

# Lesson four: My beliefs



## Lesson aim:

Pupils know some cultural practices are against British law and universal human rights, including female genital mutilation (FGM).



## Learning outcomes:

- I know that the cultural practice of female genital mutilation is against British law
- I know that female genital mutilation constitutes abuse and is a crime
- I know how to support a friend who I am worried might be at risk of female genital mutilation



## Resources required:

- Resource sheet: Vulva
- Resource sheet: FGM fact and fiction cards

## Key words: vulva, clitoris, circumcision, female genital mutilation

### Teacher notes:

Male circumcision is a legal practice in this country and can be necessary for medical reasons. Female genital mutilation (FGM) is an illegal practice in this country and many countries around the world. It is surrounded by cultural sensitivities which need to be addressed. Discussing from a human rights perspective provides a helpful approach. It is important all young people have awareness of FGM so that young people from practising communities and their peers are able to discuss this practice and know how to support each other.

Teach this lesson with full consideration that some pupils may have experienced or know of family and/or friends that have already experienced FGM. The lesson may lead to cultural sensitivity and/or safeguarding disclosures.

### Begin the lesson by...

Explaining to pupils that this lesson is going to look at female genital mutilation, sometimes referred to as FGM. FGM breaches a person's human rights and is considered a form of abuse. FGM is illegal in this country and many other countries around the world. FGM can only happen to girls and the process of FGM means that sexual intercourse is unlikely to be enjoyable and pleasurable (as it is meant to be), but could be uncomfortable and painful. Explain to pupils what they can do if they find any aspect of the lesson upsetting and need to leave the classroom. Remind pupils of the working agreement, especially the process for making disclosures.



## Activity one: Pleasure ping pong

Divide the class into pairs. Instruct the pairs to face each other. Tell pupils that you are going to give them a category, following which they are to take it in turns to say something that gives them the most pleasure relevant to the topic. The first person to take more than three seconds to respond or who cannot name something loses. Play the game to best of five, using the following topics:

- **Favourite foods** – chocolate, strawberries, sweet and sour chicken, popcorn, chips etc
- **Favourite things to do** – Xbox, cycling, eating chocolate, football, singing, soak in the bath etc
- **Favourite things about school** – art, being with friends, the library, home time, learning new things etc
- **Favourite things to receive as a present** – new clothes, music, fun stationary, bath bombs etc
- **Favourite music** – names of favourite music artists, genres, song names, instruments etc



**What would it be like if someone didn't let you have any of the favourite things that you identified in the game?**

Explain to pupils that they have a right to enjoy things that give them pleasure, providing this does not cause harm to another person. This can include having pleasurable sexual experiences with the people they love when they are older.

Divide the class into groups of five. Give each pupil within the group a number between one and five. Provide each group with a vulva worksheet and labels. Tell each group to label the part of the vulva that corresponds with the number they have been allocated.

To check the answers are correct, ask pupils to stand up if their number represents the part of the vulva that provides an experience of pleasure. (pupils allocated a 'one' should be standing). Repeat for the remaining numbers.

Explain to pupils that some boys are circumcised which is the surgical removal of some or all of the foreskin (the skin that covers the tip of the penis) and that this is legal. Some girls are circumcised. This is called female genital mutilation (FGM) and is the removal of the clitoris and sometimes the removal of the inner, or the inner and the outer labia. It can also include sewing the vulva together so that only a small hole is left to urinate and menstruate (having a period) through. All types of FGM are illegal.



## Activity two: FGM fact or fiction?

Divide the FGM fact and fiction cards between the pupils. Tell pupils who have a card to move to the left of the classroom if they think their card is a fact and the right side of the classroom if they think their card is fiction.

Tell pupils that if they have a blue or a purple card, they should be stood on the right of the classroom. If their card is black or green, they should be stood on the left of the classroom. Tell pupils if they need to correct their position they can swap sides now.

Ask pupils with facts (left side) to take turns in reading their cards out to the class. Reinforce that all of these statements are true.

Myth	Fact
People have FGM for religious reasons.	FGM is not required by any religion.
The clitoris will continue to grow if it is not cut.	The clitoris stops growing after puberty.
The clitoris will harm the man during sexual intercourse.	The clitoris gives the woman sexual pleasure. It does not cause harm to anyone.
Without FGM the woman will smell.	FGM makes the vagina less hygienic. It can be harder for urine and menstruation fluids (period) to pass out of the body.
FGM heals quickly.	FGM can take up to 7 weeks to heal. In some cases it can become infected and never completely heals.
FGM is a matter of personal choice.	FGM is illegal in the UK and many other countries.
FGM has to be done using pain relief.	FGM is conducted without any pain relief. It can be very painful.

Explain to pupils that FGM is a very dangerous procedure that can cause many complications, including death. FGM does not serve a positive function for women. FGM denies girls their rights as a child under the United Convention of the Rights of a Child, Article 19 which states that they have a 'right to be protected from being hurt or mistreated'. FGM can also make sexual activity an uncomfortable and painful experience, instead of a pleasurable activity. It is against the law to have FGM in the UK or to arrange for a child to be sent abroad for FGM and is punishable by a prison sentence.



## Activity three: FGM fears

Read the following scenario to the class:

"I am an 11-year-old girl. I have two sisters. They are age three and nine years. I also have a brother who is age seven years. My parents have recently started talking about taking my brother, sisters and I back home for the summer holidays and have said that there will be a special party just for the girls. My sisters are really excited about this and my brother is annoyed that he is being left out. I am feeling anxious and scared as I have heard that sometimes these parties are where FGM happens. I don't want to have FGM done, but I don't want to go against my parents who have told me if I don't have FGM one day then I will never be able to get married as people will think I just want sex all the time. What should I do?"

Ask pupils to pair, square and share how they might feel if they found out that one of their friends was going to have FGM.

Divide the class into pairs. Tell each pair to create a freeze frame that demonstrates someone as the 11-year-old girl from the above scenario, whilst the other is their friend. Ask each pair to consider the body language and what they might say to each other. Move around the room touching the frozen pairs on the shoulder in turn, and ask them to share their response with the class. If they are uncomfortable doing this, allow them to demonstrate this by putting a finger over their lips.

Highlight key points and discuss the strengths of the responses with the class.



### Extension:

Tell pupils to create a FGM factsheet. The factsheet should include the health risks of FGM, the law and what to do if someone is worried about FGM.

### Finish the lesson by:

Providing pupils with an opportunity to ask questions. Ask pupils to share some of the FGM facts that they have learned in the lesson. Remind pupils that FGM breaches a person's human rights and is considered a form of abuse. FGM is illegal. Reassure pupils that if they have any concerns they, or someone they know has experienced, or is at risk of FGM they should report it to an adult they trust in the school. Signpost pupils to who they can talk to in school if they have any concerns or questions about what has been taught in the lesson.