LEADING WITH ADALAH
A Guide for Institutions

When a victim of sexual violence discloses to an institution, they are reaching out in hopes that the institution will be able to offer protection and justice. An institution that fails to respond in a victim-centric manner can contribute to further harming the victim and their family. In fact, some victims have shared about how often times, the institutional betrayal often generates greater trauma than the assault itself.

RESPONDING TO SEXUAL VIOLENCE DISCLOSURES
Throughout the Quran, God emphasizes the importance of creating communities, leading with integrity, and standing with the most vulnerable. In fact, the Quran says: O you who have believed, be persistently standing firm in justice, witnesses for Allah, even if it be against yourselves or parents and relatives. Whether one is rich or poor, Allah is more worthy of both. So follow not [personal] inclination, lest you not be just. And if you distort [your testimony] or refuse [to give it], then indeed Allah is ever, with what you do, Acquainted.

ADALAH PRINCIPLES
As more victims of sexual violence find the courage and strength to come forward, it is crucial for institutions and their leaders to lead with ADALAH, or justice, by addressing sexual violence in a victim-centric and timely manner, and working to establish a commitment to accountability. In addition to responding to disclosures with RAHMA and working toward prevention to fulfill an AMANAH, the ADALAH principles offer organizational leaders with steps that they can take to ensure that they are equipped to address sexual violence disclosures with a victim-centered, trauma-informed, transparent approach.

On the other side of this card is a framework you can follow using the acronym ADALAH, inspired by the Arabic word for justice, to help you build institutions committed to justice, accountability, and transparency.
Allocate Financial and Human Resources
When building budgets, organizations should set aside money and time for intervention, prevention, and survivor support. This includes funding that may be needed for any educational programs, staff trainings, fees for outside consultants and/or investigative partners or mediators. It also may include emergency funding that victims may access for legal and counseling fees.

Determine Victim-Centric Restorative Practices
Due to the significant impact sexual violence can have on the survivor, their family, and the community at large, relying on the expertise of outside, qualified trained professionals can make a huge difference. As such, bringing in the right professionals is an important step to ensuring that the situation is handled in a manner that is trauma-informed and just.

Assess Risk to Community & Create Action Plan
With help from trained professionals, organizational leaders can assess risk to the community and create an action plan. This includes determining consequences for the perpetrator who has committed the harm as well as community education and prevention efforts.

Learn About the Various Avenues to Justice
There are numerous options for justice and healing, from legal options to restorative justice and trauma-informed counseling. If the victim is a minor, leaders need to consider state-specific mandated reporting laws. Check HEART’s avenues of support flowchart to help you navigate this.

Accommodate Victim Needs
An important part of a victim’s journey to healing is restoring their notions of safety and accommodating their unique needs in a timely manner. This can mean ensuring they have access to appropriate referrals and services, or that they don’t have to interact with the person that has harmed them.

Honor Transparency and Accountability
Institutions can commit to future harm reduction and alert other communities or institutions that may hire an offender. This doesn’t mean that offenders shouldn’t be hired once removed from an institution, but rather gives the other institution an opportunity to consider what they need to do to prevent future harm.