

Conference aims to ease Muslim social concerns

Calgary Herald

Published: Friday, November 30, 2007

A two-day conference is set for this weekend to help Calgary's growing Muslim community deal with major social concerns.

Workshops and lectures will focus on issues such as depression, anger management, generational gaps and addictions.

"We conducted a community survey to see the problems our people are facing," said Idrees Khan, chairwoman of the Muslim Families Network Society, the conference sponsor.

"Our community is no different from any other part of Calgary's population. We're facing the same big problems of family violence and substance abuse."

Khan said breaking down communication barriers between generations is often a big step to dealing with problems before they escalate into crises.

"Even when parents and teens are talking today, they're often not really talking, they're fighting," said Khan. "We have to help parents learn how to talk to their children about their problems and how to build their self-esteem."

Khan said a 'silent culture,' where many people are reluctant to talk about their personal problems, is an ongoing roadblock to harmony in some Muslim homes.

"What we want to do with this conference is to tell people it's OK to have these problems, that others have them too and here are some strategies to start addressing what is bothering you," Khan said.

The conference runs from 1 to 4 p.m. Saturday and 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. Sunday at the Westgate Community Centre, 4943 8th Ave. S.W.

Information and registration are available online at www.muslimfamiliesnetwork.com, via email at muslimfamiliesociety@yahoo.com or by calling 466-6367.