

Female Genital Mutilation/Cutting Awareness Initiative

To report a concern or connect to a provider, email: 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 cannot be justified on the basis of culture, religion, or tradition
- 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 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 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
- Questions about Immigration Issues: sijs@acs.nyc.gov
- Language Access: language.access@acs.nyc.gov

Social Services:

- FGM@acs.nyc.gov for child welfare related 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
- Libertas Center for Human Rights services for torture survivors 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

Medical Services

1. Gotham Health/Morrisania 1225 Gerard Avenue Bronx, NY 10452 718-960-2875
2. EMPOWER Clinic: Care for women who have experienced sexual trauma. For an appointment, email: empowergyn@gmail.com Website: <http://empowergyn.org/>
3. Bellevue/NYU: Program for Survivors of Torture. 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 for services asylum seekers
- Health Right International - coordinates legal and medical services for asylum seekers
- 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
- Sahiyo – advocacy/ resource referral
- 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>