Building a Better Muslim Community WhatsApp Group

Use this workbook alongside the article "*Treating Community WhatsApp Groups As Institutions*" to transform your community WhatsApp group into an institution that is the cornerstone of your community. You can break up the discussions and meetings you have according to the outlined phases below.

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PHASE 1 — Understand

Worksheet 1: How Healthy Is Our Group? Community WhatsApp Group Assessment

Purpose: Get administrators and members to honestly evaluate the current state of the group before changing anything.

Rate your group from 1–5:

___I understand why this group exists.
___Most posts are relevant to the group's purpose.
___Important announcements are easy to find.
___The group isn't overwhelmed by unnecessary messages.
___Members know what is and isn't appropriate to post.
___Discussions remain respectful.
___Administrators consistently enforce the rules.
___Administrators are actively helping the group accomplish its goals.
___The group serves a diverse range of community members.
___The current group structure meets our community's needs.

Reflection questions:

- What is working well?

- What frustrates members?

- What kinds of posts create the most problems?

- What information do members wish they received more often?

- What information do members wish they received less often?

Overall Feedback:
☐ Keep things mostly as they are
☐ Make some changes
☐ Major restructuring is needed

Worksheet 2: Who Is Our Community?

Purpose: Get administrators and members to define the boundaries of the community the WhatsApp group includes.

Geographic area:

Who is eligible to join?

☐ Anyone in the local Muslim community
☐ Members of a particular masjid
☐ Residents of a particular neighborhood
☐ People within ___ miles
☐ Other: _____

What organizations count as "community"?

Check all that apply:

☐ Local masaajid
☐ Muslim nonprofits
☐ Islamic schools
☐ Muslim-owned businesses
☐ Muslim student organizations
☐ Muslim youth organizations
☐ Local government/community organizations
☐ Organizations serving Muslims but not specifically Muslim-run
☐ Other: _____

What types of events belong in this group?

☐ Islamic lectures/classes
☐ Masjid events
☐ Family events
☐ Youth events
☐ Women's events
☐ Men's events
☐ Community service opportunities
☐ Health/community resources
☐ Local events that Muslims may benefit from
☐ Fundraisers
☐ Small business announcements
☐ Other: _____

Our definition of "relevant"

Finish this sentence:

A post belongs in our community group when…

PHASE 2 — Define

Worksheet 3: Our Purpose & Goals

Our Community's Mission

This WhatsApp Community exists to…

_____

_____

_____

Choose our primary goals

Rank these from **1 = most important** to **5 = least important**:

___ Share community events
___ Help members find local resources
___ Help Muslims connect socially
___ Share important safety/community information
___ Allow members to ask questions
___ Facilitate mutual aid/help
___ Connect people with Islamic learning opportunities
___ Other: _____

Our 3–5 official goals & measuring their success

Goal	*What would success look like?*	*How will we measure it?*
1		
2		
3		
4		
5		

Worksheet 4: Design Our WhatsApp Community Structure

What should be in our Community?

Main Announcements Group:
What information belongs here?

Subgroup #1: _____
Purpose: _____

Subgroup #2: _____
Purpose: _____

Subgroup #3: _____
Purpose: _____

Subgroup #4: _____
Purpose: _____

Subgroup Test

Before creating a new subgroup, ask:

☐ Does this serve a clearly different need?
☐ Is there enough interest to justify a separate group?
☐ Will separating this conversation make the main group more useful?
☐ Is there a clear purpose for this subgroup?
☐ Does it have someone responsible for moderating it?

If we can't answer yes: *don't create another group.*

PHASE 3 — Establish

Worksheet 5: Posting Guidelines

Member Posting Checklist:

Before I post…	Yes	No	Not Sure
Is this relevant to the group's purpose?	☐	☐	☐
Is this information useful to a significant portion of this group?	☐	☐	☐
Does it belong in the group rather than a subgroup/private message?	☐	☐	☐
Is this something that needs to be shared now?	☐	☐	☐

What types of posts are allowed?

Types of Posts	*Allowed*	*Allowed w/ Limits*	*Not Allowed*
Announcements	☐	☐	☐
Events	☐	☐	☐
Questions	☐	☐	☐
Recommendations	☐	☐	☐
Requests for help	☐	☐	☐
Community resources	☐	☐	☐
Fundraisers	☐	☐	☐
Business advertisements	☐	☐	☐
Religious reminders	☐	☐	☐
Memes/humor	☐	☐	☐
Political content	☐	☐	☐
Lost & found	☐	☐	☐
Other:	☐	☐	☐

Conversation & Message Volume Rules

How many consecutive messages from one person are reasonable?

When should a conversation move to a private chat?

When should a discussion move to a subgroup?

Should we set a specific time or day for open discussions to occur regularly?

When should administrators intervene?

- ☐ When it becomes repetitive
- ☐ When it becomes argumentative
- ☐ When it becomes disrespectful
- ☐ When it becomes unrelated
- ☐ After ___ messages
- ☐ After ___ hours
- ☐ Other: _____

Our “Conversation Getting Out of Hand” Protocol

1. ---
2. ---
3. ---

Worksheet 6: Code of Conduct

In this community, we agree to:

Speak to others with:

Disagree by:

Avoid:

Never post:

Handle personal disputes by:

Protect people's privacy by:

What happens when someone violates the code?

First violation:

Repeated violation:

Serious violation:

Grounds for removal from group:

How can individuals file complaints about a post or person for administrative review?

Worksheet 7: Membership & Removal Protocol

Joining the Community

Who can add members?

What is the approval process?

Does the person need to agree to the rules?

☐ Yes ☐ No

What information, if any, should be provided to new members?

Leaving / Removing Members

Members may be removed when:

☐ They repeatedly violate rules
☐ They engage in harassment
☐ They post inappropriate content
☐ They spam the group
☐ They are no longer eligible for membership
☐ Other: _____

Who makes the decision?

Is there an appeal/review process?

PHASE 4 — Govern

Worksheet 8: Administrator Job Description

Community Administrator Position

Purpose of the role:

Required responsibilities

- ☐ Monitor posts
- ☐ Enforce group rules
- ☐ Add/remove members
- ☐ Respond to member questions
- ☐ Post announcements
- ☐ Organize community resources
- ☐ Maintain subgroup structure
- ☐ Conduct periodic reviews
- ☐ Encourage engagement
- ☐ Other: _____

Time commitment

Estimated time required:

- ☐ Less than 30 minutes/week
- ☐ 30–60 minutes/week
- ☐ 1–2 hours/week
- ☐ 2+ hours/week

Proactive responsibilities

What should administrators **actively do**, rather than merely moderate?

Weekly:

Monthly:

Every few months:

Annually:

Worksheet 9: Choosing & Evaluating Administrators

What qualities should an administrator have?

Rank the most important:

___ Fairness
___ Reliability
___ Patience
___ Good communication
___ Knowledge of the community
___ Ability to handle conflict
___ Availability
___ Technological competence
___ Good judgment
___ Willing to step down if appropriate
___Other: _____

Diversity & Representation

Do our administrators represent the people actually using this Community?

Consider:

☐ Age
☐ Gender
☐ Family situations
☐ Different community groups
☐ Different areas/neighborhoods
☐ Converts/newer Muslims
☐ Youth/young adults
☐ Other relevant groups

Administrator Selection

Who can nominate administrators?

Who selects administrators?

How long does an administrator serve?

Can administrators be removed? How?

How many administrators should there be?

Worksheet 10: Administrator Response Protocols and Templates

Having pre-determined responses drafted and ready to send in specific situations can make the administrators' job easy and consistently allow them to enforce the group rules.

Gentle Reminder

Needed when:

"Assalamu alaykum! Just a reminder that _____. To keep this group useful for everyone, please _____."

Removing a Post

Needed when:

"Assalamu alaykum. We removed your post because _____. Our group guidelines state _____."

Private Warning

Needed when:

"Assalamu alaykum. We wanted to reach out privately because _____. We appreciate your understanding and ask that going forward you _____."

Moving a Conversation

Needed when:

"This is a helpful discussion, but since _____, we're going to move it to _____."

Closing a Discussion

Needed when:

"We're going to close this discussion here because _____. Thank you to everyone who participated respectfully."

PHASE 5 — Implement & Revisit

Worksheet 11: Our Community WhatsApp Charter

Community Name: _____

Our Purpose:

Our Goals:

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

Who We Serve:

Our Posting Guidelines:

Our Member Code of Conduct:

Our Administrator Responsibilities:

Our Administrator Selection Process:

Our Review Schedule:

Date Adopted: _____

Next Review Date: _____

Approved By: _____

Worksheet 12: Member Feedback & Approval

Provide a draft of the charter for the group to approve and then communicate the voting and approval process.

Our voting process

Voting process:

Deadline: _____

How long will voting remain open?
_____ days

Minimum participation required:
_____ %

Percentage required for approval:
_____ %

What happens if a proposal fails?

Worksheet 13: Annual Community Group Review

Next annual review date: _____

Once a year, ask:

Are our goals still relevant?

☐ Yes ☐ Mostly ☐ No

Are our rules still working?

☐ Yes ☐ Mostly ☐ No

Are there rules that need to be added?

Are there rules that are unnecessary?

Are our administrators still appropriate for the role?

☐ Yes ☐ Some changes needed ☐ Major changes needed

Are any terms for administrators up? Would any administrators like to step down?

☐ Yes

How many administrators do we need to add? _____

Deadline for administrative changes: _____

Do we need new subgroups?

Should any subgroups be closed?

What does our community need now that it didn't need a year ago?
