Female Genital Mutilation/Cutting: A under-recognized form of gender-based violence in the United States

Agenda

- Overview of FGM/C
- History of the U.S. movement
- Connection to broader gender-based violence work
- Resources for Service Providers
- Q&A

Funding provided by Grant #90EV0430 from the Administration on Children, Youth and Families, Family and Youth Services Bureau, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. Its contents are solely the responsibility of the author(s) and do not represent the official views of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services.

Webinar services provided by the National Council of Juvenile and Family Court Judges. The opinions, findings, conclusions, and recommendations are those of the presenter(s) and do not necessarily reflect the views of the National Council of Juvenile and Family Court Judges.
Speakers

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Overview of FGM/C
How many people know someone who has experienced FGM/C?

What is FGM/C?

Female genital mutilation/cutting (FGM/C) comprises all procedures that involve partial or total removal of the external female genitalia, or other injury to the female genital organs for non-medical reasons.

https://www.who.int/news-room/fact-sheets/detail/female-genital-mutilation
After Effects

Short-term:
- severe pain
- bleeding/hemorrhage
- shock
- infection
- urinary tract infections

Long-term:
- menstruation problems
- fistula
- psychological harm
- birth complications
- sexual dysfunction

After Effects

Mental health
- Poor sleep
- Fatigue
- Generalized Body Pain
- Limitations in daily activities
- Poor self perceived well being
- Altered HPA axis- long term effects?
- Altered sexual function

If Khatna affected sex life, is it positively or adversely?

Respondents from Q26
(n=108)

- Adversely: 87%
- Positively: 7%
- Unsure: 3%
- Left answer blank: 3%
Why is it performed?

- Curb sexual desire and prevent promiscuous behavior
- Religion
- Culture
- Tradition
- Marriageability
- Cleanliness and purity, to aid religious piety
- Enhance sexual pleasure

FGM/C IS GLOBAL

FGM/C is present in at least 92 countries around the world.


FGC In the United States

THE NUMBER OF WOMEN AND GIRLS AT RISK OF FGM/C VARIES WIDELY ACROSS THE STATES.

NUMBER OF WOMEN AND GIRLS AT RISK
- 25,000 OR MORE
- 10,000 - 24,999
- 5,000 - 9,999
- LESS THAN 5,000

Population Reference Bureau 2013 Data
History of U.S. Movement

Have you heard about anti-FGM/C work in the U.S?
Multi-Sectoral Survivor Centered Strategy

Tolerance 
Action 
Diversity 
Survivor 
Collaboration 
Respect

FGM/C Trends in the U.S.


Increased Awareness
US efforts focus on prevention, protection, research, and care

Increased Government Support
Inter-Agency Working Group on FGM
Government reports, policy statements and recommendations
Research Funding

Increased Collaborations
US End FGM/C Network
- End Violence Against Girls: Summit on FGM/C
- Official launch 2018
- 600+ Indv. Members and 50 orgs
- State/City Coalitions

Survivors & Communities Speak out
- Survivor Led Initiatives
- Limited support survivors and survivor led organizations

Increased Intolerance
- Islamophobia
- Anti-immigrant sentiment

Insufficient Resources
- Limited access to funding and capacity building for CBOs
- Sustainability challenges
FGM/C and the Law in the US

Federal Law against FGM/C in the US
- 1996

First federal prosecution for FGM/C in Michigan (US vs. Nagarwala)
- 2013

Federal court denied the House appeal of the federal law
- 2017

Federal law amendments introduced in the House Judiciary Committee - Stop FGM Act
- 2018

Federal law was struck down
- 2019

Federal now be brought to the floor for a vote - Stop FGM Act

27 States had laws against FGM/C
- 2020

38 States have laws on FGM/C

State Laws on FGM/C

- States with FGM/C legislation
- States without FGM/C laws
Myths & Misconceptions

- FGM/C is one standard procedure and all women experience the same consequences
- FGM/C only happens in African communities
- FGM/C doesn’t happen in the U.S.
- FGM/C can be safe by being medicalized
- Girls and women choose to undergo FGM/C
- FGM/C has been criminalized in all U.S. States
- FGM/C is a religious or cultural issue and we should not condemn it
What connections do you see between FGM/C and other forms of gender-based violence (i.e. domestic violence, sexual assault, etc.)
Resources for Service Providers
**Covid-19 and FGM: Lessons learned from Ebola**

**Source:** UNICEF Technical Note on COVID19

### Key Effects on FGM Prevention and Care
- Social isolation and loss of social support
- Loss of access to education, reproductive health & protection services
- Loss of livelihoods
- New opportunities for young people to take on positive, new roles in their communities

### Key Program Recommendations
- Support response plans grounded children's rights gender analysis & address the increased risks of GBV
- Support efforts aimed at interrupting FGM/C during the pandemic & beyond
- Support access to digital tools for education, health, psychosocial support and social protection services (e.g. sexual and reproductive health services, GBV services)
- Support research both during and post-pandemic

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**Resources**

- [US End FGM/C Network](#)
- [An Educational Toolkit to Empower Survivors](#)
- [Female Genital Trauma: Guidelines for Working Therapeutically with Survivors of Female Genital Mutilation](#)
- [Female Genital Mutilation/Cutting (FGM/C) – A Visual Reference and Learning Tool for Health Care Professionals (Booklet)](#)
- [Obstetric Care for Women Affected by Female Genital Cutting](#)
  - And many more.......
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