

# 2024 MENTORS

## Shaykh Hamdi Ben Aissa - Mentor and Teacher

Shaykh Hamdi Ben Aissa is dedicated to the mission of empowering youth and nurturing unity among individuals seeking to discover their true potential.

In a world that often feels fragmented and disconnected, he is committed to guiding the youth on their path to self-discovery and empowerment. His central focus is helping them reconnect with their heritage, sacred texts, and timeless concepts that define the essence of being human.

With a background that encompasses various cultures, languages, and educational experiences, Shaykh Hamdi is uniquely positioned to translate complex ideas into accessible concepts for a wide audience. Having experienced immigration firsthand, at different stages of his life, and having worked with diaspora children as well as Canadian born and raised youth and adults he understands the necessity of helping people navigate identity, faith, personal development/growth while engaging and contributing beautifully to whatever context a person may be in.

Shaykh Hamdi's journey of personal growth and awareness has been marked by a deep desire to make the world more beautiful, greater, and truer, especially for the youth he works with.

He is the child of a learned father and a graduate of Zaytuna University in Tunisia, which provided a strong foundation in spirituality. Growing up, he witnessed the natural relationships and exchanges within his community, leaving a lasting impact on his approach to life.



Throughout his life he dedicated himself to teaching and expanding his religious knowledge under the guidance of living scholars who embodied their teachings. Learning from these luminaries emphasized the profound connection between seeking knowledge and seeking life itself.

Through travels to various regions, including Syria, Egypt, and Yemen, Shaykh Hamdi had the privilege of meeting individuals who lived and transmitted spiritual wisdom. Subsequently he invested over a decade of his life to building and envisioning projects, initiatives that would facilitate personal development while promoting the universality and accessibility of teachings from diverse spiritual traditions and Islam.

Through these initiatives he has hosted many youth camps and classes such as camp connect, a gaspesie youth trip and so much more. He has also designed, taught, and published a course entirely dedicated to youth and their understanding of the Qur'an called 'Dare To Read.'

With unwavering commitment, Shaykh Hamdi Ben Aissa remains dedicated to empowering youth, fostering unity, and guiding individuals on their journey to self-realization in a harmonious world.

### **Mahdi Hassan - Co-Facilitator**

Mahdi Hassan is a dedicated medical professional currently completing his residency in Psychiatry with an anticipated FRCPC from McMaster University in Hamilton, ON. He obtained his Doctor of Medicine and Master of Surgery (M.D., C.M.) degree from McGill University in Montreal, QC, following an undergraduate journey where he earned a Bachelor of Science with Honours in Biomedical Science from the University of Ottawa.

In addition to his academic pursuits, Mahdi values community involvement and leadership development. He has had the opportunity to participate in student organizations, including serving as Co-President of the McGill Medical Student Society's Whole Person Care Interest Group, where he aimed to foster a



supportive environment for his peers. He has also been involved in advocacy efforts, particularly in raising awareness of rare diseases and organizing workshops for professional development.

Mahdi is deeply committed to mental health advocacy and has volunteered his time to support mental health initiatives within multicultural communities. He believes in the importance of ongoing education and has completed training in Mental Health First Aid and Applied Suicide Intervention Skills.

With a genuine passion for patient care and a commitment to lifelong learning, Mahdi hopes to contribute positively to the field of psychiatry. He is grateful for the opportunities he has had thus far and looks forward to continuing his journey of growth and service in healthcare.

### **Sarah Walsh - Co-Facilitator**

Sarah Walsh is a licensed Clinical Aromatherapist, Mindfulness Meditation instructor, Yin Yoga instructor, and is a homeschooling mother of four young souls.

Sarah uses her knowledge, attained both formally and experientially, of the natural and spiritual world to help guide and hold space for those to explore deeper levels of self, tap into higher levels of awareness and consciousness to ultimately gain a firm foothold on the path of light with Allah Subhana Wa ta'ala.

In her free time, Sarah loves learning the deen and is a student of Islamic studies with Rabata Institute, she loves to be in nature, and loves the creative arts.

