We have been given a horrific insight into the absolute hate, racism and Islamophobia that exists in the world. This might be hard to stomach because we see New Zealand as a 'safe' country at the bottom of the world, free from all the global conflicts that 'other' countries suffer from.

For many people in our country, this safety has not always been a given. Muslims have feared such attacks for years, and were not listened to when they raised their concerns. Many people of colour sit with the fear that they might be targeted, attacked or discriminated against because of their skin colour every day. The idea of us being 'safe' is a myth - because a country founded on white supremacy means that only some of us can experience that safety.

For most people of colour I know, this attack has been no surprise. We are so drenched in racism that those who experience it knew the time would come where violent hate would be targeted at communities of colour (again). Love, support and solidarity with Muslim communities is absolutely necessary at this time. But let us not try to reassure ourselves that we are 'good' people as a way of ignoring the massive racism that goes on in this country every day.

You might not even know that you have been racist, because it is a blind spot. I've said and done racist things in the past, because I did not know anything different. It is uncomfortable to realise you have hurt people through your own ignorance. You have a few options right now:

You can ignore what has happened to our Muslim communities and go about your daily life. You can send flowers to your local mosque, attend a vigil and then go about your daily life. OR you can send flowers, attend the vigil AND decide that you do not want to be a part of the racism that seethes within our country any longer.

That means confronting the racism within us, working to illuminate our blind spots, addressing racism within our friends, families and communities, challenging racism in our big systems and never giving up until we have a world that is safe for everyone. It does not always need to be grand statements like this, but it can be the quiet work behind the scenes that undoes white supremacy.

I do not say this because I think I am better at this than anyone else. I say this because I predict that we will soon be asked to forget about the racism and Islamophobia that underpinned these attacks - and to call it something else. We may be asked to think of acts like this as unstoppable and unpreventable and to prioritise reassuring ourselves that we are not bad people in New Zealand. So that some of us may return to that illusion of safety and comfort that has not existed for communities of colour in this country since 1840. There is still work to be done.

Please remain vigilant - it might not matter for your family, but it does for someone else's. Moe mai e ngā whānau mā, moe mai, moe mai rā.

My name is Rick and I am a Jewish resident of Newtown. I am so upset by the recent killing of my Muslim brothers and sisters. When I heard the horrible news, I went to our local halal butcher shop to check how they were. I stood there with them and cried. I'm sad that it took such a devastating event to bring me together with the local Muslim people and for that to also be true for the nation as well. I've been going to the Mosque in Kilbirnie each Friday, since that Friday, to stand there, greet and reassure every arriving worshipper with praise, handshakes and hugs. I feel their grief and fear. It's in my DNA. My parents miraculously survived the Holocaust. An attack on any group of people for what they look like or who they pray to, or for simply being who they are, is an attack on us all. Being Jewish is no different to being Muslim; too many of us have been persecuted for our beliefs, colour and commitment to our faith. Yet we are not defined by the suffering imposed on us. Please, let's all try to be kind to each other and celebrate our diversity.



Image by E Cullen - Goodnight Kiwi re-mix

Goodnight Kiwi: A tribute to Abdul Aziz

This re-mix of the classic 'Goodnight Kiwi' image was inspired by Abdul Aziz, who was in Linwood Mosque when the attack happened. He ran at the attacker, throwing an Eftpos machine at him. We need more Kiwis like Abdul Aziz with Eftpos machines and fewer 'alt-right'/fascists/white supremacists.

"I just threw the Eftpos machine [at him] ... I called him. I said, 'Look! I'm in the car park - come this way, come this way!' I just wanted to take his focus away from the mosque [so he would] come into the car park. Even if I got shot that's alright, as long as we could save some other lives." - Abdul Aziz, RNZ interview 17th March 2019.

It's time to talk about racism in New Zealand

My name is Gayaal Iddamalgoda. I am from a migrant background and I am a proud member of the Newtown community whānau. In the wake of the Christchurch mass shootings, I have seen an unprecedented outpouring of solidarity with our Muslim community, and this is a wonderful and hopeful thing. But the official line - that "this is not us" - conceals a guarded truth. That truth is that New Zealand has a problem with racism. It is a problem that started with the first acts of colonial violence against Māori and it is a problem that is woven into the institutional fabric of our nation. It is a problem that shapes our present, from the mass incarceration of our indigenous people, to the exploitation of migrant labour. And, like any problem, we must acknowledge it so we can face it. If you are Māori, Muslim, a migrant, or anyone who suffers from racism on a day to day basis, it is time to speak up and seek help. If you see racism in your family, community or workplace, it is time for you to take action. We live in a society plagued with racism. Sadly, "this is us". But it does not have to be. Let's change the narrative and say with one voice, "this is not what we want to be."



Newtown was so beautiful on the 21st March. Newtown School playground was packed with around 500 people - and people from all faiths and races stood together, less than a week after the attack that shook Aotearoa.

The Newtown Collective (a bunch of community organisations) got together with local Muslim Newtowners to plan this dinner. We had heard that Newtown women who wear hijab were afraid to leave the house and we knew that we needed to show our Muslim neighbours and friends that they are supported in their community.



There was a speech from MP Paul Eagle on behalf of the wider Newtown community and then speeches, songs and Quran readings from the Muslim community.

We had interpreters so that people who spoke different languages could understand and make connections. We shared hugs, tears, conversation, food and even laughs.



Clowns and face-painting meant fun for the kids, which put a smile on their parents' faces as well. It was a light moment in a dark time and we need to make more of these connections.

Thanks to everyone who helped make it happen - let's do it again!

Newtown Stands Together

Our community gathered after the 15th March attack, showing strength and solidarity...

Credit: All photos by Antonio Hernández

What's the Happs?

At Newtown Community & Cultural Centre - Corner Rintoul/Colombo Streets

Some mug has stolen our mugs!

Between 9am-4.30pm you can drop on in to our drop-in room for a warm, free cup of tea or coffee and chill, chatting to whoever is about. You'll need a mug to put that free coffee in though, and we're going through them like they are disposable! Does your cupboard runneth over? Is having too many mugs just not your cup of tea? We're accepting donations of mugs and cups and we need a huge teapot too - just drop them in!

Yin and Sound

Yin Yoga and Sound Healing are two ancestral forms of healing brought into one. By combining Yin Yoga practice with live music we aim to journey deep into a meditative state of presence. Friday 3 May at 6-8pm. Book by contacting jana.grossmannova@gmail.com

Quick Kai

Healthy heat & eat meals available at the community centre from our 'Quick Kai' freezer. Come and grab a frozen feed for only \$2. Freezer open Monday-Friday, 9am-4.30pm. Vegan available.

Soup Group - Free Soup Fridays

Building community one bowl of soup at a time! Come enjoy a free bowl of soup and some lively banter every Friday from 12-1pm here at the Centre. Vegan options available.

At Network Newtown, 9-11 Constable St.

Meditation: Your Journey to Happiness

What is really important in our lives - and what is not? In our challenging and dynamic modern world, meditation brings clarity, purpose, simplicity & calm. Learn this valuable life skill in a FREE 4-week introductory course, Mondays in May 6.30-8pm: www.wellingtonmeditation.org

Everybody's Clothes Swap: Part II

Time to replenish, refresh and revive your wardrobe? Don't want to contribute to total ecological collapse, but still need to keep warm? Bring any clothes you no longer love, and take away new threads on May 4, 11am-2pm. All genders, ages, shapes, sizes, and styles welcome! Entry by koha to ChangeMakers Resettlement Forum. For more details contact newtownclotheswap@gmail.com or check the Facebook event page: bit.ly/2vcLnI1

Body Strengthening

Start your Mondays right with this fun exercise class for all ages and stages! Sessions alternate weekly between Step Aerobics and Stretch/Pilates. \$2 per class. Mondays 9.30-10.30am.

Shivam Dance Academy (SDANZ)

Kathak and Bollywood dance training and fitness. SDANZ is for all ethnic backgrounds and age groups. With three different one hour sessions each Saturday from 1-4pm, you're sure to find something that suits your ability and style! Check out www.sdanz.co.nz for info and to book.

At Newtown Hall, 71 Daniell Street

Resoursonance: Musical Upcycling workshops with Liam Prince (of the Rubbish Trip)

Two hands-on workshops on upcycling/making musical instruments using everyday objects (from junk to natural materials) while being waste-conscious and resourceful in the process.

Saturday 11th May 2-4pm: With local musician and instrument inventor, Mikey Jamieson.

Saturday 26th May 2-4pm: Taonga pūoro (traditional Māori musical instruments) edition! With three local taonga pūoro practitioners, Ruby Hinepunui Solly, Sam Palmer and Ricky Prebble. Find these events at: www.facebook.com/TheRubbishTrip

Elsewhere in Newtown

Rainbow Circus: The Circus Hub, 11 Hutchison Rd, Newtown

Try something you didn't realise you were capable of! Circus allows us to celebrate our differences co-operatively; to move forward and explore new skills together, & discover what our bodies can do outside of gender, sexuality or presumptive spaces. This is fun, rainbow community-oriented fitness, Fridays at 7.30pm! Contact info@circus.org.nz