



## Female Genital Mutilation/Cutting Awareness Initiative [FGM@acs.nyc.gov](mailto:FGM@acs.nyc.gov)

### What is Female Genital Mutilation/Cutting (FGM/C)?

“Female genital mutilation (FGM) 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.” – World Health Organization, 1997

### FGM/C Facts:

- FGM/C is a Human Rights Violation
- FGM/C is a Crime in the United States
- FGM/C performed on a minor is Child Abuse, and must be reported to the SCR\*
- FGM/C can not be justified due to cultural, religious, traditional or other beliefs
- FGM/C results in many short and long term physical and psychological consequences:

#### Physical Consequences May Include:

- Excessive bleeding
- Infection/recurring infections
- Urination difficulties
- Poor wound healing
- Transmission of HIV/Hepatitis
- Sexual dysfunction
- Infertility
- Childbirth complications
- Heavy/painful menses
- Shock
- Death
- Need for additional surgery

#### Psychological Consequences May Include:

- Depression/Anxiety:
  - Powerless, guilt
  - Sadness
  - Low self-esteem
  - Body image issues
  - Betrayal
  - Relationship & family issues
- PTSD:
  - Nightmares
  - Intrusive memories
  - Severe emotional distress
  - Trauma triggers
  - Flashbacks
  - Trauma avoidance
  - Overwhelming guilt and/or shame

### Working with Survivors:

- Only refer to culturally sensitive and clinically informed service providers. (You can email [FGM@acs.nyc.gov](mailto:FGM@acs.nyc.gov) to ask questions and discuss provider options)
- Avoid the word “mutilation” as it may be offensive to the survivor
  - Mirror the survivor’s own language, use their words to discuss FGM/C
- Avoid asking for unnecessary details to prevent re-traumatization
- Notify [FGM@acs.nyc.gov](mailto:FGM@acs.nyc.gov) for guidance and service provider referrals

---

\* SCR: New York’s Statewide Central Register of Child Abuse and Maltreatment. To report abuse or maltreatment of a child ages birth through 18 by parent(s) or person legally responsible, call 1- 800-342-3720  
<https://ocfs.ny.gov/main/cps/>

## **Prevention Through Developing and Communicating Awareness of:**

- “Vacation Cutting”– a planned summer trip to a country that practices FGM/C, or a holiday trip that requires additional time off from school, and/or mention of visiting relatives for an upcoming “special ceremony”
- FGM/C cannot be justified on either traditional or religious grounds. It may be a traditional practice, but it is not required in any religious text.
- Recognition of the vulnerability of very young girls - the younger the girl, the less likely she will understand or object

## **NYC Agencies with FGM/C Knowledge/Expertise:**

### Immigration and/or Language Access Issues, U and T Visa Certification Requests:

ACS’ Office of Immigrant Services and Language Affairs (for ACS and contract agencies)

- U or T Visas: [uvisa@acs.nyc.gov](mailto:uvisa@acs.nyc.gov)
- Questions about Immigration Issues: [sijs@acs.nyc.gov](mailto:sijs@acs.nyc.gov)
- Language Access: [language.access@acs.nyc.gov](mailto:language.access@acs.nyc.gov)

### Social Services:

- [FGM@acs.nyc.gov](mailto:FGM@acs.nyc.gov) for notifications and referrals (managed by ACS’ Office of Child Trafficking Prevention and Policy and Agency Medical Director)
- NYC Family Justice Centers (FJC) <https://www1.nyc.gov/site/ocdv/programs/family-justice-centers.page>
  - All five boroughs offer services from the Arab American Family Support Center and four boroughs offer services from Sanctuary for Families
- Arab American Family Support Center, Anti-Violence Program
  - Brooklyn: 718-643-8000; Queens: 718-937-8000 <https://www.aafscny.org/>
- Sanctuary for Families. 212-349-6009, x221 <https://sanctuaryforfamilies.org/>
- Sauti Yetu promotes immigrant girls' safe transitions into adulthood. Locations in Staten Island and the Bronx. 718-665-2486 <http://www.sautiyetu.org/>
- Bellevue/NYU: Program for Survivors of Torture. [info@survivorsoftorture.org](mailto:info@survivorsoftorture.org)
- Libertas Center for Human Rights services for torture survivors [libertascenter.net/contact/](http://libertascenter.net/contact/)

### Legal Services

- African Services Committee 212-222-3882 <http://www.africanservices.org/>
- Sanctuary for Families. 212-349-6009: Immigration: x293, Family Law x246
- Bellevue/NYU: Program for Survivors of Torture. [info@survivorsoftorture.org](mailto:info@survivorsoftorture.org)

### Medical Services

1. Women’s Holistic Health Initiative, Harlem United / URAM, The Nest Community Health Center 212-849-2780 <https://www.harlemunited.org/the-nest-is-now-open/>
2. EMPOWER Clinic: Care for women who have experienced sexual trauma. For an appointment, email: [empowergyn@gmail.com](mailto:empowergyn@gmail.com) Website: <http://empowergyn.org/>
3. Bellevue/NYU: Program for Survivors of Torture. [info@survivorsoftorture.org](mailto:info@survivorsoftorture.org)

### Additional Resources:

- Muslim American Leadership Alliance – advocacy / local resource referral
- There is No Limit Foundation – advocacy / local resource referral
- Physicians for Human Rights – coordinates legal and medical
- Health Right International - coordinates legal and medical
- Catholic Charities USA– legal / social services
- North American Society for Refugee Health – medical
- Equality Now – advocacy/ local resource referral
- Safe Hands for Girls – advocacy / local resource referral
- Forma- counseling/ advocacy/ community outreach
- Tahirih Justice Center – legal / advocacy

FGM/C information provided courtesy of the New York Coalition to End FGM/C.

Learn more at: <https://endfgmnewyork.wixsite.com/home>