Let's talk about FGM

Be part of the change that ends FGM within a generation
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This booklet was created by young people from Cheney School and Cherwell School who participated in a project designed by Oxford Against Cutting.

With thanks to
Abbie, Ahd, Anna, Chantelle, Ella, Flora, Iman, Luna, Nia, Roisin, Roisin, Sondos, Sophia.

The student team also ran an art competition, CUT: Artists Against FGM, and the winners’ artwork is reproduced in this booklet.

Cover
Adapted from artwork by Emily Hicks (page 15)
WHAT IS FGM? I’VE NEVER HEARD OF IT.

FGM stands for female genital mutilation. It is the removal of the external parts of female genitalia.

Some people call it female genital cutting (FGC) or female circumcision (FC).

_Type 1:_ when the clitoris or the clitoral hood is cut off.

_Type 2:_ when the clitoris and inner lips are cut off.

_Type 3:_ when the clitoris, inner lips and outer lips are cut and sewn together.

_Type 4:_ all other harmful practices including pricking, piercing, cutting, scraping and burning.
DOES IT HAPPEN HERE? WE KNOW GIRLS ARE TAKEN ABROAD TO HAVE IT DONE.
WHO IS AFFECTED BY FGM?

FGM happens to girls from when they are born up to adolescence or just before they get married.

An estimated 100-140 million women have been affected worldwide.

In the UK 24,000 girls under 15 are at risk of Type 3.

It happens globally, nationally and locally.

www.oxfordagainstcutting.org

_image by
Olivia Burt and Mimi Morley Iszatt
WHY?

Some people think they have to do FGM because of religion but it’s a practice that exists in cultures all over the world, regardless of religious belief.

It has been passed down from one generation to another. Sometimes it is done to show that a girl is becoming a woman.

Some girls are pressured to have it done so as not to bring dishonour to the family’s name.

FGM is often done to stop girls having sexual desires and protect their virginity.
Does it matter to boys?

It is important for boys to know about FGM because it can affect their mothers, sisters and their own child.

Everybody needs to tackle this issue together.

Circumcision of boys is very different to FGM because of the reasons behind it, the risks involved and the harm.
THE LAW

It is illegal for people in the UK to perform FGM.

It is also illegal to take a girl overseas to have FGM performed on her and to assist the procedure taking place.

HUMAN RIGHTS

FGM is a violation of multiple human rights. For example:

_the right to health and security
_the right to life as in some cases FGM can lead to death
_right to equality

It causes inequality between men and women and is a form of discrimination.
A SURVIVOR’S STORY

Waris Dirie was about five years old when she was left in a makeshift shelter under a tree for several days to recover from her female genital mutilation (FGM).

She still remembers her anger. “When they tried to convince me that God wants this, I said: ‘Did my God hate me so much?’ I remember telling my mother: ‘If he hates me, then I don’t want him.’”

In the days after FGM, many girls die from blood loss or infection. Dirie says she lay there, talking to God, saying, “make me stay alive. You owe me this now.”

“All my life I’ve tried to think of a reason for my circumcision. If I could perhaps I would be able to accept what they’ve done to me. But I’ve never been able to find one. And the more I thought about it, the angrier I got.”

“Female genital mutilation targets little girls, baby girls, fragile angels who are helpless, who cannot fight back. It’s a crime against a child, a crime against humanity. It’s abuse. It’s absolutely criminal and we have to stop it”.

Waris Dirie is a Somali model, author, actress and social activist. She has established various foundations for the protection of girls’ and women’s rights and is UN Special Ambassador for the Elimination of Female Genital Mutilation.
HELP AND SUPPORT

I am worried for ...
I think I may be at risk
I just need someone to talk to

WHO SHOULD I TELL?

Trusted adult
Police Officer
Teacher
School Nurse
HOW TO HELP PEOPLE YOU KNOW

You can talk to them about your concern and let them know why you think it is a harmful practice.

FGM will affect everyone. It affects you, your family and your children.

Be sensitive and make sure they know you’re helping. You can contact helplines.
If you or someone you know is at IMMEDIATE risk of being cut or being taken overseas to be cut call the police on 999.

You can make a referral if you are concerned that a child is at risk of harm to: MASH, Oxfordshire (Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub) 0845 050 7666

NSPCC (National Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children) 0800 028 3550 (FGM Helpline) - a free 24hr service for advice, information or support.
Email: fgmhelp@nspcc.org.uk

Oxfordshire Domestic Abuse Helpline 0800 7310055

FOWARD (Foundation for Women’s Health, Research and Development) 020 8960 4000 www.forwarduk.org.uk

Metropolitan Police
There is a child abuse investigation unit dealing with FGM known as Project Azure: 020 7161 2888
**Home Office**
You can get information from the Home Office that might help you argue against FGM. You can obtain a small leaflet to carry with you about the UK law in various languages on: 0870 241 4680

**Foreign and Commonwealth Office**
+44 (0)20 7008 1500
Call the Foreign and Commonwealth Office if you are abroad and need help or advice.

**Childline**
0800 11 11 (this number will not show up on a phone bill).
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