

Date: 9/23/19

Gender: Female

Name: Nadia Malik

Country of Origin: United States

Year of Immigration:

Abstract: Nadia Malik, a Marquette University student in biomedical sciences discusses her experience as a Muslim American woman in today's society. She is second generation, with both other parents being immigrants from Pakistan at a young age. Having moved to multiple states throughout her life, she has gotten to experience multiple Muslim communities across America. Within the interview, we got onto topics that really put into perspective how Americans view Muslims. Through her experiences with racism and discrimination, she tells how she led a very normal life despite what people who hold prejudice may think. Within these experiences, she weaved in the great service work she has done, which is rooted in her firsthand beliefs; helping her brother with down syndrome. She hopes to continue her passion for helping people in her future career and has the full intention to leave her mark on the world.

Key Themes: overcoming stereotypes, disabilities, family differences, success, culture

Names of Nadia's family members have been omitted from the audio and will be written as initials.

Stella Bowman: Okay hi! I am Stella Bowman and I'm here with Nadia- Malik, is that how you say your last name? And I'm just gonna like start the interview by asking some general questions

about your background. So I already said your name, but what is your name, age, and level of education?

Nadia Malik: Yah so my name is Nadia Yasmeen Malik, but Malik is just kinda how I say it-- to just people, whenever I seem them, cause it's just easier to say. Um... I'm 21 and... I'm a biomedical sciences major!

SB: Awesome, and you go to school here at Marquette, correct?

NM: Mhmm.

SB: Okay, and um, why do you like biomedical sciences?

NM: Um so I am on the pre dent track and um the reason why I chose to do biomedical sciences as my major is cause it teaches you um, more of like a broader outlook on science and more science-related classes but in like a a medical viewpoint, where verses like biological sciences it's more just focusing on biology whereas in biomedical sciences your going to take things like nutrition.... um, molecular pathology. So diff-- it's just like a lot of different things revolving science, but healthcare. So for me, I was just really open to that.

SB: Awesome! Okay, um.... So when you were growing up where did you go to school K-12 you know? And like public schools? Did you go to a public school, community school, such as Islam school or a private/religious school?

NM: Yah. So my um... my experience growing up has been um... really interesting actually we moved about 6 or 7 times--

SB: Wow...

NM: I was born in Indiana... Fort Wayne, Indiana, and then my family moved to Ohio and my brother was born there and he's 2 years younger than me. And then we moved to Denver, Colorado.

SB: Oooh! Love Denver!

NM: 3 Years after that where my sister was born and shes 8 years younger than me, and then we moved to um... Ashburn, Virginia, um which is a part of Northern Virginia and then we moved-- so I was there for 3rd grade to 8th grade and then we moved to Michigan (???), where I was there for high school from freshman year to junior year and then we moved back to Virginia and were in Great Falls, Virginia, which is like 10-15 minutes from D.C.... without traffic. On a good day!

SB: (laughs)

NM: And I was there for senior year and I've been at Marquette for 3 and a ha- I guess, 3 years and a fourth since it's just the fall of senior year. So...

SB: Wow! That's amazing!

NM: Yah... definitely moved a lot! So, I've ha- I've been in a lot different schools, have a lot of different experiences just being in different states, so...

SB: Wow... were those all public schools? Or we-

NM: Yah!

SB: Specific? Okay.

NM: All those were public schools, but I know you mentioned Islamic schools--

SB: Mhmm

NM: so on side on weekends we have this thing called Sunday School which was, on Sundays (laughs) and it was basically just Islamic studies and learning just like our history revolving Islam, about our prophets and just typical like religious customs, um but also we learned how to read Arabic and read the Q'ran. Um.. but, but a lot of my Islamic studies actually came from my dad! Um, He kind of would spend Sundays cause at one point after Sunday school I kind of...

kind of outgrew it um... cause I was like “okay I’m hearing the same stories like I want something different, I wanna understand the deeper... like what’s the meaning of my religion” things like that. Um, So my dad would spend every Sunday with me, I think it was after, or around 8th grade, that’s when it started and we would read through the Q’ran but really just understand the English translation. Cause you can read the Arabic, but that’s not our native language. So... the English is what’s gonna make the most sense and um, kind of he would give me a lot of examples of how things relating that would apply to our everyday lives. Um but also how to be modern and moderate as a Pakistani Muslim American in the U.S. -

SB: Right

NM: So... um just that- it’s just all a balance like my dad’s biggest thing he taught me is just live in moderation. Which is just you know... you know your religion you know your values you know your cultural customs but you are in a different country and you know, your born in a certain generation and you will adapt to that because that is just what you grow up in, and you-

SB: Right. Mhmm

NM: Assimilate. And um you know you can still keep your identity of being Pakistani and being Muslim but you also can, I mean, I was born here so I’m an American.

SB: Exactly!

NM: So it’s you know, um... I’m an American (laughs) and my family is very patriotic since like, my parents grew up here, so...

SB: Yah that’s so interesting that’s even what we found in, in class, and um there’s a girl, Sara in our class whose Muslim and she was talking about how, you know her family is very patriotic and I find that so interesting cause then it’s like, I don’t know I feel like you look at some Americans and they just like... are not very patriotic-

NM: Yah

SB: even like my family, very liberal, but it's like kind of, we don't....

NM: Right

SB: I don't know my parents definitely are like qu- sometimes question like why am I in America,

NM: (laughs)

SB: like you know what I mean? What is it giving me? That kind of thing, and so I think it's like.. I dont know I think it's like such a good defense for anyone who thinks that people of different cultures should not be allowed in this country, cause they end up-

NM: Well, I think the basis of America's va- freedom-

SB: Right!

NM: And also, we have freedom of religion, freedom of speech!

SB: Exactly!

NM: But it's also just like you know, we all are different but that's what makes America, America

SB: Great! Exactly!

NM: Cause we all are different but we all bring our culture and diversity and not a lot of countries have that, traveled a lot out of the country, and seeing that, is not as prevalent, but that's what makes it really cool here because we have a mix of friends and we learn from each other through having different cultures and understanding religions and customs.

SB: I'm totally in agreement with that like I fee- I just feel like thats, thats what like makes up America and it just ends up being those people who bring in the culture who bring in the different things that make this country, like lovable? You know what I mean?

NM: Mhmm

SB: So, oh my gosh totally on the same page with you about that! So moving back to school and like you're growing up! Right so like tell me about the places and like buildings you spent a lot of time in your childhood. So you mentioned your Sunday School, so do- any other specific schools maybe you enjoyed more others? You know?

NM: Uh so I mean I was in the public school, um my brother was in public school with me for a lot of it, and my sister and I were never really in school with each other cause 8 years apart (laughs). Um but I mean I know when I was little I went to Montessori school.

SB: Oh.. I've heard of Montessori! Yah!

NM: Yah! So it's like more like it's a little bit of like a private school but it's more.... Um focusing based off of your skills, building off of that um and then after that, that was just like for Kindergarten. But then 1st grade onwards I was always in public school. Um I think outside of public school I would do a lot of Kuman (laughs)

SB: Yeah (laughs)

NM: Which is that math reading supplemental stuff, so it always kinda made me really advanced in school. Um, and that wasn't really cause of my pare- my parents pressuring me, it was just cause like I loved school like I was literally a nerd (laughs).

SB: (laughs)

NM: I just loved to learn! (laughs)

SB: (laughs) Mhmm!

NM: But, I think places that I would like to spend outside of school would just be like a dance studio. I used to dance A LOT! And for me, my parents were really supportive of that, and they were like you know you gotta try different things that or hobbies that you might enjoy in life.

And um, I used to dance I used to play tennis I used to play volleyball in high school, so for me like sports and like athletics and things like that were really important. I've also been really involved in music, in high school I was in choir and I was in an acapella group so all throughout-

SB: Wow! Yah!

NM: My childhood-

SB: Really busy!

NM: Always in choir, yah! I was very VERY busy! But I think for me, that's what made it fun. Because I was just was able to like explore myself through those things. Id say another thing, I would always be at my friends, my friends' houses. Like Id be like hanging out with them outside whenever I get my work done and they would come over to my house. I think for the most part it's just like a typical life.

SB: Right! Yah! And it's so interesting cause I feel like that s something that people like kind don't realize about people who are of Islamic faith and who are Muslim and Arab like they're people too, you know?

NM: Well yah! We live, I mean just like any other person!

SB: Exactly!

NM: And I think a lot of times there's the stigma that we're very conservative and that conservativeness makes us like shut off from the world and isolated and that we only wanna talk to people that are similar than us. But there's actually like a lot of interfaith going on. Like a lot of my family members, one of my family members actually runs an Islamic school in Peoria, Illinois-

SB: Ooooh!

NM: Um but they do a lot of interfaith um... talks where they have, I think they have a church official come, um I think they have a Jewish priest come, uh-

SB: Wow!

NM: They just have a lot, a lot going on! And I think you know, there's a lot of understanding that can be done just by having interfaith talks. Um... yeah, I think, for the most part, I think you know there's a stigma that like people who are, people of Islamic faith are a certain way, but we're just like anybody else, like anyone else studying their own religion.

SB: Mhmm. Exatctlyty! You mentioned so we were talking about this earlier, butyou mentioned dance, so you know, when was that time that you were dance, what age, and what studio did you go to, did you go to multiple studios? What did you do, you know?

NM: So, I started dancing when I was 7 years old um, my kind of like cultural parties, they do this thing called a Tolkey, which is basically a celebration for someone who gets married, and I remember I just got up and started dancing and my mom was like, "Your good at this, Imma put you in classes!" So I went to dance camp when I was 7 years old where we did hip hop, jazz, contemporary, ballet, and I was like I love hip hop! I love the music like, I love the energy, and it just felt natural to me. So my mom kind of let me do hip hop classes and stuff, and then when I was 10 years old I started to compete on a hip hop team for Studio Blue. Um and that's in Virginia. Um but we kind of moved around a lot so I started dancing in Denver when I was 7 and then 10 years old is when I started competing in Virginia. And then High School I kind of stopped taking classes, but I um started to kind of just do it on my own for fun. But then when I got to college I joined Marquette Messa, which is the Bollywood dance team here, um at Marquette, and I've done it since I was a freshman. Um but yeah alongside actually, backtrack,

when I was 7 my mom also put me in Bollywood dance classes so I've kind of just been in the dance kind of environment a lot.

SB: Bollywood's a hard craft!

NM: (laughs) It's fun!

SB: It's like, it's a lot of intricate stuff, I like took one class when I was younger and it was- it's just like very hard, so like kudos to you for doing that!

NM: Yah it's a lot of fun. And I think for me it's like also a way to connect with my culture.

SB: Yah! Uh huh!

NM: Cause like I mean, Bollywood it's associated with Hindi and the Indian culture, but there's a lot of intermixing between Pakistanis and Indians among the Bollywood culture, cause the music and the language, and Hindi is very similar to Arab- or uh Urdu, which is the language for Pakistanis. So um there's just, it's just a good way to get with my culture.

SB: Yah! That's awesome! And how did it feel to be Muslim in these spaces, whether you were dancing you know what I mean? Did you- Even just moving around, I mean you moved around so much like how did being Muslim impact any of your experiences at all?

NM: Yeah, so honestly, I feel like when I was little like, I was I never compared myself to anybody and I was like so we're all the same like I never really thought of anything, and then it wasn't until I started to go to Sunday school that I really learned that- okay I am Muslim by birth um, through my family and I honestly like in elementary school I think I did get bullied a little bit. Just like people to be like "why are you here you know you're a terrorist" things like that-

SB: Oh my gosh!

NM: And it did take a toll on my self-esteem-

SB: I can imagine!

NM: But you know, But I honestly was like you know what? People are gonna bully other people, as long as I just stand up for who I am and what I believe in I'm going to be okay. And it's actually interesting I even did get bullied by someone who was also Muslim-

SB: Wow.

NM: Being like "Oh you're a terrorist, go away!" and I'm like, you're literally from, a like, even if your from a different country you're still in a country of Islamic faith, so like what makes it okay to just-

SB: Say that. Yah.

NM: Say that! I mean it's not okay to say that to anybody. I mean you know, it's just wrong. But I did get bullied a little bit through that experience. But I honestly got a backbone from it. And I was like, you know what? I'm proud of who I am I know my religion isn't a bad thing it's about peace and it's about kindness and it's about kindness and charity. Um, just like any other religions are. And middle school, high school I didn't directly face any of that. I think Middle School I started to go through that phase of okay who really am I? Cause I was like I just wanna be like everybody else, everyone's wearing shorts, everyone's doing this, and Im like, I can't cause of my religion, because it says like, be modest.

SB: Mhmm.

NM: But my parents were never like, it's not about modesty, it's about doing it for the right reasons. Wear something because it makes you feel comfortable and your not doing it to show off to other people.

SB: Right.

NM: So, it wasn't until High School when I really understood that, so in Middle School, I was a little rebellious where I was like "C'mon just like let me be like everybody else!". But when I

was in High school I was like you know why am I doing this? Like I need to be myself I need to kind of um, I really wanted to learn more about my religion learn more about my culture and my dad actually when he was in college he told his father, my grandfather, that like you know I know im born into the Islamic faith because of our family but I want to study the world religions. And because I just want to know if this religion is right for me. And he studied the world religions at Purdue and for him, he's like you know what I studied them but this is what made the most logical sense to me. So he's of the Islamic faith as born through that and my dad even was like you know what let's sit down, I'll let you, I'll talk to you about all the other religions unbiased, nothing like, he really never said anything that would sway me in any direction um but he also was like you kneed to do your own research. And you need to learn about the other religions for yourself. Because he said you know it's your own growth to know what's right for you, what's right not right for you. Because like at some point as a parent you can only do as much, but at some point, your child will do whatever they want. And my parents are very loving and they're open and I've never been able to hide anything from them. Like im very open with them I have a really good relationship. Um, even the toughest conversations I can have with them. Like even If I feel a little uncomfortable, they are open enough that they are willing to listen and understand where I'm coming from. So I think when I got to college I really like um I took a theology class because Marquette requires it! (laughs)

SB: (laughs)

NM: Alongside that, I found it really interesting cause there are a lot of things that are in common with my religion. And then from that I was really interested. So I did a lot of research, I've actually talked to a lot of friends that are of the different religions. I mean, I found my faith through my own religion, because it is what makes most sense to me, but also, like, I respect the

other religions, because there is like a similarity among us all. Right, you know? Like all our core values, like treat others how you want to be treated, things like that, like trust, honesty, charity, you know, things like that, like, all the religions are the same. And I think you know, like, we're all on this planet. We're all the same people right and the end like we're all going to have to answer to, whatever higher being it is, but end of the day, like, we all should just love each other. Yeah, I think for me, like, going through those experiences, I really learned a lot about myself.

SB: Mhmm.

NM: And even though like, some people can mistreat others, just because of their religion, yeah, doesn't make it right. But I think in a way, it helps strength strengthen myself. So-

SB: Yeah, that's great! And then you kind of talked about this, but like, how did you feel like you expressed your Muslim identity differently in these places? Like Did you find yourself you even said like, um, that you want to be like everyone else? Did you conform to that sometimes, did you not? Did you openly practice your religion? Did you- you know what I mean, like that, those kind of things?

NM: Um, so I remember actually, when I was in elementary school, we had like a food day where everyone brought in food from like their cultures. So it was super fun!

SB: Oh! I remember those!

NM: So like, I was like, Mom, we got to make our famous Pakistani dessert, which is called barfi, which is basically like a condensed milk type of like little pastry.

SB: Ooh yum!

NM: So it's really yummy, I mean it's like almond-y. Um so, I don't know, I brought it in and everyone's like, oh my god, this is so good. And then I think that was like a way to just like show

my culture, but I never really like expressed like, I'm Muslim. And that point, and then, I think in elementary school, I think when that conversation came up with like, bullied a little bit, um, you know, like, I never I was like, What is me being Pakistani have to do with like, me being a terrorist. I never understood that.

SB: Right. Uh huh.

NM: Or when I had a conversation with my parents their like, you know, there's a lot of stuff on the media and it's after 911 that a lot of people got scared and it's totally understandable to be scared after something like that happens. I mean, it's horrible, you know, but I think end of the day, like, people will do bad things, but you can't label -

NM & SB: everybody-

SB: Exactly!

NM: As that, so, um, I think once I had a conversation with my parents, I was like, okay, I understand. People are doing it out of fear. It doesn't make it right. But like, right, I'll forgive and I'll move on. And then I think when I was in middle school when I was kind of going through that rebellious phase-

SB: Oh my gosh, I relate (laughs)

NM: (laughs) I was really just like, you know, I was struggling with my identity. Because everyone in middle school was like, having their crushes-

SB: Right, yeah.

NM: And I remember everyone used to wear like, Abercrombie and Hollister has, like, Mom, I gotta have it. Um, but and my mom was like, okay, you can have stuff but you got to also like, make sure you're not you know, you got to be yourself.

SB: Right, uh huh.

NM: And I think one rebellious thing I did, and I can't believe I'm saying this, but sneaking shorts to school. (laughs).

SB: Oh my gosh, I know people who did that!

NM: And then I remember one time like one of my friends took my pair of jeans that were in my locker. So I had to go home and shorts and my mom was like, why did you do that? Like, she's like, just just be honest.

SB: Exactly, right.

NM: I was like, Mom, like, why can't I wear shorts? And why can I be like everybody else? And she's like, it's not about that. It's just I don't want you doing it for the wrong reasons it right, you know, and I mean, a little bit of it is about being modest, and you know, like, just protecting yourself, but I think her biggest thing and my dad's biggest thing was like, just do something for yourself, not for other people. So I think for me, like it took time to learn that but once I got into high school, I really was like, I'm just gonna focus on myself is like, I'm gonna love myself, I'm gonna learn about myself. And I'm not going to care, like what everyone else is doing. I'm just gonna do that.

SB: Right.

NM: And I think in high school like, so, my brother actually has Down syndrome. So um, growing up with that brother with down syndrome also has made me really open to understanding like why people are the way they are. And that everyone is different has different things going on in their lives that can impact them. And my brother is actually very high functioning and we've always included him and everything we do and I think because of that he's just like any other person and anyone with a disability is like any other person and in high school I actually created a club where we worked with kids with special needs to like, integrate them

into the school. And you know, my parents were like, you know, it's a good thing you did this not only just for those kids, but for people that are Muslim because it was that you know, like, we're good-hearted we're not like you know what they see on the on the on TV and things like that. So for me that was like I felt like a huge was a huge accomplishment in my life. Because I was like, you know

SB: Wow, yeah, you should be proud of that!-

NM: I'm not just doing it for these kids I love so much but it's also just for like, My people yeah, I want to show that, you know, like, we're good, we can make a difference and we want to make a difference and we care.

SB: Yeah!

NM: So I think for high school, that was like kind of me trying to be a good role model, and to show other people that, you know, people can treat you wrong, but that doesn't mean you have to like stoop to that level and you can stand up and be who you are and be strong and do good things in the world. So for me, like that was a really good experience. And then in college, I'd say freshman year, um, I kind of was like, not conflicted. I think it was more like I was so strong in my values, that when I like was around people that were doing things against my values. It was kind of hard. Because I remember I'd be like, Mom, like I don't get why people are this way. Like they don't include me just because like, my values are this way, but I don't judge anyone else for doing what they do. For example, like you know, in college, everyone goes out and parties and they drink and stuff. And I personally don't drink. But that kind of like being in an environment like no one tempted me everyone was like respectful the fact that I wouldn't -

SB: Right, uh-huh.

NM: like people wouldn't necessarily invite me just because I wouldn't -

SB: because they think, yeah -

NM: You know, like, I'm gonna tell like someone's mom like, Oh, this person was drinking or whatever. And I'm like, I don't care like you do you, I do me. (laughs)

SB: (laughs) Mhmm.

NM: I... like everyone has the right to choose what they want to do.

SB: Yeah, exactly.

NM: And I don't I don't judge based off of that, like, I, if someone treats me right, then we're good. But like, if someone were to like, do something to hurt me, that's what I'm like, Okay, I have a problem. But like, if you know, I'm not I'm not a judgmental person. And everyone again has the right to do what they want. So I think that experience and high- sorry, in like my freshman year of college like I did kind of struggle with, like Mom, how do I like keep my values but also like, be invited things and be included? really right.

SB: Right!

NM: And then I think eventually people just kind of got used to me being the way I was and just enjoy my company that eventually, like people are like, oh, okay, like, just because she doesn't do this doesn't mean she's like someone we can invite.

SB: Right? Exactly. And you probably found some really good friends like through that, like, like you're filtering out, you know what I mean?

NM: Like, yeah, like people who truly care about you?

SB: Right, exactly

NM: So like I think it was a little bit of a struggle, like, just understanding like, you know, how do we still be myself but not like be excluded? Because, I mean, I'm from Virginia, I'm going to school in Wisconsin, and I don't really have anybody. (laughs)

SB: (laughs) Right, yeah.

NM: So for me, it's like, you know, you gotta you gotta make friends and you gotta be included, and it was kind of that process.

SB: That's awesome. Um, okay, so moving on to - I'm assuming you never served in the US military, right?

NM: No (laughs)

SB: And didn't have any family who did by chance?

NM: No.

SB: Okay, well, then we'll just move on to the next question. Are you employed and um, you know, what's your job?

NM: Uh no I'm not employed. (laughs) But I'm pursuing a career in dentistry and I've like dental, dental assisted here in there. But other than that I'm not currently employed.

SB: I get though, school sometimes is like, so overwhelming that you're like, Oh, I can't be here anymore but like, what made you want to do dentistry? That's like an interesting thing. I have a friend who's doing that as well. And I'm like, what, like, makes you interested in teeth?

NM: So, um, so actually, I have braces on right now (laughs). But when I was in middle or elementary school, I was eight years old. My two front teeth were really crooked and I had a really bad bite. And I used to be a little bit embarrassed about it. And then, like I said, it was like, it's just me like, Oh, well. My mom was like, we're going to go to the orthodontist. Like, we'll try to fix your teeth. So I went and that was phase one. Um and honestly, once I got those braces off, I was like, I literally was crying. I was like, holy -

SB: life-changing! Yeah!

NM: like how like I, like changed my life like not just for functionality, but like it changed the way I look. And he might put it on it's been such a huge impact on me. And ever since then I wanted to be able to give that same feeling to to other people. Because for me, at the end of the day, like I want to go home being like I did something good. And I've like impacted someone's life. So I ever since then I was like, I want to be a dentist. So that was when I was in third grade and ever since then it's like never really changed. And then in high school, I shadowed a lot and I actually worked for a dental lab where I got to do research. And then for the dental advisor, which is a company that sends out articles to a lot of dentists around the world and they hold conferences is about products and you know? How, like if a product needs to be fixed or if this product works really well. So for me, it was really cool because I got to see that like, you don't have to be a dentist necessarily to make an impact on someone like a lot of these people doing research are indirectly making an impact on a person like a patient is it um, so for me, that was a really cool aspect to see. And then I think also just like working with kids with disabilities, it's my club and high school like -

SB: Just makes you wanna help people more -

NM: Yeah, yeah. So like for that like I kind of just was open to like the dental field and in high school and then my summers after freshman year and sophomore year. I dental assistant and I loved it. And I love working with kids and I love working with my hands and I don't know, I just love science, and I just, I just always been drawn to it and I see myself I see myself doing that.

SB: That's so cool. See, I would never like see it that way. I think that's so like that's so awesome that like, I don't know, you get something out of it that way. Um, okay, so next question. Are you married? Are you engaged? None of that?

NM: No (laughs)

SB: And I'm assuming you have no children?

NM: No (laughs)

SB: Just trying to cover all the bases here.

NM: I mean, my sister's kind of like my own child, cuz my mom was like, help me with this.

But, yeah. No kids!

SB: So then, moving on to the next questions are going to be at your about your culture, like how you define yourself, which you kind of already touched a lot on, but like, we'll just, you know, keep going off of that. So how do you identify yourself? This can be the most open-ended answer!

NM: Yeah, so I think a lot of times people would be like, Oh, where are you from? And I'm like, Well, I'm from the US. I was born here -

SB: Right.

NM: And I think a lot of times when people say Where are you from? They want to know what your ethnicity is. So it's like your terminology matters. So if then then I felt like oh, like, Where are your parents from? And I'm like, well, they're from they were born in Pakistan, but they grew up here. My dad was two when he came here. My mom was five when she came here. So I was like, my family's extremely American, like, me and my siblings were born here. My parents have been here for how many, who knows how many years!

SB: Yeah, exactly! (laughs)

NM: Um, yeah, so I usually say that I'm American, but that my parents like, and our family lineage is from Pakistan. So I usually identify as that. I never really didn't bring up my religion, which is, I think something that never really comes up. But I think if someone were to ask like, oh, what like faith and do you practice then I would say like, I'm Islamic.

SB: um, do you feel that the way you identify yourself changes with where you are? The place where you are? If yes, how I feel like that would really relate to you. You moved around so much like, yeah, I can imagine that like, even I mean, I feel like there's certain areas that you are more progressive that you've lived than others, but like yeah, like how does that way you identify yourself change did it changed or just like let yourself you know, we kind of talked about that but-

NM: Yeah I'm honest I've always identified myself as like a Pakistani American. Um I think living in Virginia being like 10, 15, 20 minutes from DC like it's such a diverse area, there's much food culture like you see people from different countries speaking different languages walking around you and it's just a great environment because you just get exposure to a lot of different people. But yeah, I wouldn't say like I've ever swayed from how I am just because of like the place yeah, and like my parents have always put the ideal of just be who you are.

SB: Yeah, that's so great. And then other like you kind of just talked about DC but are there any place where you feel your best and most- you can most successfully express your identity?

NM: Um, I think growing up like, Indiana obviously don't remember just because I was born there that right yeah, then Ohio, I was really little, Denver I remember briefly, like a little bit about it. Um, I'd say Virginia since I've lived, I lived in Virginia for five years before we moved to Michigan, and then we moved back. My family's been there since 2015. Or... Yeah. 2015. But I'd say Michigan and Virginia. I know Michigan is like, primarily more of a white state or Caucasian state, but I think it's pretty diverse still.

SB: Right, yeah!

NM: But I took Michigan and Virginia. I know Michigan is like, primarily more of a white state or Caucasian state, but I think it's pretty diverse still. Right. Yeah. I think every state that I've

lived in I've always had like a Pakistani community. Some places are smaller than others, like I think, Ohio, Indiana, they're more smaller and Michigan was smaller, but -

SB: their there.

NM: Yeah, there were there and then when I was in DC, or sorry, Virginia, and Michigan oh sorry, Denver, and Virginia/DC, like those places and just having a big community.

SB: Yeah that's awesome!

NM: Yeah. So I've never really felt like I never had anybody-

SB: Right.

NM: From my own culture, and my parents aren't just friends with people that are Pakistani, like my parents, like, always have their co-workers over. And we always have our neighbors over.

Like, we have a very diverse group of friends, like family friends, and I know my parents whenever like you just stick with your own, like, you can integrate yourself.

SB: Right, yeah! No, that's so interesting. Because even like, I don't know, at first glance, you kind of think about the certain states and you're like, Oh my gosh, like, that's gonna be very, very white or whatever. And even I've been places that I've Oh, that's kind of what I've assumed. Even just like I'm from Illinois. So even just like, places in Illinois, even like near Peoria, like stuff I've like, was like, expecting to like, you know, see tons and tons of white people or whatever. And like, I don't know, sometimes you find that you're like, Oh, well, there's more diversity here than I thought like, maybe it's not the best but like, right, you know, it's crazy. And I think that's so cool that yo- you've definitely, there's still like communities.

NM: Well, it's not like we have communities throughout different states. But there's a network like we have this group called APPNA, which is like, I'm forgetting the exact wording of it. But it's basically like a Pakistani Association for medical doctors in the US.

SB: Wow.

NM: And like, a lot of families go. So I have friends and like random states that like I've never been to, but we've been going for years. So we have very close friends. And then my family's a little bit more of a well-known family because of my grandfather. And since my dad's family was like one of the few first few families to come into us.

SB: Yah elaborate more on that, cause I know we talked about that earlier.

NM: So

my grandfather is a pathologist. He's retired now, um, he's 92. But he came to the US, I believe in 1968. To, he got an offer from Indiana University. -

SB: Good school.

NM: He went, he was at King Edward's Medical College in Pakistan on which is where it's like a British run school, medical school and he was one of the top two students of his class. And he got an offer from IU to come here and do a two-year program to become a pathologist. And then he worked for a hospital for a little bit. And then he owned his own practice for a long time. And then he's just he's, he's taught at Indiana University for a long time. And he's on the medical board for just picking people for the medical college. And he's pretty well known in state of Indiana, just because my family has been really involved there and they're really involved in like the Islamic community there. But yah so, I think along with that... (lost train of thought)

SB: (laughs)

NM: (laughs) Low-key rambling

SB: No, no it's fine! We were talking about um, well we kinda did get a little off topic! (laughs)

It's okay. But you were just talking about your family and like how, the places, and the communities

NM: Yah! So I think because my grandfather has been here for such a long time, like he's 92.

And my, my dad came here when he two and he came here two years before that. So my dad is currently 52. So my grandfather has been here for 54 years.

SB: Wow!

NM: So my family is pretty well known. So it's just interesting, like, and I have a ton of cousins and my dad's one of five siblings. So um, everyone's just in a bunch of different states, and you meet a lot of people and you network. And I think even with social media, like, I have friends in other states just through social media.

SB: Right, yeah!

NM: So it's just a good way to connect. And I think every place I've moved, we've always made really good family friends.

SB: That's awesome. Yep. And do you have any traditions of your religion or culture that you practice like food recipes you know even things that you learned from your grandparents or your parents. Um, do you follow any food restrictions like they put down here like Halal meat and stuff like that and what's your favorite food?

NM: Yeah, so halal meat is like a lot of people have halal meat or they eat Halal meat It's also called zabihah. But my family like if we go out we'll kind of eat whatever but we don't eat pork.

SB: Oh Okay!

NM: Yah so we wont eat pork but we wont't nessecarly eat halal meat or zabihah meat, but we will eat it like if my mom just goes out and buys it and then cooks it at home. So it's like if we're out we won't eat it necessarily, but if we're at home like we use that Yeah, so um, things like that, I guess. In a sense a religious type of customs or traditions, we celebrate, celebrate Eid and there's two of them every year. We also celebrate Ramadan -

SB: Oh yes!

NM: Which is the fasting for 30 days and then one of the Eids is after Ramadan is done it's just like a big celebration and everyone literally house hops and gets a different food and money and presents.

SB: Ooh fun!

NM: And then our second Eid is after the completion of Hajj is done, and which is where everyone goes once in a lifetime to Mecca and that's where they walk around (???) which is that box.

SB: Ooh, yeah.

NM: Um, but usually people celebrate that after that's completed and like the host parties or people that have completed Hajj because it's a really big deal my religion I don't know my family goes a lot of cultural parties like almost every week and are we go plus, so it was really fun to dress up in the clothes-

SB: Yeah!

NM: And in sense of food, my mom has taught me how to cook a lot of Pakistani food that like my grandparents have taught them and I've even cooked at school because I'm sometimes I'm just like, I want some, like cultural food, but I also like make a lot of American food, Mexican food, Asian food and sometimes I like do a fusion of like Paki food with like something else, right? Oh, it's really fun to experiment. I guess with religious type of things that I will do. Um, we have this thing called Gemma, which is our Friday prayer. So every now and then I will go to Gemma. I should say I should be more practicing, or I should be praying more and hitting more of those five times a day prayers. But for me, I pray at least one time a formal prayer day, which is like what we call salah, which is like one of the five that we can do. There's five of the salahs

you can do but I choose to do one usually. And I always do this thing called du'a, which is like an informal prayer where you're kind of just directly speaking to your God and just like, you know how people like they'll fold their hands and say in the name of the father, son, holy spirit, Amen?

SB: Yah!

NM: That's like yeah, that's kinda like what we do. Yeah, like what we do. But for us, we're just cupping our hands and holding them together and saying it and at the end we say amin, which is the same thing as just like a different way of saying it, I guess. So for me, like, I'll do that in the morning before when I wake up and then at night before I sleep, so just start my day in my day, in a place of being grateful, but I think in a sense of how practicing I am, I should be more practicing. But for me, it's like spiritual like I believe in a god I believe in the angels I believe in like, right from wrong, knowing the difference between that and just being a good person. So I wouldn't say I'm the most practicing person, but I definitely like have that spiritual sense and I do every day try to incorporate something of that.

SB: Yeah. And once again, like even what you were talking about earlier, like the similarities suddenly kind of like everyone's religion is like rooted in the same thing like I think you meant just mentioned, like the spirituality aspect of it like I'm Catholic and I'm like think very, you know differently. I don't practice like you know, like very well at all. But I think more of like, in a spiritual sense. So it's so interesting that like, there's similarities and that's like, that's like one of the huge like misconceptions, you know?

NM: And I think another thing is like everyone is at their own level isn't and they take a piece they want you like, some of my family members are a little bit more conservative, where they do wear the hijab, they do pray five times a day. And then some of my family members are a little

bit more liberal end and my family's more moderate. And I think when it comes to practicing, like everybody is at their own level. And everyone is just continually growing and learning from their experiences and into their faith. So I think, again, like everybody's at different stances. So I think a lot of times people can judge based off of that, right um, but in the end like we all are believing and something.

SB: Exactly. And going back to the food a little bit. Um, so do you ever have trouble like finding ingredients that you need for Pakistani food? Or is it...?

NM: Um, I think so before I so my junior year I moved into an apartment and my mom was like, we got to go to the Indian store. We got to get the spices before you go to Marquette because she's like, I don't know how often you're gonna be driving to go get stuff. So we literally went to

SB: A specific store?

NM: Yeah,

SB: Oh cool!

NM: we would pick spices and my mom like literally sat there labeling jars with me. Like what would be what.

SB: (laughs) that's so funny!

NM: But a lot of times we use similar things like just like the meats, obviously. But like coriander, garlic, ginger, cumin, things like that. We use some very similar spices, but there are specific spices that like I had to get. A lot of times it's just honestly the same spices in almost everything but just the meat you're using that makes it different. Yeah. Or the way you're cooking it makes a difference? Um, I wouldn't say I had an issue actually. Just because, um, there's actually an international grocery, grocery store in Milwaukee.

SB: Wow. And I didn't even know that.

NM: Yeah, it's called. It's called Cermak, which is it's like a normal grocery store. They have everywhere, but they carry international food. Yeah, like Latino brands of stuff. And they have Asian stuff. They have like Arab stuff, like Arab meaning, like Iranian foods, things like that. And then they also have like, Pakistani spices, Indian spices, like literally everything you can imagine. And it's so cool going in because I'm like, if I feel like making Asian food, I'm just going to grab like-

SB: some stuff there!

NM: stuff like I need, you know? But it was it's good because I've never had to stock and I think it's cool that they have international grocery store.

SB: Yeah, that's awesome. And um, you kind, of going back to religion now, you kind of discussed this, but like, do you attend a mosque or church on regular basis and like where do you pray If you don't, because you kind of said you were what do we off and on?

NM: Yeah so, um, I mean, so, mosque the same- another way you can say mosque is a Masjid. So I'm the Masjid that I usually go to my family's in Virginia, there's two. One of them is called the Adam Center. And that's actually where I went to Sunday school a little bit. And then, being here at Marquette. The university has a prayer room that they offer for students of the Islamic faith to us and they also have prayer rooms for any other faith

SB: Right, I didn't really know that.

NM: It's actually in this building.

SB: Oh, cool. We are in the AMU!

NM: Yeah, the second floor, left corner, but they have that but also like, prayer wise, like, a lot of times I just do it on my apartment. Um, but also like, sometimes, like, I'll have class at the time, there is a prayer time. So usually what I personally do is I would make it up where I would stay

in class, but then later in the day, like, pray to make it. And I know some people like they will step out of class and be like, sorry, I have to go pray and teachers are usually accommodating because they understand. Um, but for me, like, I'm just like, I just would rather than later. Yeah, so I just get one thing done. And I'm not thinking about different things. Because a lot of time when you're praying, you're supposed to have a clear mind and you're just solely focusing on praying-

SB: Right, but you're focusing on other things, you're in class.

NM: So just for me, personally, is what I do but I know a lot of times sometimes when people like are on the go, and they're like, Oh, crap, it's a prayer time. Like if they're driving the like, pull over on the side, just do it in their car. There's a like, you can, it's not like you have to be using a specific thing in a specific place. Like you can pray wherever, whatever, but it's just what you do for your own preference.

SB: And you said you live, do you live in apartment off campus?

NM: Yeah.

SB: Where do you like live in?

NM: It's the IVY on 14th.

SB: Oh the IVY, Okay, okay. Yeah, I think I think Bali who um, connected us like works just works their front desk?

NM: Muskaan?

SB: Yeah, yeah. Muskaan! Yeah, we call her Bali on the team (a dance team).

NM: Yeah, yeah, she works there. Um, no, that's so awesome. That's like, that's great.

SB: Yeah. So for me, like my parents were like, We want you to be central on campus. Like, you know, like as a girl walking late at night, you know? You want to be safe. So for them to like be somewhere central that has like,

NM: Right, that's like a perfect place! Yeah. Do you cook like at home or do you roommates cook?

SB: Actually, I'm in a studio by myself.

NM: Oh, cool okay!

SB: I had a roommate for two years in the dorms, but this year, I mean, my junior year and this year, I've honestly just like kind of enjoyed living by myself because one I'm so busy that half the time I'm not there. So half the time I'm like out with class or research or dance and then whenever I'm there, it's kind of like my own place to just relax calm down, like get some peace of mind and focus because like it's a good sunny space for me because the library is literally social which is like ironic because the library

NM: Yeah, yeah. Oh my gosh.

SB: Yeah, usually I'm rarely in my apartment but I love living there.

NM: No It sounds so it's really nice in there too. But yeah (laughs)

SB: Um okay, so moving on again. So what languages do you speak? You kind of talked about this before we were doing the interview. Yeah, so um, both of my parents can speak Urdu and Punjabi. So they're from Lahore, which is like the Punjab part of Pakistan. But because my parents grew up here like my dad, you don't want to hear him speak or do like it's just I don't know he's slanders it (laughs).

NM: I think he just has such an American accent, and there's nothing wrong with it. But for him, like he just his parents really just spoke to him English because they just wanted him to learn the

English English language right but every now and then they would speak to him and Urdu so and he can understand it. And he can speak it if he wants to, but his pronunciation isn't just correct and my mom can speak fluently if she wants to. But usually my parents literally just speak to me in English. When I was little they wanted my grandmother who was watching me to speak Urdu to me or Punjabi to me and they would speak English so I would get that like bilingual type of thing going right. But for some reason, my grandma was just like, I just killed like, I don't know why I can't speak like earlier too. I just speak English. And my both my grandparents, grandparents speak like fluent English. Like FLUENT English, like half the time I'm like, wow, you you speak better English than me. But yah, no my parents. So I actually don't know my language. (laughs)

SB: Wow...

NM: my parents understand it, but I literally don't know it. Like you could be speaking to me like fluently and I just look at you like (nods head) so I know I can pick up a few words here and they're like basics like go get me water. Do you want food? Like how are you doing today? How old are you? What's your name? But if you're having a fluid conversation like we are right now, I literally will look at you with a blank face.

SB: Oh my gosh, that's so interesting, though. Yeah, that's so interesting.

NM: Yeah. So it's actually funny. Because my younger my brother O.M, he, like, loves watching bollywood movies. He, like, the other day, I was talking to him he's like, Nadia, and then he like said something in our language. And I was like, I know what that is. He's like, I just watched bollywood movies. He's like, you need to spend more time doing that. And I'm like, I'm studying.

SB: Oh, my God. That's so funny.

NM: But yeah, so like, none of us really know our languages. Honestly, the same for my cousins. Like, both sides. My cousins like none of us know it.

SB: That's so interesting.

NM: But our parents, the thing is, all of our parents grew up here. So everyone is so Americanized, that we don't necessarily know the language as being like my generation of the kids. But for the parents, like they understand it they just don't speak it. So it's actually kind of interesting, because whenever I'm with like, my friends that are Pakistani, like, they're always like, how do you not know Urdu? How do you not know Punjabi, how do not know how to speak? I'm like-

SB: You just don't,

NM: And then they're like, they always like, tease me. And they'll say some things like, just jokingly and I'm like, damn it. (laughs). So I do wish I can learn it. Um, So I do wish I can learn it. Um, but yeah, I just don't speak it.

SB: And going off of that, like, do you have any connections with your grandparents home land?

NM: Yah!

SB: Okay!

NM: Um, I mean, my dad said the family, everyone is in the US, or they're in the UK. Okay. Like everyone, like, when my grandfather left, everybody left, like my grandfather, I think has three brothers and two sisters. And I think just one of the sisters, and two of his brothers, they're alive. And they're all in the UK and all their kids are in the UK. And I've met a few of them. Because of a family wedding. And then my mom's side, one of her cousins and her aunt used to live in Pakistan on but they were the cousin was born in the US. So actually, some of my mom's cousins that were born in the US. So when my grandmother came here, all of her siblings came

with her. Wow, yeah, literally everybody is religious in the US of UK and then we have like two family members in Pakistan. But other than that everyone's here.

SB: Do you go back and visit Pakistan at all?

NM: I've never been.

SB: Wow. Uh huh.

NM: You know, with a lot of stuff that's going on in the world. You it's not necessarily safe. But I have a lot of friends that go because they have family there and places to stay. And, and safer area. Yeah. So for my family, like we want to go but it's just because of a lot of the stuff going on. It's just not-

SB: the safest, right. That's understandable! Yah of course!

NM: So for me like I want to go and experience it. And I know like a lot of my family, my family members have gone like they'll go for to get their wedding outfits.

SB: Aww beautiful!

NM: But I just haven't been. Last time my mom went back was, she was 15 and my dad's been back since he's left.

SB: Wow, that's so interesting. Yeah. Wow. That's so cool. Um, okay. And then moving on to some Well, you were kind of talking about just talking about how isn't safe there in some areas and I feel like even in America, this goes along with politics, whatever. But, um, this question is kind of outdated. So I'm gonna rephrase it. But um, it asks, Do you read the daily newspaper?

But do you? How do you check you check the news regularly? Like, how do you get your news?

NM: So for that country or here? Both?

SB: Honestly, both. Okay. We can start with America first if you want.

NM: Yeah, I think with America, like a lot of times you watch the news, And I'll have like CNN on or Fox.

SB: Yeah, yeah, mmmm.

NM: The other thing is like the news is very biased. And it's depending on who the different channels.

SB: Yah! (laughs)

NM: And a lot of times-

SB: Boy do I know!

NM: There's so much negativity going on in the world, and they only show the negative stuff. There's no anything positive. And I'm like, why do you just show the negative stuff that's gonna make people think a certain way. But if you show positive things like you know, it'll change to make everyone happy. But and I get it, like, you have to show some negative things to inform people what's going on! So in the US, I generally do that um. I used to use Facebook a lot. I've been off of it for a while, but um I know my mom will tell me things because she's on Facebook all the time. I don't know what it is with their generation. (laughs)

SB: Oh, no. They like love their facebook! All the adults love facebook.

NM: Um but, so there's a lot of news articles on Facebook, right. And also on Instagram, there's just a lot of like, new stuff. And it's like a such a social platform. So a lot of people use that. I don't have a Twitter, so I don't really keep up with that on that platform. Um, but a lot of times, like, if I do see something on a news that I'm like, Okay, this is interesting, I'll do research on it. Yeah, because you can't just look at, you gotta get other picture to know what's really going on. For other countries, and even Pakistan on there's like Al Jazeera, they're really good about like, showing different countries and things going on. A lot of it is also just like family members and

friends. Like, I do formulate my own opinions. It's not just what someone tells me. But like, when it comes to like Pakistan, like a lot of people that go there often come back and be like, Okay, this is what's going on. Imran Khan is like the recent Prime Minister of Pakistan. And he actually was a famous actor. Wow. Um, and for us, it's like, thank God, it's someone that's modern he's, wanting to make a difference. So yeah, I mean, everyone's like, thank God, it's someone who knows, like, how to be modern and not bring necessarily religion in into it-

SB: Right. Yeah,

NM: It, when it comes to politics yeah, everyone has a religious background, but I think like, just focus on the politics.

SB: Yeah!

NM: Don't bring religion into it. Because religion doesn't necessarily co- like coincide with the actions you make. When it comes to politics, I think. Just my own personal viewpoint.

SB: Yeah! No, yah!

NM: But a lot of times, I see a lot on social media, because sometimes the news doesn't really cover what's actually going on. For example, there's this whole thing going on in Kashmir where with Kashmir, like there's a part of it that India owes, owns, and then part of Pakistan owns. And that happened when there was like an independence day where they separated because there was like a boundary. And recently what's been going on is that India has kind of taken over. And a lot of the families there are, have no form of communicating with us. And one of my really good friends actually goes to Marquette here. Her entire family's in Kashmir,

SB: Wow...

NM: Except for like her parents and like some of her aunts and uncles, that are in the U.S. But her grandparents are there, her cousins and even her aunts and uncles. And she's like, I have no

idea what's going on. And she's like, I'm literally scared for them. And it wasn't like you don't even see that on the news. And not only people know about it, but social media becomes such a platform like everyone's been posting about it and talking about it. Like there's awareness-

SB: Now there getting attention.

NM: It's getting attention. And I have Indian friends that are supportive of like, what's going on is wrong. And there's people that support it, right? Like, okay, like, this is right. But again, everyone has different viewpoints with the politics of it, but when they start bringing religion to it, that's what it's like, for me, like, I don't feel okay with that. And that goes for any religion.

SB: Right? I completely agree, even here I'm-

NM: No, yeah, I think no one should be oppressive like that.

SB: Yeah, exactly. And then kind of going off of that, but is there any specific political events, I'm in your parents, grandparents homeland that have affected you or your family? It doesn't even need to be you. That you know of. That's okay if you don't know of any.

NM: My parents don't I really talk about it. But that's just because all of us are literally like, we, they, were practically were born here at this point. Our families are so Americanized that like, I don't even know how to answer that question. (laughs).

SB: Yeah, no, totally fine. Um, all right, well, then I'm going to skip down a little bit, because some of them relate to that. Okay. Do... how would you describe your political participation in the US? So like, just like, you know, like, how, huh, maybe this isn't what better way to phrase it? Like, I don't know, like, how do you do feel like you express your political opinions a lot? Do you feel like you don't you know?

NM: I know a lot of people are like I'm a Democrat or Republican, I'm this, I'd say, I'm a moderate. And that just goes for anything in life. I think my family has instilled that in me, and I just truly believe that way-

SB: Like seeing the middle ground. Yeah.

NM: That, you know, we all do have our freedom. But also, there's a balance to everything. And I think some of the things with the republicans I like some of the things with democrats I like so I'm a moderate. Yeah, um, but along with that, I really don't post my political views on any social platform. Because, you know, there's a lot of hate. And a lot of people can take what you say wrong.

SB: I feel that. Uh huh.

NM: If I'm discussing it with someone and we just are talking about It's okay, um, but I never post about it and it's also just like, I don't want myself as like a Pakistani Muslim American to be seen as, in a bad way.

SB: Yeah, yeah.

NM: Because we all like represent us.

SB: Yeah, oh totally!

NM: And theres already so much hate towards Muslims. It's just negative things seen right? On, on on TV, that people still associate that way. So if you're being like, you know, I'm not okay with this. And yeah, identify as a Muslim people will sometimes be like,

SB: my opinion is a ceertain way or-

NM: you're thinking this way because of this. And it's, you know, it's just, it's just different.

SB: No, I get that.

NM: So for me, personally, I don't put anything political. Any sort of type away.

SB: Okay. And then, um, do regularly vote?

NM: I voted last time.

SB: Okay.

NM: And I will be voting this year.

SB: Awesome. Okay,

NM: So but I know when I was 18, I like didn't know-

SB: That was kind of me too. And that was even last year, I I wouldn't have done it. If it wasn't my mom, like forcing me my mom's like, very, like, exercise your right to vote, you know, like, ah, but yeah, that's, like, similar. Um, and then kind of going off of that, like when it comes to candidates who are from your own culture, religion, and what ways, if any, does that affect your voting behavior? Like even I feel like, like um, like uh, I know theres like Illhan Ohmar. And there's another woman...

NM: Rashida?

SB: Yeah, yeah. Yeah! Um, you know, but how does that does that impact any thing? Do we need more voices?

NM: I mean, I think we should have diversity.

SB: Yeah.

NM: In our government in general, with different viewpoints, different religions, things like that. But I don't think that will ever sway my choice, because it depends on what that person is saying, and what their platform is and their ideals. Because, you know, like, I don't want to just be for someone just because it's like, oh, there the same culture as me. It doesn't make sense. Oh, have to fully agree with what they're saying.

SB: No, that does make sense. And even like I was I wrote down here in my, my notes, like, do you feel like Trump's presidency has impacted you a certain way or impacted, Not even Honestly, I guess? It doesn't even need to be him specifically. But people? Like, you know what I'm saying his base?

NM: So um, I remember, I remember my freshman year. I was in my dorm and I was watching literally the count. When it was Hillary and him. And when I saw the results, I got scared. I was terrified.

SB: I know the feeling. (laughs)

NM: I literally was terrified. And the next day walking on campus, like you'd see people working Make America Great Again hat. And like people would give you stares. And I'm like, Oh, my God, are we regressing? Literally becoming like, Are we going to have like this whole, like, discrimination stuff? Like I was literally scared! And I had someone that day, tell me like, you don't belong here. Why are you on this campus?

SB: Wow...

NM: And I was like, this is a free country!

SB: Yep mhmm.

NM: A free country! You know why? Just because someone is just because someone is highlighting issues? Doesn't mean that it's true.

SB: Right! Exactly.

NM: And I think I think you know, everyone has goodness in them. I think deep down there has to be something good within him. And I can't say that I fully hate him. Because I don't know him personally. But I think some of the things he has said are definitely offensive. And it also just,

like, stirs up hate and other people that don't have that knowledge, of what other people are like, and what actually is going on in the world.

SB: That's I feel like that is the root is the root of it. And he knows what he's doing too, you know?

NM: Right! He's tweeting, and there's stuff on the news, and you know, people that aren't educating themselves, or just believing what they're seeing and hearing. If educate yourself on the something, then you will know like, okay, is he being true? Or is he not? Or like, half or like, is this stuff he's saying right? And I think, you know, there is a lot of stuff that has happened. And I know, like being a Virginia like, I think it was one of the Virginia campuses I it might be (???) or it might be tech on but there was literally an outbreak. That happened.

SB: Wow.

NM: Where some Caucasian people, like we're like people need to get out of here. Like just supporting Trump and some of the things he said, and I'm like, this is literally a free country, you're going to be well that are paying to go to these universities to get an education and better their life, make them afraid-

SB: Unsafe!

NM: Unsafe! Like a Marquette that like literally that day, freshman year, I felt safe, unsafe, now scared and I'm like, I've never felt that being here. And I was like, I'm born here.

SB: Yeah, you shouldn't feel that way.

NM: No. And I am very patriotic, like I celebrate Fourth of July like-

SB: Exactly. Wow

NM: Literally love the country. And I think it was definitely hard. I think there has been negative impacts. And I think it's not just to Muslim people. It's been to a lot of people of different

ethnicities and is just not in my opinion, I don't think it's right, but right. I think you know, as someone who's president they can have their opinions and their own beliefs but to stir up

SB: to discriminate it crosses the line.

NM: We're regressing. We're not doing what our country's about!

SB: I completely agree. And then going off of that. So this is kind of less about Trump, but more just about, like, you know, United States and stuff. So I'm assuming you were very young when 911 happened, right? Like, do you know how old you were?

NM: Um, I was born in 1998.

SB: So it was like, 2001?

NM: Yeah, so that was like, a year after my brother was born. So I was like, four.

SB: Yeah. Uh huh. And, um, so obviously, you probably don't remember, you know, much about like, what followed, but have your parents ever talked to you if they've like,

NM: Yah!

SB: The impact of sorry- I should'nt have interrupted you, like the impact that they've had? Because of that, or anything like that?

NM: Yeah, I think, um, they have talked to me about it. And I know for them to, like, you know, no one really knows what happened. Nobody really knows who did what, what happened. And in some senses, like my dad was like, he's like, you know, what he's like, I don't want to go and thinking it was our people of our religion. Like, I feel like he's like, maybe that was said, just to like, make us look bad. And until, for all the war purposes, that things have been going on.

SB: Yes.

NM: But it also could have been, so he doesn't, he's not saying yes or no to either. But he's just saying, like, I don't know, specifically, what happened. But there was blame on Muslim people.

And because of that, we've had some negative implications, like where people would say stuff to us. When I was really little, I didn't remember anything. So like I said, an elementary school. When I was in, I think it was second grade. I literally had some, like, you're a terrorist, get out of here. Why Are you at school?

SB: (gasps) Uh.

NM: And I was like, what like I was born here!

SB: I didn't do anything, right! (laughs)

NM: You know, my parents have never really like, put religion on anybody else either. Right? So and what you're seeing on in the news is not an example of what our religion is about. Our religion Islam means peace.

SB: Right.

NM: And it's in our five pillars of Islam, like, basically, the what they think is like, the basis of what Islam is, is charity, praying, believing in a god, being good, like a good hearted person, with good intentions, things like that. Just like any other religion. Um, so I think like, my parents, like, I mean, my mom stopped working after my brother was born. But my dad's been in business for a long time. And, you know, people will, every now and then they make remarks. But I know, my dad, like in the business world, it's not tolerated.

SB: Right! It- Yes, exactly.

NM: So, you know, he lets a lot of things go, but if it's really bad, he will step up.

SB: Ya mmmm, you know, good for him! he should! And that's like, I feel like that's so important to like, note that, like, people of any culture, you know, race or whatever should, they shouldn't be afraid to stand up for themselves.

NM: Like, my dad was honestly to any of this goes for anybody. My dad was telling me the other day, he was at dinner with a few of his friends. And there was an African American couple next to them. And someone was saying, like racist remarks. And my dad got up, he's like, watch your mouth.

SB: Good for him. Exactly.

NM: Like your in a public space, you can believe what you want to believe. But don't be saying stuff, in-person to other people, you're making them feel bad.

SB: Yeah.

NM: And, you know, like, we should all stand up for each other, has a right to be the way they are. They're born that way. They have a culture had their own religion, and we should just respect it.

SB: And it's only they can control it, especially when it comes down to race, and I just feel like, yeah, discriminating against people of color.

NM: Like, and that couple wasn't even doing anything! Just eating dinner.

SB: No, that's a perfect example. Well, even like, you know, that, like makes total sense. So and even, like, even if it's not some huge, like, concrete example, about how, you know, your parents, or anyone you know, was affected, like, after 9/11. It's just like, I think people's, you just mentioned, people calling you a terrorist and stuff like that, like, and it's, it's, it seems like, it's like so jarring because it's like, I don't know, it's not that it seems small, but it definitely was like a little small part of your life. But that's like a lasting, you know, impact or you just carry that with you!

NM: Yah! I'm never gonna forget that. Like I literally know the kids who the kid is I know his face I literally remember that exact moment.

SB: Uh huh.

NM: But, you know, like, along with anything, that's good, there's always bad things. And I think like what you're seeing on the news, like, a lot of times, like when we see something we're always like, God, please don't be someone that's Muslim. Please don't be someone that's Muslim.

SB: Right, I know!

NM: Like we don't want this negative connotation with us. And like-

SB: It just reinforces the stereotype and allows for people who are ignorant.

NM: And the people who are killing other people, that are saying in the name of religion, they're not practicing our religion, they're going against our religion. And we don't support that. At all.

SB: Exactly

NM: At all, like the Taliban, we don't support that.

SB: Of course not! Right. Exactly. And that's what's so twisted. I feel like they many Americans just like lump, you know, everyone into a category. And it's like, well, that's like not, you can say the same thing for any faith. You can say that for, you know, Catholicism, there's pedophiles in Catholicism, but that doesn't mean every Catholic person is- you know what I mean?

NM: An example, and example, right, do you remember like the Spanish Inquisition? What they're doing is essentially the same thing, as what some of these terrorists are doing. And none of it is okay.

SB: Exactly.

NM: Regardless of faith. None of it's okay. Killing anybody is not okay, regardless of faith of whoever's doing it. But it's not fair to put the blame on others who aren't doing that.

SB: Yeah, exactly. So to generalize-

NM: Because I know like, there's people that definitely are like anti-Islamic, or they call it Islamophobic. And things like that are just, it just as uncomfortable. You never see anyone being like, Oh, yeah, we're like anti-Catholic or anti (???).

SB: Exactly.

NM: It's literally like, all I'm seeing is just anti-Islam.

SB: Right.

NM: But it's just because of what the media portrays. And you never see like, what a lot of us like the good things we do.

SB: Right? I totally agree. Yep. That's insane. It's just, it's so interesting hearing, especially, because I'm biracial. It's so interesting, hearing it from a like a comp-, like, you know, obviously, like not the same perspective, but like, you know, a different situation. And it's just crazy how, like, there are people like that who like just think that way and don't, you know, aren't educated about the truth.

NM: They're not, they're not even taking the time to even. And it's, it's interesting, because I'm like, I feel like there's a little bit of ignorance in it.

SB: Yeah. Oh of course!

NM: Where it's like, if you wanted, yeah, make that decision to be like, do I really know if this is right? Is it that factual? But again, everyone has a right to make the choices they make.

SB: Okay, well, thank you for sharing those experiences, because that's so insightful. So I'm going to switch the topic now to marriage. And I know you said you aren't married or, you know, engaged or anything like that, but um, in your culture. So how are women viewed? And what is their typical role? And what about men? And how do you feel about that?

NM: Yeah. Um, so every family is different. I don't think I can speak specifically about everybody. Um, my family is actually very mixed.

SB: Okay. Uh-huh.

NM: Um, a lot of my cousins had married non-Muslims and non-Pakistanis. One of my cousins married someone who was Catholic. She converted to Islam by her own choice. And in our religion, we don't really oppress anyone they have to convert. And for him, like he was like, you don't have to convert. It's up to you. And she took the time on her own to learn. Wow. And she was like, I like this. So she converted. And I have two boys. Very cute, mixed boys. And then another one of my cousins's married a girl who's Uzbekistan. So she's Muslim, but I'm just a very different place. Different culture and everything, but our families accept it. And that's fun. Because you learn different foods and different things, and my parents, like with me, like, they're like, Look, all they want is someone that's good hearted. That's gonna like, treat you right. And make you happy.

SB: Mm-hmm.

NM: And support you. So they don't care, what ethnicity someone is. What religion someone is. I mean, preferably, like, I know, it would be easier to be with someone that the same culture and faith, but love is love.

SB: Right? Exactly.

NM: And, yes, my parents are always like, you know, whoever it is. Good for you! (laughs).

SB: And I'm assuming you take on those values as well. So you just view it as being like, um, yeah, cause like this question says, like, you know, in what are some ways you feel like you balance faith in your American identity? So you kind of just see it?

NM: Yeah. So I mean, again, like, end of the day for me and what my parents have instilled in me, but me specifically, I just want someone that's good. That wants to be successful and works hard for themselves, enjoys life and likes to have fun, and experience new things, but just good hearted at the end of the day,

SB: And, what does marriage mean to you?

NM: Um, well, (laughs)

SB: big question! (laughs)

NM: It's a big question! (laughs) So my parents have been married for 27 years. My mom got married to my daughter, she's 21. And she graduated from Marquette. And my dad was 24. And they act like best friends where they don't have to be like mushy all the time. Yeah. But they're just best friends. And they genuinely do care about each other. And for me, marriage, I think is a bond but a friendship. And a partnership.

SB: Yeah, that's how I feel too.

NM: When you're working together to have a family and to have- to have together. But there is love there. But for me, like, I want someone that's going to be my best friend at the end of the day, no matter what.

SB: Yeah. All right, that sounds good. And you just answered all the stuff that's on here.

NM: And then regarding your question of like, women and men, like what their roles are, yeah, um, so in the more traditional sense, and some people do believe in this way. It's that the man is the head of the household, and he is the one that provides for the family through an income in a job. And for women, in a more traditional standpoint, again, it's that they kind of like take care of the family. Yeah, do things like that. But I think being in America, and how, nowadays, compared to then it's more modernized. In my culture, like, especially now what I'm noticing is

like, a lot of girls are working. And a lot of these guys are like, yeah, I want a woman that works. Because, yeah, like, that's just becoming what it is. Yeah, and it's really cool. It's like interesting, like, my dad, with my mom used like work, if you want to work, like, I don't care, like, do what you want to do, that's going to make you happy. Even though for him. He was like, I am the head of the household. I gotta like, provide for my family. But with my mom, he was like, You do what you want to do. And she stopped working because my brother is down syndrome. And like, when someone has a disability, they need a lot of medical attention, right? Yeah, over him. She stopped after that. And it's interesting now that we're all getting older. I mean, my sister is 13. And she'll be starting high school next year. Now they're all getting older. Like, it's kind of like, they have to let go a little bit. Yeah, they don't necessarily need to, like, be too prevalent (laughs). As bad as that sounds! Um, and my mom is like, I need to get back into it. So for me, like, my parents are very supportive of like, my dreams, and they're like work if you want to work. And if someone is not okay with that, like, that's your choice. But if you want to work, and you want to be a mom and balance that, do it. Um...

SB: Right, uh-huh. And going off of that, would you ever relocate because of marriage? It's like, if that's like someone who you fell in love with? Assuming that's relating to the question. You know?

NM: I mean, my mom's done it, and my family, we've done it. And it's not easy. You have to adjust. You have to set everything up, start off fresh, make new friends, but I learned part of that is just you learn a lot through life experience. You learn how to adapt to new environments, make new friendships, and you learn about different places. And I think I'd be open to it, just as I also I'm so used to it. So, and I love traveling! And I mean, my parents have, by the grace of God

have allowed us to like experienced parts of the world. Yeah. And I think that's definitely opened up my eyes to a lot of things. So I think for us, like, I would have no problem with it!

SB: Awesome. That's so cool. And then how, like, do you guys like integrate wedding customs? So like, you mentioned that? Obviously, there are family... that like, yeah.

NM: I guess it also depends on the family. Like every family, again, is different on their tastes of how traditional they are, how not so traditional they are. They are more modern they are. So for example, my one cousin who married the Caucasian girl, she so they did one day of the Islamic ceremony. And then they did one day of like, the Catholic ceremony.

SB: okay. That's very cool. Yeah.

NM: And then like, the first day, she were like, the typical Pakistani bridal off at the second day she wore a white wedding dress, and they kind of balanced both. And then for my other cousin, marry the girl who says Pakistani, they incorporated both. So she was able to wear her outfit, but then also our one of our outfits, because traditionally, in our cultural weddings, we have multiple events. And it's like a blast. And it's such a big party! (laughs). Yeah. But yeah, so we pretty I mean, my family blends it like everyone is just really open.

SB: Well, that's so cool. Okay, so moving on from marriage. This is kind of talking about some your college stuff. We already talked about this. But um, you know, what is your major just to repeat that?

NM: Yah so I'm a biomedical sciences major and I have a minor in public health.

SB: Yeah. And you plan to go into dentistry correct?

NM: Yeah! So my plan after this senior year is to do a master's in healthcare, something health-related, and then, I'll apply to dental school.

SB: You were kind of talking about this earlier, like, like, just now but you know, your career path, will you let that influence your marriage decision at all?

NM: Uhhh (laughs)

SB: Or you want to be your own person? And someone has to support you-

NM: It's interesting, actually, I've been kind of facing a little bit of this, like, cultural battle little bit, um, a lot of girls, when they hit 21, there's this whole idea of like, looking for somebody, because things take time. Yeah, um, you know, dating in our culture is not necessarily like a normal thing, and it can be looked upon negatively. But some families are open to it if both families know. Um, So I know my parents are like, a senior in college, like, you can start to like, see people talk to them see, like, what you like and what you don't like. But my mom had had a, she's had a conversation with me, she's like, you know, time's a tickin! And, and when you're typically like, 25, 26, um then it's like, okay, like, she shouldn't be married by now.

SB: Right? Yeah. Like the biological clock or whatever it is.

NM: Yeah, exactly. Um, and I think that's also kind of a little bit of a traditional thinking.

Because nowadays, like, again, women are getting in the workforce. And yeah, we're more career than a lot of guys do want women career focused. And, I mean, I'm kind of talking to someone right now. And we've had a conversation and he's like, you know, I wonder what the timeline would look like if this were to work out? Yeah. And I was like, Well, I mean, I'm being dental school and-

SB: (laughs)

NM: I'm not going to be done with dental school until I'm like 26, or 27. Yeah, I want to specialize like, I want to do Pediatric Dentistry. So like, things take time. But, I think if it's the right person, things will work out the way they're supposed to be.

SB: Yeah, yeah. And how do you feel about dating? So obviously, you've kind of been looking around. (laughs)

NM: Yeah (laughs). Well, I've always had a lot of guy friends, my parents were never like, you can't have friends, guys.

SB: Yeah. (laughs)

NM: And then, kind of like junior year, my parents like, you can talk a little bit like, you know, you have a lot of guy friends that you're really close with. And I think it's, it's been interesting, seeing kind of like, what these guys value and what they don't, right? Because a lot of times like some these guys are like, Oh, I want a girl who's like super good follows religion does it but yeah, a lot of these guys do like XYZ. And you're like, What? How can you expect that when you are a certain way? So there is a little bit of the stigma of like, how a girl should be. Yeah, um, but I think growing up in the environment I have been in like, my parents, again, are very like, open-minded. So it is a little bit of, it's a little hard actually to find someone that's moderate. And like my family, because my parents have grown up here. Like a lot of the guys that I'm really close friends with, some of their parents came here when they were like, 10, or like, 20. So they're not as Americanized as my family. And I know sometimes people can look at it in like a negative way. Because they're like, Oh, she's not as cultured. And here I am cooking the food like listening to the music! Like, you know? So I think it's, it's a little bit of a battle, but I was like finding the right person, and who has like, similar values and a similar upbringing. Because like, my parents always taught me like, you know, you find someone that you have things in common with because it makes things easier. And getting along and understanding each other. Yeah, so but again, like, I'm open to people of different cultures, different backgrounds, that kind

of thing. Right now I've kind of just been talking to people of the same like, cultural background and faith, but I never know where I don't know where life is gonna end up! (laughs)

SB: (laughs)

NM: Who knows, maybe I'll find someone in dental school! (laughs)

SB: (laughs) Oh, my gosh, no. But then also going off of that, do you think that the internet, Facebook, social media, dating apps, even just like texting, like has made it easier for Arab and Muslims to meet their future spouse?

NM: Sure. I mean, there's like, I think I'm forgetting what's called it's like Mosey or Mu- like Mumble like there's just like all these different apps for Muslim people to meet!

SB: Interesting,

NM: Which has been interesting. There's something called Minder, which is like Muslim Tinder! (laughs) Oh, it's really cool. I don't use these dating apps cause I have a lot of guy friends and my family's really connected did and I'm not trying to boast myself, but like, it's just saying, like, I, I don't want to resort to that to like-

SB: if you need to yah,

NM: If I need to yeah, also, it's just because like, and now I'm also just really focused on my career-

SB: and school. Yeah.

NM: Oh, my God, I have guy friends. And if something comes along the way then cool, but if not, like, it's just not my time right now. So for me like-

SB: That's a great way of looking at it.

NM: Yeah, I wouldn't say right now I'm like, 100%, like, okay, I need to find somebody. But I think maybe like, after I graduate, and things are in dental school, and I'm a little bit more like

settled in my career, then it'll be a little different. Um, but I think social media has made it like a great way to connect with people. But there's a lot of negative implications with it. Like, there's a lot of people that will like slide in your DMs, and they'll be like, you want to come over and Netflix and chill? And I'm like, I'm not that kind of person.

SB: Right? Yeah. Yeah. I get that.

NM: So, I think there can be negative things that come along with it where people can want to be with you for the wrong intentions. But there's a lot of good that can come out of it.

SB: That's awesome. And then you also touched upon well I, the question, but we kind of already talked about this particular question. But I think it's really interesting that I feel like your parents view of marriage and like way of marriage and finding someone is very similar to the values that Americans have. Yeah, the question is asking how they differ. But you kind of talked about how they're more open and-

NM: Yeah, I think it depends on the family. Like there's this thing called a Rishta. Which is basically, when people share their bio-data, which is like, what the career is, what school they went to, their heights, their ears, like just like literally little things about them. And then some of these Aunties will like switch the biodata and be like, does your guy think she's cute? Does she think he's cute? Okay, got a match. Sometimes they do that. So sometimes it can be arranged. My parents had a semi-arranged one where they had family friends that knew each other. Like actually like, actually family, but still, like a different level, where it was my Aunt's husband's sister. She knew my mom and then they introduced my mom and dad. And they were like, I can see it happening.

SB: (laughs)

NM: And they got their families involved! And then after that, it was like, okay, they're going to go through a process and see if, like, where this could go. And then ever since then it like, got engaged, got married, and been married for 27 years. For me, and my parents, like, you know, just keep us in the loop. If there's someone you're interested in, like, let us know, if there's someone you want to like date, and like, the other family knows that, you know, you would both be dating, and that's okay. Because like, then it's like, the parents are in the loop. So it's not so like, you're doing something bad, right? Because then it's like if your parents know, then it's like, it's okay.

SB: And that's even so interesting. Like, I feel like, people can hear arranged marriage, and they're like, Ugh! Oppressive!

NM: But actually it's a good thing too! Cause it's also like your parents are looking out for you.

SB: No, and it's just a connection of family. It's...It's just like dating, but like telling your parents what's going on! Like, I don't, you know what I mean? So that's very interesting.

NM: Exactly. And again, like, my parents are very open with me, I'm very open with them. And like, I've been able to be like, Hey, I think kind of have feelings for this person, or I don't know how I feel about this and things like that. So it's like, it's a good thing to be able to talk about it.

SB: And then going now moving on to the topic of parenting, so obviously, you don't have any kids, but um, in the future, way future, whenever you see it happening or whatever, in what ways, if any, do you think boys should be raised differently from girls?

NM: Um..

SB: Or if you see any differences at all?

NM: I think my experience having a brother has been a little different, just because my mother does have Down syndrome, but we don't treat him any differently like he has specifically a

disability and that's a negative impact on him. We don't treat them like there's something wrong with him. So for him, he's like, super high functioning and very boyish. Like, he will talk to her head off about sports and whatever.

SB: Aww, (laughs)

NM: I think that dynamic... is a different aspect to have. But I do have a lot of guy cousins. And sometimes to me, they're like my older brothers. And I'm like, Can you help me with this? I don't know how to, like, handle this? Or things like that! (laughs) Or like, can you, can you message this person to like back off?

SB: (laughs)

NM: Yeah things like that (laughs). But I think boys and girls should be treated equally. Yeah. Um, but again, both kids can have different needs. So depending on what the kid needs, like if someone needs more attention and means that like, can you talk to me more? Versus if someone will be more independent? You know, I don't want to like hold them back from their independence. But it just depends on what my child would need.

SB: That's a good answer.

NM: I don't think, I don't think I would treat them any differently from each other. I would want to hold them to the same bar.

SB: No, right! Exactly.

NM: Like you both can do it. It's like, I know, there's a lot of ideas of like girls can't do a boys can do things like that. But being a girl, and being someone who's pursuing a career in dental dentistry and pushing myself, like, I don't want to let my girl ever go through something where she like, feels like she isn't good enough. But she wants to strive for something. And with my boy, like, I would not hold him back from anything he wants... to do.

SB: Right, exactly.

NM: So I think they would be treated the same.

SB: Okay mmmm. And then the next couple questions about- we already talked about this way at the beginning a lot, we got very in depth. So like, you can answer as short or as long as you'd like. Because I know we already touched on a lot of this. But I'm just about your life growing up, like what aspects of your parents home and culture did they keep growing up? So you mentioned food! Was there anything else?

NM: Um, I think going to cultural parties, like every weekend, and when I say cultural parties, I just mean like, like-

SB: Fun get-togethers!

NM: Pakistani people coming together, having a dinner party where all the kids are hanging out, and all the adults are hanging out... um and just catch it up. And I think it's been nice, because I've always been like, Oh, I have an Auntie to go to an Uncle to go. And they'll be like, oh, how school? How is this? And they genuinely do care about you. So it's like having like, the other family members, and having other role models too. Um, so that's one thing culturally that goes on, like, all the time whenever I come home and moms like yeah, so we have this event to go to, I'm like great. (laughs)

SB: Yeah! (laughs)

NM: Just got back!

SB: It's like fun though!

NM: And it's been cool to make friends of like the same background and everything and connect to have like the same kind of how we've grown up with each other. And definitely the religious holidays. That's been a fun one. I think, culturally, the food. Definitely the movies, the clothes. I

think overall, just their values. I think a lot of their values have been instilled in me. I think I'm definitely a blend of my parents.

SB: Aw, so cute. No, and then going off of that, like, Did your parents influence your choice of career at all? Or no, right? Cause you were talking about earlier-

NM: Yeah. So there's a lot of like, social stigma, where it's like, oh, a lot of like, what they call brown people pursue medicine, or something healthcare related. And my grandfather is a doctor. Like a lot of people in my, in my dad's side family are doctors and even on my mom's side, but my dad is one of the only siblings to really just be in business. And he's been successful through it. And I was actually talking about this one of my friends the other day, where she's like, I just feel pressure where people are like, well, you have to be a doctor. And I'm like, do what's going to make you happy! And my parents have been supportive. They're like, if you want to give me a teacher, and you want to go into journalism, go into to journalism, if you want to be a dance instructor, like, do what makes you happy and what makes you passionate, but also so you can support yourself. Yeah. That's so cool. So I don't think they've ever been like, don't do that.

Except one time. I was like, I want to go on American Idol. And they're like, hell naw. (laughs)

SB: (laughs) No, that's like, Oh my God. That's like every parent. You're like, "I can do this" and they're like I eh, don't know about that!

NM: No (laughs)!

SB: Oh, my gosh. Okay. Well, talk to me a little bit about the clubs just like you can like name what clubs you've like been at Marquette. Yeah, here at Marquette, and when we're talking before you mentioned a lot.

NM: Yeah. So I'm part of Marquette Mazza, the Bollywood dance team! I do, I'm kind of involved with ISA, which is Indian student association. Just cause, a lot of my friends and I and

my dance team. Like we've performed a lot of events for that. And I'm actually the only Pakistani person on that team, um Mazza. And then I actually created our Pakistani Student Association here at Marquette, because that's never been here. And I created that my junior year, or... sophomore year that started off junior year. Um, and it's great since we've never really had a way to connect with everybody because you know, people, but there's always newbies and they're like, I don't know, like, who to hang out with or who to- So that, and then I'm in a research lab. So I, kind of dissecting mice. And doing a lot of surgical nasty stuff with those (laughs). Yeah, and just some chem stuff with that. I'm part of the Biomedical Sciences Research Association. The pre- dent association-

SB: Wow, very involved

NM: -Best buddies.

SB: Oh yah, I've heard of best buddies!

NM: Yeah. So it's we work with students with disabilities. And then I've been actually working, it's, one of it was for my class like for service learning. But then I kind of just started doing it on my own. So they have it's like called St. St. Anne's Integrational Care Center. Okay, it's for seniors that have disabilities. And some of them like have physical disabilities, and some of them have like more of cognitive disabilities, and somehow just straight-up special needs. For me, I wanted to do that, because I was like, I don't know what my brother is going to go through when he's older. And I think that experience has been really great. And I actually soon will be working in one of their offices, like their dental clinics for

SB: Wow awesome!

NM: Adults with special needs. So kind of that. I don't know what else I'm just, I'm just busy.

SB: No, that's okay! That was more than an extensive list. And that's perfect. And I think that goes along with your culture. It's very fitting to you and it just shows how you want to give back to the world. I think that's great. Um, okay, so the next questions, I'm going to specifically talk about your parents. So just like, what are your parent's names? And are they working? Still retired? And you mentioned this earlier, but um from where did they immigrate? And when did they immigrate?

NM: So my dad came here when he was two, his name is S.M.M. But people call him S.M.M because it's just easier to say. And at work they call him that and... did you say career?

SB: Yeah!

NM: Okay. Huh. He had, so he went to Purdue for um engineering like mechanical engineering, but he ended up getting an internship with GE out of college and ever since then, he's been in the business route. And right now he's an executive of a company.

SB: Wow, good for him!

NM: So he kinda just like worked his way up. Yeah, he never got his MBA. He just like naturally just knows business has that innate skills. Um, my mom, her name is S.H.M, H was her like maiden name, but she just made that her middle name and took my dad last name. Hmm. Um, she went to Marquette and grew up in Wisconsin. And she came here when she was five. Oh, and my dad grew up in Indiana. We're all his family's still from and where I was born. But my mom, yeah, so she grew up in Wisconsin. She was five when she came here. She graduated here with a degree in IT.

SB: Wow. Yeah.

NM: And she ended up working with the same company as my dad.

SB: That's so interesting!

NM: And then she stopped working after my brother was born. And I think she's right now kind of between getting back in and maybe doing interior designing.

SB: Wow, awesome. Now, how do you think that they identify themselves? And do they often talk about their homeland? I mean, even though they were only there like- they probably can't remember, you know what I mean?

NM: Yeah. But um, my dad hasn't been back. Like I said previously, right. He was two like, he literally left and hasn't gone back. Um my mom has gone back, last time was 15. My mom is very into our culture. Like she looked like, loves going to parties every weekend, cultural parties, and she loves cooking. She loves the clothes, like the fashion like she's always on that. Yeah. And then my dad, I would say he's very like, I'm an American. So like, whenever my mom will be like, Oh, yeah, like, if someone asks, like, Where are you from? should be like, Oh, I'm Pakistani. But my dad's like, American. Yeah. And she's like, And he'll lecture my mom, he'll be like, come on. You've been here since you were five. You're American. She's like, I know I am. I just say I'm Pakistani, because like ethnicity, you know? Yeah. But she's like, and people just generally that's what they're asking for. So I just answer that way.

SB: Right, exactly, that's so interesting!

NM: And my dad's always like saying, Yeah, my dad's like, that's not the right way to answer that question. (laughs) But for him, like he's like, I'm gonna proud American. I love 4th of July, he loves football like Superbowl, everything

SB: Wow. That's so funny!

NM: So he's like, he's got the Indiana accent and everything.

SB: Oh, my gosh.

NM: So I'd say our family, like, both sides, hundred percent American. There's not an inch in our bones that's not.

SB: Wow. Yeah. And you kind of talked about this earlier? Because I think I asked you a similar question. But were did any, like historic events, like ever impact your parents like the Great Depression, major wars? Like?

NM: Um, I would say 911 was a big the biggest thing because like that, just that like that idea of like all Muslims are bad.

SB: Yeah, yeah.

NM: But I think other than that, I'm not too sure. Like, best to my knowledge, but that being alive for that long and being with them. Like, I think that's the one thing I've noticed.

SB: Okay. And then, um, what are the names of your grandparents who immigrated to the US? And I know you said your grandpa was a doctor, or anything else that your grandma did or is?

NM: Yeah, so all my dad side. My grandfather's currently living, he's 92. His name is M.I.M. And then my grandmother, she passed away when I was 11. Her name was at the A.M. I don't remember her maiden name. And she passed away when I was 11. So that's 2008.

SB: Wow, I'm so sorry.

NM: No, it's okay.

SB: Losing a grandparent is hard.

NM: Yeah. Well, she had like lupus. Oh, it was kind of just, yeah. It was a tough time. I think it definitely made her family get a little bit closer and stronger.

SB: That's always good too.

NM: On my mom's side um, when my grandmother and them came to the country, her husband, let them come here, took all their money and went back to Pakistan. And then he died a year

later. So he left my mom and her two sisters to basically be raised by just my grandmother and my grandmother worked 3 jobs and they were on rations, and they worked their way up. And my grandmother's name is S.T. Um, so they really like worked their way to be where they are today.

SB: Wow.

NM: I know, my mom, like where we are right now. Like she was on 27th Street, which is like, not a safe area now. And back then it still wasn't safe, but it's worse now. And she's driven me past her, like where she used to live. And for me, like, I was like, Oh, my gosh, I can't believe you like, we're in this situation. She's like, that's what happens when you come from a different country, and someone takes everything you have. Yeah, but for them, they never like, let that bring them down. Like my mom and my two aunts when to Marquette's private school, for high school, and then they got a scholarship to come to Marquette. All three of them went to Marquette. So yeah, I think that's kind of their history.

SB: Yeah. And then, um, what was like the reason for their immigration? And do you like know any specifics about it? Like how they paid for their trip fare? Like, was it literally just off of like the money they had been making? You know what I mean, it's okay if you don't know.

NM: My grandfather um they came here because of his job with Indiana University. So for them, it was that and I think I'm not too sure, but I think they did fund for them to come here.

SB: Wow. Okay.

NM: But it was interesting, because my grandfather was here for um like, he went back and then my dad happened, but then he left. And he was gone for like a year of my dad's life. And then my grandmother took her five kids on a plane from Pakistan on to London, from London to the US by herself. She barely knew English. And it was a struggle for her, but they made it. (laughs)

SB: Wow, what the heck, that's insane!

NM: And then that's in my mom's family. My mom's grandfather was very well off like in their family, and my grandmother came, my grandmother's siblings came. I don't know the specifics of how or the money involved, but I know they came here and then from my grandmother, like I said, her husband left her and went back to Pakistan on that he died a year later. And he took everything they had, but my grandmother worked her butt off three jobs, trying to take care of her kids. And then my mom's uncle also did help a lot.

SB: Okay, and then where do they settle in? in Milwaukee?

NM: Yeah, so my mom and her like her aunts, uncles, my grandmother, they all lived like right by each other each other. And at one point, my grandmother couldn't afford their house anymore. They all lived in one house like, they all grew up really close.

SB: Wow. That's so interesting.

NM: Yeah. And then my dad's family, they grew up in Indianapolis.

SB: Oh, cool.

NM: Yeah.

SB: Oh, awesome.

NM: So I mean, I was born in Fort Wayne, but I've been there multiple times to know like, where everywhere is. Yeah, it's crazy that I'm here at Marquette. Like where my mom was and I've seen where she grew up.

SB: No, that's so cool. Okay, so we're gonna move on now to cultural clothing. So um, do you have any traditional cultural clo- uh, clothing and I don't want to miss pronounce the names but they have like the Saree on here and the Thawb and any anything like that?

NM: Um, so we have Shlavarkames which I think is on there.

SB: Yes!

NM: Yeah. So that's we we wear Shlavarkames. That's like a puffy kind of pants and a top. Kames is your top and Shlavar means pants. (laughs) Um, and then sometimes we do wear Sarees, it just depends on different of honestly depends on different events and styles have changed and become so modern now, too. And it's super fun to just be up with the trends. And for different events, like you have more simple casual daily outfits if you want it like to go to a casual party. Sometimes for cultural parties will wear American clothes. And then sometimes if it's like a religious holiday will dress up. And then for weddings, we dress up, dress up. And it's fun like you do your jewelry. You do your hair, your makeup, and you just get all yourself up!

SB: So are those like the only circumstances in which you wear them, just for like events and things like that?

NM: I mean, I pretty much just wear it for cultural events. I never really were okay, just going out. But being in DC, like the DC, Virginia, Maryland area, like people will be walking around wearing any other culture outfits. It's always just so diverse. I'm like, I remember one time I was walking in the mall, and I was like that Auntie is literally wearing a Saree. I was like, Whoa. Oh, my like, that takes guts.

SB: Uh huh. Yeah.

NM: I don't know, I personally just again, I've grown up here and I'm comfortable with our usual clothes.

SB: No, yah, nd then going off of what you just said, like, how do you feel like wearing your cultural clothes?

NM: Um, I think because people have become so aware of like cultures now. I think if I was younger, and I wore it to school or something, I would get bullied. Yeah, I think nowadays, like people like Oh, that's so cool. Yeah. Like I've had friends come to like events with me where

they're like, can I wear your outfit. And they're like from different backgrounds and are like, oh this is so fun!

SB: I always find the, the clothing so very beautiful.

NM: Like we have a lot of beadwork.

SB: It's so gorgeous!

NM: Thank you! So it's like really fun. And like, especially with like, henna and things like that, like people gotten really into that. So I think there's a lot of like, more cultural exposure, now than there was probably before. That, I don't necessarily feel too uncomfortable wearing it in public if I had to. Because there's been times where like, I'll go with my family to a dinner party, like a cultural dinner party, but it'll be at like, sometimes a restaurant and we'll like book out like part of the restaurant and you show up in your outfits, and people will be like, what is going on? But they know it's a cultural event, so no one's judging in any negative way. And sometimes people are like that's so cool.

SB: And you talked about this earlier about, like modesty and certain things that your parents-parents instilled in you. But does religion play a role in your choice of clothing at all?

NM: Um, I'd say when I was younger, I definitely struggled with that. As I'm older now, like, my parents, like, growing up here, they've been... (got a text message) really, like, more lenient, I guess. Um, but the thing is, like, for example, if I'm going on a trip with my family, like we will wear like sleeveless or shorts or dresses. But that's just what my family but if I'm like, at school, I don't really like our sleeveless because my parents don't think like, if I'm showing my shoulders, that's inappropriate. But it's also because they know my intentions are not to be like, look at my sexy shoulder, you know? (laughs)

SB: Yah (laughs).

NM: Like, it's just like, for comfort cause sometimes it's just so hot!

SB: Yeah. Oh, God, I know!

NM: And like athletic clothing, like, they don't care. They're like, do you like, you know, if you're going to sweat it out, Don't stink up your clothes! (laughs) Yeah, no, I think they're a little bit more chill with that. Um, I never post pictures with me wearing dresses or skirts, like that-

SB: Interesting, okay.

NM: Even if I'm going on trips with my parents. I don't like, it's about just like, holding your reputation till like, make sure you don't look like sleazy. Because some people will be like, oh, that girl wearing shorts. Like, she's probably slutty. And it's like, you don't know what that girl's intentions are? You don't. And I'm like that's when I get upset because I'm like, you know, people shouldn't judge for that reason. But it does happen.

SB: Yeah, so you'd just rather not put yourself in a position where-

NM: Yah, I'm like, if I'm with my family, that's okay. If I'm around the house. It's okay. If we're on vacation. Like, no one knows me.

SB: Yah, exactly it's fine!

NM: But like, if I'm at school, you know, I'm not going to be doing that. Because there's been instances where, like, for my dance team, like sometimes we'll have to wear like crop tops and leggings. And like, I remember one time, I was walking in this one girl of the same like cultural background, same religion, like was like literally giving me those judging eyes. And I was just like, like, eh, I know what I'm doing? Like, I don't it doesn't bother me, but it's just like, why do you have to be negative towards me?

SB: Right. Oh yah. Exactly. Wow, that's so interesting to then I feel like I- (got a phone call) I feel like even um, I have a similar experience, at least. I don't know, like, my mom never taught

me like, you know, modesty should have let me wear what I wanted to wear. But um definitely in the sense of like, I watch what I post on social media, what I want to be like, you know, even some things I like, think about, like, I'd rather have this as a story on my Instagram, then as an actual post that can be permanently, like, stay there. You know what I mean? I totally understand.

NM: Again, there is negative connotations, to social media, to everything! People can just look at, like, look at what you're doing and be like, envious, like, why are you, why is this person hanging out with this person? Why was I not invited? Things like that. But I think for me, it's also just like, I'd rather if I'm married to someone, and they're okay with it. Even if they were not okay with it I'd be like, look, this is the way I am. I'm used to this If you love me, you'll like respect that, you know? on. And more than often, like, people nowadays, for the most part are like understanding, because every generation is going to get like, less and less and less as sensitive, yeah, like sensitive to it. Because it's just used to it. Like, I think my little sister was kind of going through it where she, like, my mom has let her wear shorts to school or whatever. And my mom's like, yeah, you're going to high school now. Like, you might want to consider not wearing shorts, you don't want people to think a certain way about you. Yeah, she's like, I don't want to, why can't you just let me be the way I am? I literally was like, flashback, flashback! (laughs) Yeah, but I know, like, she'll go through what she will go through and she'll understand-

SB: What's going on, yeah. And then, um, did your mother wear any traditional dresses? And if yes, did she pass any dresses down to you?

NM: Um, she did for her wedding.

SB: Oh wow!

NM: And she's kept her wedding outfit and her jewelry. But I personally don't think I will be wearing that because of trends and stuff. And my mom's like, you don't want to wear this old thing. Or like, they just keep it for like their own memories.

SB: No. And that's so interesting. Because even like, that's exactly the same how I feel. You know? Like, I thought my mom's wedding dresses very beautiful. And she still has it but I will not be wearing that or like, you know what I mean? And, but I know some people who that's like a big, even just like in regular, like catholic culture.

NM: Like, my mom has like her cultural outfits for like dinner parties. And sometimes she'll be like, I've worn this enough, do you want it? Or she'll be like, this doesn't fit me, do you want it? but for the most part, like there's really nothing that she has specifically handed down to me that's like, for her like, very memorable, but my grandmother that passed away, before she passed away, she actually sort of she kind of knew she was going to pass away. I don't know how!

SB: Sometimes they have that intuition though.

NM: Have that spiritual, well, they just know. And she a month before she passed away, she started for each of her grandkids, put something aside for each of them and wrote a note. For me, she gave me some of her rings. And like her, her rings I should wear every day and I think that's like a piece that's very close to me. But for the most part, yeah, my mom doesn't really give me anything (laughs).

SB: Yeah. No, that's so cool though about your grandmother, I think it's awesome. And then have you bought any cultural clothing? Like any specific cultural clothing dresses? And would you pass them down to your children? And if yes, why would you pass them on?

NM: Um, well, I think one thing I've passed down to my sister is my, my old outfits that I wore when I was little. Cause she's like, super skinny. And when I was little, I was like, the same like her. So my mom's like, you gotta give her those, so gave that to her. Um, I think for me, like I would pass down jewelry. I know my mom is like, you know, one day when you get married-

SB: It's symbolic too I feel like.

NM: It is it is. I have bought some cultural jewelry. I have bought the shoes, they're called Kosta. And then I have bought like, some clutches and things like that every now and then. But for the most part, like I'm barely home since I'm at school. So I'm I know you (???) (Laughs). Like, we'll have like a PSA dinner banquet, or same thing with ISA, so sometimes I will bring it from home and be able to like dress up. So

SB: Wow, that's so awesome. Okay, now the next topic you're going to really be able to speak to because it's about disability. So we kinda already talked about it. Um, but I'll just like, You answered a lot of these. But all we can just like expound. So like, how do you feel like some of these topics are considered taboo to talk about in most Arab and or Muslim families? And if yes, like, why do you think that is the case?

NM: Okay, so based off of my experience with my brother, I think it was hard when I was little, because a lot of times, like we would come home from dinner parties, and he'd be like, he'd cry. And he'd be like, why can't they just include me? None of the boys want to talk to me, things like that. And I would be that person. I'd be like, O.M come sit with us at the dinner table. Like, right, like I was always inclusive, because I understood. And I was like, and I like nowadays, I think because we integrate him into everything we do. He's so high functioning.

SB: Yeah!

NM: And also it's because we integrate him and everything we do other people learn how to interact with him. So like a lot of my Pakistani friends that are guys, like family friends, like whenever they come to my house and like we'll all hang out. They'll be like, Hey, O.M, knuckle punch, or like, O.M you wanna go play basketball? So I feel a little bit and like, I think also because he's older, like now he's like, he's so confident in himself. And he's like, a happy go lucky person. Like, maybe like, you don't want to talk to me, that's your problem. (laughs)

SB: (Laughs) Right! Yeah, yeah!

NM: But like for him, like he's so independent. And everyone knows how to interact, and that's been family friends with us. And my family, like extended family. Everyone's so loving and supportive of him, their like, O.M, he's their favorite person. Because he's so funny. Like-

SB: That's so cute!

NM: He's just like, I don't know, talkative, (laughs) and my grandma's extremely close to him on my mom's side, like, they'll talk on the phone every single day. But, yeah, so I think there is like a lack of knowledge, that people have and it's a little bit of that fear of unknown. And I think, nowadays, because people are so open about disabilities, and they talk about it, and like integrating programs into schools and things like that people are more aware. And that's the same thing that goes with just cultural awareness, or like things that are going on the media, like, just as much as we are learning about people with disabilities, other people should also like, take the time to learn about people of different faiths and backgrounds. So but I think he is he struggled with it for a while. But I think it was until like, I remember one time I had to stand up for him.

SB: Yeah.

NM: And was like, your brother's weird. And I was like, you're weird. You don't understand the fact that he's actually has a disability. And just because he has that doesn't make him less of a person.

SB: Right!

NM: And I was like, he's, like, so much more better hearted than you. Because the fact that you can say that to someone-

SB: Shows that you, yah exactly.

NM: Not even someone with just disabilities, anybody. So I think for him like it's it was bumpy. But in high school, he got like, the whole basketball team was like, all it's making the water boy, he'll play basketball with us every- they brought him to practices. And they would like, bring him to games and games. Like he would like get him water bottles sit with them, they would let they would let him actually every basketball game shoot the first hoop, like both teams would. So he was very involved in school as he is character so everybody loves him! (laughs)

SB: Yeah, obviously, like, you definitely believe in the principle that they are people too.

NM: They are, they are!

SB: Like, you know, they can leave just as fulfilling lives-

NM: Oh, hundred percent. And I think my experience with my club, like, you know, is when you start to treat someone that they have an issue, or they're, they're less than you, they think that way and regress. So like with my club, after three years of working with a lot of these students, like I had parents coming up to me being like, my kid is more high functioning, they know how to socialize. Before they felt not nervous to socialize, like most kids with autism, don't, they're not good, sometimes depending on how functioning they are, in social settings, but we had one kid

that did have autism, and he didn't like it. But then afterwards, he would like literally High Five us.

SB: Wow, that's such a huge success and like milestone.

NM: Right. And so like just to see that impact, like the more we integrate them, the more they will be high functioning, but they're just like anybody else that wants, you know, in our personal connections, they want someone to be their friend, they want someone to love them to care about them, give them attention, just like any of us would. And I think even my experience working with adults with disabilities like it's sad and hard for me to see. Because a lot of them just get put into the daycare. It's like a daycare center for them, just because their parents, their parents or siblings, or caretakers are like, I just don't have the time for this. I don't want I don't like I like I'm too busy. Like I don't want to some people I get it, they have work situations where they can't provide and can't necessarily watch them. Because it depends on the severity of it. But, a lot of times, they're just like, like the other day, one person was like, yeah, their family one a vacation didn't even take them. And I was like, Are you kidding me? Like, I think seeing how my family interact with my brother really impacted me where I'm like, why can't more people be like that?

SB: Right! And if they're integrated into the same things that everyone else is their issues would probably improve! Obviously, what you've seen-

NM: And it's not just that-

SB: he has been becoming high functioning.

NM: Yeah. And then also we, as people that might not have a disability,

SB: you need to be aware of-

NM: You learn how to interact, need to be aware, like, you know, if someone's like, freaking out, it's not your fault. They just, it's something in their disability, that's they're not comfortable in

this situation. Really? How do you calm them down? How do you help them, the only way you're going to learn these things is if you interact. So I think my experience with my brother has definitely impacted me. Um, I think and it's interesting, I see it with my little sister now too that, like she started a club in her middle school is where she's like, we need to have this.

SB: Wow-

NM: And they already started doing it! And I think just because of me-

SB: Oh my gosh, that's so great, that's so fantastic.

NM: So I think like, and for her, she's like, my inspiration is my brother too. And when she was in elementary school there, she was like a bus patrol person. Um, and there was a kid, his name was Mason, he had, I think he had Down syndrome. Also, she would walk him off and on the bus to and then, like, when she left her school had to go to middle school, she was crying because she's like, I'm gonna miss him! So I think like, our brother has really impacted us in such a positive way. And I know my dad told me the story that when he was born like they literally we're freaking out, and were devastated because they didn't know-

SB: Right!

NM: Like, the whole time she was pregnant at first, they're like, it's a girl. And then they're like, wait, it's a boy. And then when he was born, then they were like, oh, he's got down syndrome. And my mom was like, what? Like they were worried. They're like, how is he not gonna have a normal life? What are we gonna do? Like, what are we going to do? And my dad was sitting in the waiting room, and just like needed to like think things through and get space. And this lady had a daughter with a disability and she was sitting by them and he goes, she goes, cherish him, he's gonna be like, the biggest blessing and the most fun you're going to ever have in your life. And she's like, treat him like he doesn't have any issues. And ever since that, he took that advice,

and It's been such a good outcome. And I think for them, having a positive outlook, not only made them feel good about the situation. It impacted me and my sister to know, this is how we should interact with my brother, implemented on what they taught, but then also life has helped my brother immensely.

SB: And do you feel like there's a discrepancy among um, disabled females versus disabled males at all? And it can even, it can be in general or in specific to the Muslim and Arab communities?

NM: I don't necessarily see it

SB: Right uh huh.

NM: But, I think everyone, most people, not everyone, looks at them like they got an issue. They have a disability, something's wrong with them. So they lump them all together. But I think in the Muslim Arab community... Some people just don't know. They don't know how to interact. And I think that's the biggest thing, but it goes for anybody, anyone in the US, regardless of culture, ethnicity, religion. I think we just need to integrate them and make them more involved, and it'll change how things are happening. There's a lot of kids with disabilities that are actually very intelligent.

SB: Oh, for sure!

NM: I don't know if you seen the show, like Good Doctor.

SB: Yeah. Uh, huh. Yeah, exactly.

NM: Like, it's based off of a true story, I believe. And then, like, a lot of kids with autism are very high functioning and very intelligent. It's just like, socially, they like, not necessarily have the ability to socialize, like how we can um, my brother is super high functioning. So like, for him, like, academically, he might not be there. But his social skills are like insane.

SB: Wow, yah, so interesting.

NM: Sometimes he'll pull out these words. And I'm like, I don't even know that word.

SB: Yah you're like Woooahhh!

NM: I think it's just about integration but, that goes with everybody.

SB: Yeah. And do you things like marriageability options are like limited or more available disabled people? I mean, I definitely, I feel like I would say they're kind of limited, just with the stigma that comes around it. But-

NM: I think, I don't want to say more a normal person. But someone who's nondisabled, right, or viewed as normal, might not necessarily want to marry someone that has a disability. Um I know my brother, he's always like, yeah, I'm gonna marry this woman, and I'm going to have this beach house with all these kids, and I'm going to live a lavish life. I'm like, Oh, my God, you character.

SB: That's so funny. (laughs)

NM: But um, I'm like, we're always like, who's gonna pay for that? He's like, Dad. And then my dad, just like your retirement fund (laughs). But, um, so my parents are like, you know, he's so high functioning, that if he meets somebody, and it's somebody, it could be someone that has a disability, someone that doesn't, depending on the situation, they're open to it. Yeah, they just know, like, they're gonna have to take care of them. And I know, like, my responsibility as an older sister, and I, I just genuinely do care about him that if anything, were to happen to my parents, I'm responsible for him. And my sister is too. Yeah.

SB: Well, thank you for sharing that. Okay, so now we're kind of wrapping up. So is there anything else about your history that you would like to share with me? at all? It's okay if you don't have anything. Just an open-ended question.

NM: Yeah. Well, I think, um, I think one thing I'm noticing among a lot of us in college is just like anxiety and depression are just very common. I have ADHD, and I have like, anxiety, like generalized anxiety.

SB: I have generalized anxiety too.

NM: Yeah. So I'm on medication. I go to therapy. It has affected me with school sometimes. Um, and I think it's something that's not as spoken about, but it's becoming more spoken about. And I think like my freshman year of college, like, it was really hard for me between like, figuring out how do I like balance myself, like my values, and then interacting with people? So how do I help myself? Because I'm just going through like, anxiety, depression, like, it was like a whirlwind. It was crazy. Like, my parents were like, you want you to come home for the semester? Like, I can't do that. I don't want to like, you know, be behind or whatever. But I got help. And I think one thing a lot of people need to know is, don't be afraid to talk about it. Don't be afraid to ask for help. Like, don't be afraid if you are feeling depressed, or if you are feeling anxiety, like symptoms, like talk to someone. Because I think like a lot of times we don't, and that's when things get worse.

SB: Yeah, it's all bottled up. I totally understand that. Oh, yeah. Yeah. And then going off of that, are there any particular services or resources that you think the Arab and Muslim women's re-, Resource and Research Institute should provide to meet the needs of communities to which you belong? So like, just kind of we're talking about, like, even therapy, just as even as general as that.

NM: I think a lot of girls specifically go through the struggle of like, how do I deal with my culture and religion and being an American? How do you balance it all. And along with the other stresses you deal with, whether it be anxiety, depression, stresses, whatever you're facing,

regardless of the situation, it could be anything, like, just someone to talk to. Because I think a lot of times like, like my sister, she'll come to me and be like, how do I handle this? How did you do it? Because I think a lot of times people are afraid to talk to their parents. Like I've been in a lucky situation where like, my parents grew up here, they're understanding. And not a lot of people have that.

SB: Yeah. All right. And then wrapping up, do you have any um letters, photographs, notes or documents that you think will help us understand your family history? And like if I if I need them, or if I like am doing the transcription, I can always contact you about it? Is it okay for me to contact you? And I can always just give you a return date or whatever.

NM: I don't really have anything offhand. But if you need anything, you can ask.

SB: Okay, awesome.

NM: Even if you need to talk to anybody else in the family.

SB: And then, um, if any, if I need any other information, can I contact you as well and text you?

NM: Yah!

SB: Okay, perfect. So thank you so much. Like, seriously, this was such an awesome experience. Like I feel like I learned so much not just about like, Arab and Muslim like culture, but just like how the family experience and like, things can be so similar to like, you know, Americans and like that, you are American at the end of the day, like you know what I mean? And just like that everyone is very, very similar. So thank you so much.

NM: No problem!

SB: Thank you!