



Female Genital Mutilation (FGM):

Voicing the Unspoken

Speaking the Unspeakable:

Supporting young girls following disclosures

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WHY IS THIS SO IMPORTANT: FACTS

- **Young people are considered to be at higher risk of FGM**
- **There is evidence of an association between FGM and the development of subsequent psychological problems** (Mulongo et al, 2014; Kizilhan, 2011).
- **Paediatric psychological distress may present differently for children of different ages and requires specialist assessment and support** (Hurrell, 2015)



WHY IS THIS SO IMPORTANT?

- To safeguard young girls at risk of undergoing FGM.
- To assist young girls affected by FGM to overcome: any distress, post-traumatic stress (PTS), to regain confidence and live safer lives.
- To develop capacity and skills of professionals / paraprofessionals when supporting young girls following disclosures.



WHY SUPPORT IS NEEDED FOR GIRLS AFFECTED OR AT RISK OF FGM

LIVING WITH FGM AS A TEENAGER:

**Physical health
complications**

Emotional distress

Ignorance

Confusion, humiliation



CHALLENGING FGM AS A TEENAGER:

Re-traumatisation

Social exclusion

**Family relationship
breakdown**

**Emotional and/or
physical abuse**

MANDATORY DUTY FOLLOWING DISCLOSURE

What this means for you?



FGM Mandatory reporting duty

Under 18's only

- If a victim tells you she has had FGM or a girl has signs which appear to show she has had FGM
- The police **MUST** be informed on non-emergency crime number, **101**.
- This should be done as soon as possible, best practice would be by the close of the next working day.
- *The duty to report falls on the professional who identifies the FGM, the responsibility should not be handed over to a colleague.*

DISCLOSURE

What this means for the young girl?



Worries, Confusions and Hopes!

- I have now disclosed that I have had FGM: was this the right thing to do?
- What if my parent find out that I have disclosed FGM?
- They say that it is not culture, it is torture; I am totally confused.
- Will I be supported by my school?
- What will happen to me now?
- I would like to be cared for, and for my external genitalia to get back to its original state...



DISCLOSURE

How would you prepare your setting?



Disclosures of FGM from students

*A guide for teaching staff and
frontline educational professionals*





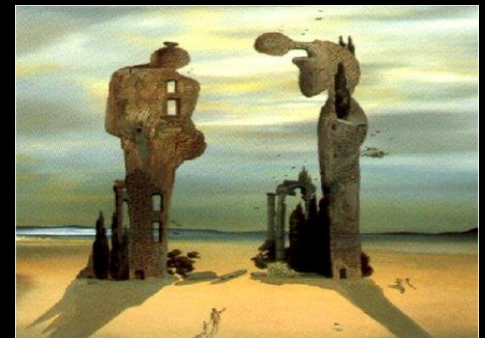
WHAT HAVE WE DONE?

Support Our Sisters

SOS Model Initiative

(BJM Award-winner 2015)

Support services adapted for schools



Support services developed for schools:

- ❑ **A Wellbeing Team** working closely with schools within school settings before and after FGM disclosure
- ❑ **Children and young people (1:1 and group therapy)**
- ❑ **Use of Art Therapy and other creative therapeutic approaches**
- ❑ **Trained Peer Mentors (youths and adults):**
 - **Peer support in basic cultural counselling**
 - **Engage with pupils to advise and supervise FGM project/campaign initiatives**



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PRACTICAL TIPS

- Provide a safe and supportive environment that promotes **trust and confidentiality**.
- Allow flexibility to make access suitable for **One to One interaction with FGM affected pupils** of varied ages.
- Use a **child-friendly, non-threatening form of communication** with affected pupils for them to feel engaged and comfortable when talking about FGM issues.
- Consult **FGM expert agencies** for further advice and guidance, or for partnership work.
- Avoid stigma by **educating ALL pupils** on the danger of FGM and engage them in developing youth project initiatives open to **ALL**.

CASE STUDY

VIDEO - TESTIMONY

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0r5sSrQnDqc>

THANK YOU!



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