



BRYCS
 COMMUNITY CONVERSATIONS
 Collective Voices for Improving the Care and Reducing the Risk of FGC

Agenda

- Brief overview of FGC
- Overview of the Community Conversations project
- Details of the project process
- Overview of *Raising a Girl*
- Ways to use *Raising a Girl*
- Other available resources
- Questions and Comments

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What is Female Genital Cutting (FGC)?

- The cutting, pricking, removing, or sewing closed all or part of a woman or girl's external genitals
- Called many different names: Female Genital Mutilation, sunna, khatna, excision, infibulation, etc.
- Considered a violation of human rights, gender-based violence, and child abuse
- Classified into four different types

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Why is FGC Practiced?

- Cultural norms, religion, rite of passage into womanhood, chastity, marriageability, etc.

Where is FGC Practiced?

- Practiced in approximately 30 different countries in Africa, parts of the Middle East, and Asia. Also in Europe, Australia, Canada, and the U.S.
- 200 million women and girls affected worldwide
 - 513,000 girls at risk in the U.S.

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Physical and Psychological Health Implications

- Short term physical complications
 - Excessive bleeding, shock, infection, death
- Long term physical complications
 - Chronic infection, vaginal cysts, problems during sex and childbirth
- Psychological complications
 - PTSD, shame, depression, anxiety, fear of sex and childbirth

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The Community Conversations Project

- Decrease the likelihood that currently impacted refugee communities will continue FGC
- Improve the practical response of service providers
- Develop community informed resources



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Focus Groups

- Held once a year at five different sites
- Included a variety of cultural communities
 - Voluntary
- Informed us of needs
 - Important topics that should be addressed
- Suggested edits and approved developed resources

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Raising a Girl: A Handbook for Newcomer Mothers and Daughters

- Created for preteens and parents new to the U.S.
- Designed for preteens and parents (or another trusted female) to go through together.
- Special focus on FGC
- Intended to provide education about healthy development of young girls.

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Handbook Design

- Each topic has separate sections for moms and daughters
- Topics include discussion questions
- Joint activities throughout

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Topics Addressed

- * FGC
- * Puberty and physical changes in adolescence
- * What to Expect when Visiting the Doctor
- * Sex Education at School
- * Building Healthy Relationships with Friends
- * Alternative Rites of Passage

And more!

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A Girl's Changing Body

Menstrual Cycle
You will start your menstrual cycle soon if you haven't already. This is also called a period. The average age girls start their period is around 12 years old, but everyone is different. You might first notice about spotting your first period about 6 weeks. Not to get more, we can't wait or another friend asks about what their experience was like. This may also mean there is more you can do to ease periods such as a pad, tampon, menstrual cup, or menstrual cap. You are prepared when your period arrives. There are some signs of your period to help you get ready for it. They are: you start your menstrual cycle, it lasts for 3-7 days and occurs once a month. The time during or around your period you might feel tired, bloated, irritable, sad, or nervous. These are signs of hormonal changes. These changes are normal and part of growing up. You can talk to your doctor about these changes and how to manage them. If you have a severe period, you can see a doctor. They can help you manage your period and how you feel during that time.

Addresses physical, emotional, and biological changes expected in adolescence.

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What to Expect When Visiting the Doctor

Provides information about female exams, pictorial guides of female anatomy, and information about going to the doctor.

Pelvic Exam:
During a pelvic exam, an OB/GYN will use their fingers to press on the outside of your body, checking your uterus, ovaries, fallopian tubes, ovaries, and bladder for any abnormalities or signs of disease. First the doctor will examine the opening of your vagina, looking for signs of irritation or abnormal discharge. Then the doctor will insert a speculum into your vagina and examine your internal reproductive organs. Usually, the exam takes only a few minutes and does not hurt, though you may feel uncomfortable. It is recommended you have this exam done annually during your reproductive years.

Pap Smear:
A pap smear is usually done during the pelvic exam where the doctor obtains a small sample of cells from the cervix to look for cervical cancer, a cancer that only occurs in women. Sometimes the pap smear is slightly painful, though it only lasts a few seconds. For women ages 21-29, it is recommended you have a pap smear every year. For women ages 30 and older pap smears are only needed every other year unless there are abnormalities or signs of disease related to your female body parts. Some cultures believe a pap smear can tear your hymen, usually an indication that a woman has had her virginity. However, there is no evidence a pap smear tears or stretches your hymen in any way.

EXTERNAL Female Genitalia

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Building Healthy Relationships

Heart to Heart

Ask your Daughter

- What are some qualities you want to see in a friend? What are good questions you want to ask with your friends?
- What do you like about your friends? Are there things about your friends you don't like?
- Are there ever times you feel like you are pressured to do something you don't want to do?
- Would you like to know your friends' likes and dislikes to know how to be a good friend?

Ask your Mom

- What are good qualities you have in your friends? What are good questions you should ask your friends?
- Are there ever times you feel like you are pressured to do something you don't want to do?
- What are the things friends do in your country of origin? What is it like here to be a friend?
- Would you like to know your friends' likes and dislikes to know how to be a good friend?

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Female Genital Cutting

How to talk about FGC together

- Health implications of FGC
- Alternative rites of passage

Health Implications of FGC

For Women and Daughters

There are no health benefits of FGC. It is harmful to women and girls and should not be used. Health implications of FGC include:

- increased risk of urinary tract infections and other genital infections
- increased risk of HIV and other sexually transmitted infections
- increased risk of pelvic inflammatory disease (PID)
- increased risk of infertility
- increased risk of obstetric complications during pregnancy and childbirth
- increased risk of postnatal hemorrhage
- increased risk of chronic pain
- increased risk of psychological distress
- increased risk of self-harm and suicide

Short Term Health Effects	Long Term Health Effects	Obstetrical Effects	Relational Effects
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• urinary tract infections• vaginitis• pelvic inflammatory disease (PID)• infertility• increased risk of HIV and other sexually transmitted infections• increased risk of pelvic inflammatory disease (PID)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• increased risk of urinary tract infections and other genital infections• increased risk of HIV and other sexually transmitted infections• increased risk of pelvic inflammatory disease (PID)• increased risk of infertility• increased risk of obstetric complications during pregnancy and childbirth• increased risk of postnatal hemorrhage• increased risk of chronic pain• increased risk of psychological distress• increased risk of self-harm and suicide	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• increased risk of obstetric complications during pregnancy and childbirth• increased risk of postnatal hemorrhage• increased risk of chronic pain• increased risk of psychological distress• increased risk of self-harm and suicide	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• increased risk of psychological distress• increased risk of self-harm and suicide• increased risk of relationship problems• increased risk of reduced self-esteem• increased risk of reduced quality of life

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Activity Pages

The activity pages are designed for mother and daughter to do together. They've purposefully been placed after more difficult topics to encourage fruitful conversations.

Activities include:

- * About You and Me
- * Tell Me a Story
- * What Makes us Beautiful
- * Spending Time Together
- * What is a Woman?

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Ways to Use Raising a Girl: At Home

- ✿ Mothers and daughters
Daughters with elder sisters, aunts, grandmothers, etc.
- ✿ Read together
- ✿ Discuss the topics together
- ✿ Work on activities together

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Ways to Use Raising a Girl: As a Group

- ✿ Led by service providers, local group of women, etc.
- ✿ Each chapter is a session
- ✿ Mothers and daughters attend together
- ✿ Group can learn from one another

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Ways to Use Raising a Girl: In Schools

- ✿ Led by teachers or parents in a school setting
- ✿ Add key topics to sex education curriculum
FGC generally not addressed

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Other Available Resources


- ✿ Female Genital Cutting Backgrounder
- ✿ Raising a Girl: A Handbook for Newcomer Mothers and Daughters (available in Somali)
- ✿ Ways to Use the Handbook
- ✿ Starting a Conversation with Your Doctor for Women and Girls Who Have Experienced FGC (available in Amharic, Arabic, French, Oromo, & Somali)
- ✿ Pregnancy and Childbirth for Women Affected by FGC (available in Amharic, French, Somali, & Tigrinya)
- ✿ Female Genital Cutting Fact Sheets for Practitioners
 - Child Welfare Professionals
 - Educators
 - Health Practitioners
 - Obstetric Care
 - Resettlement Providers

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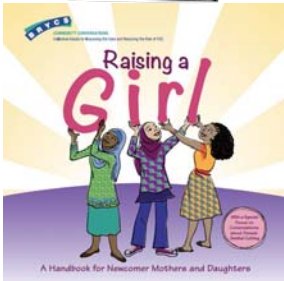
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Questions?



Raising a Girl
A Handbook for Newcomer Mothers and Daughters

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Contact Us

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