

**FGM**

# Teaching and learning about FGM

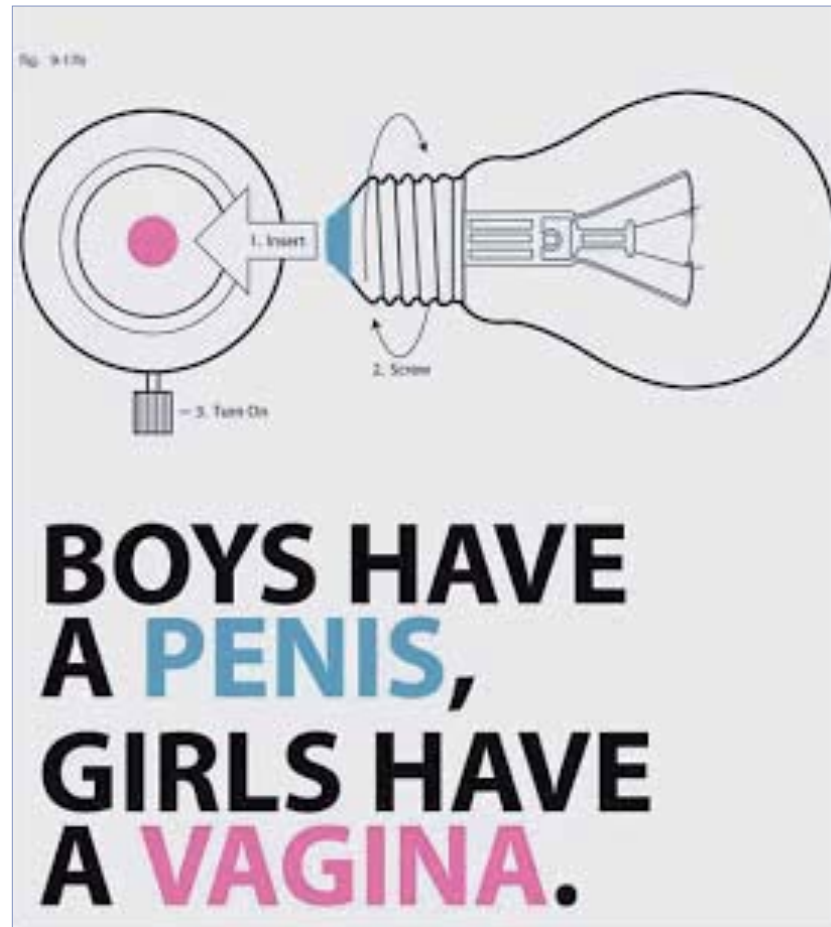
## in the classroom



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## Female genital mutilation



## Female genital mutilation

SRE covered: all you need to teach about sex and relationships in secondary schools:



► 'Beyond the basics'



## Female genital mutilation

### The local context:

- ▶ Work done as part of Islington council's *Violence against women and girls strategy* showed that 10% of 0-18 year old girls in Islington are at risk of (or may already have undergone) FGM
- ▶ ... so we certainly wanted to include addressing FGM in *SRE Covered*



## Female genital mutilation

### Reaching the right pupils:

- ▶ We also knew that girls between 5 and 9 are most at risk of undergoing FGM, but that it also occurs in adolescent girls
- ▶ So ... in secondary schools it was important to teach the youngest pupils – Year 7 (11-12 year olds)
- ▶ The lesson had to fit in with the SRE they were already doing, and be accessible to their age group



## Female genital mutilation

### Developing the lesson:

- ▶ We worked with experts (local and national)
  - Forward
  - local DV prevention officer
- ▶ Included inputs from young people in lesson
  - *Think Again* film by Forward
  - Waris Dirie book extract
- ▶ Used good teaching methodology: made it engaging and interactive



**KS3**

# FGM lesson



## **SRE Covered:**

all you need to teach about sex and relationships  
in secondary schools

## Female genital mutilation

### Learning outcomes:

- ▶ To revise the different parts of the female reproductive organs (genitalia)
- ▶ To understand what female genital mutilation (FGM) is
- ▶ To know that FGM is illegal and where someone at risk can get help





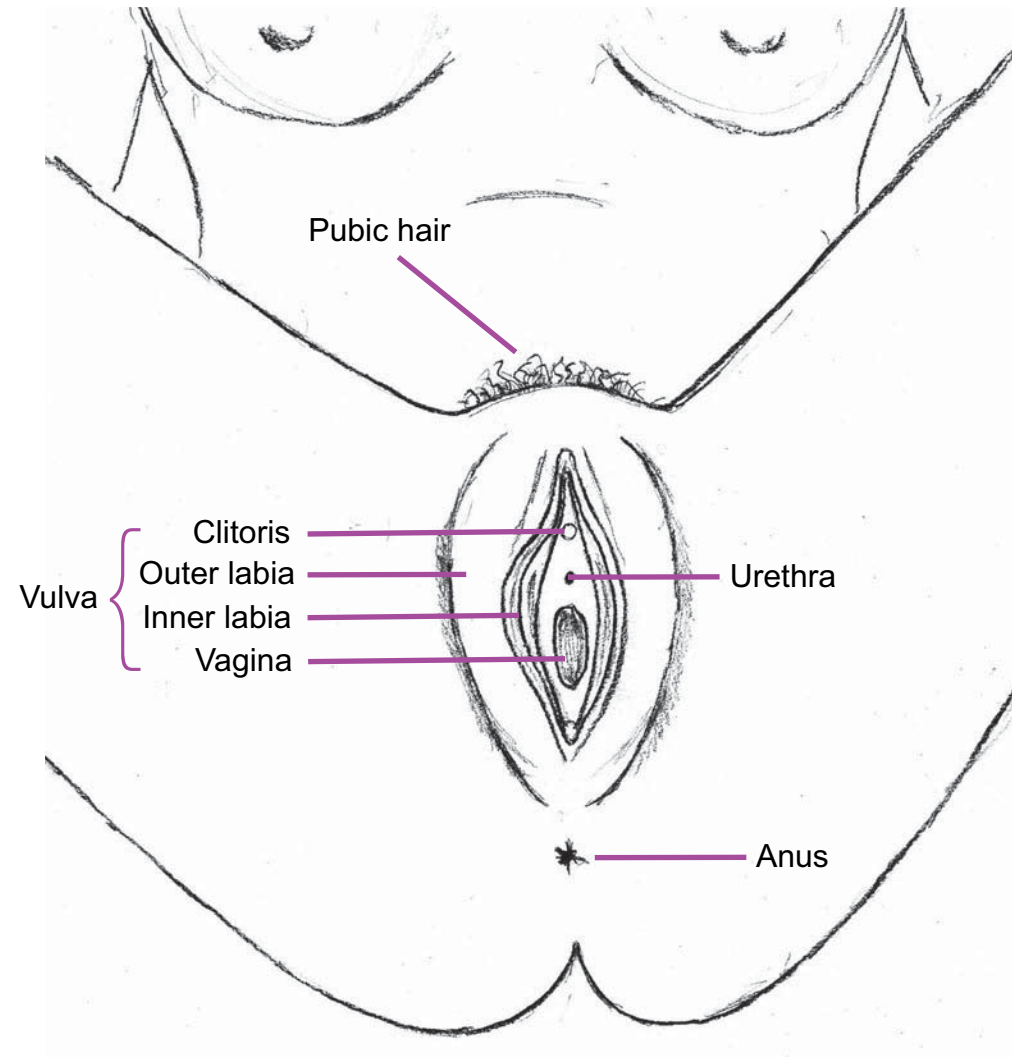
## Female genital mutilation

### Ground rules:

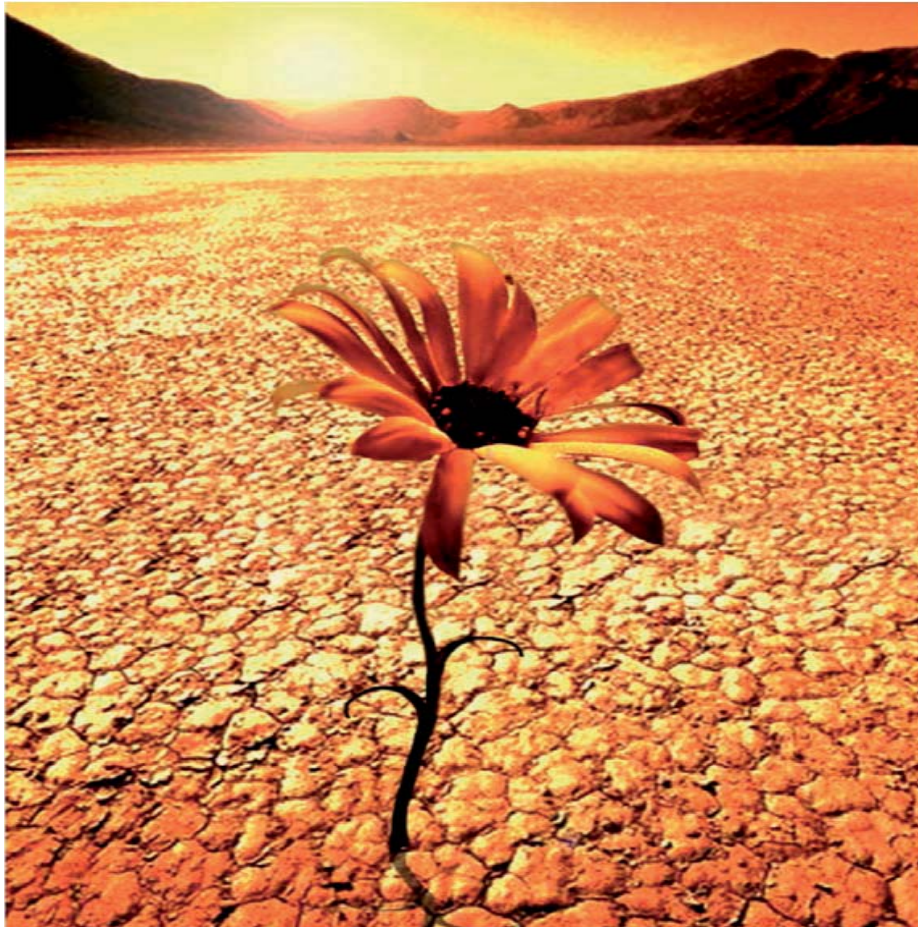
- ▶ Respect people for who they are and what they say
- ▶ Listen when anyone is talking
- ▶ Try to use the correct words for naming body parts and sexual activities
- ▶ No personal questions
- ▶ Don't name names: if you want to ask about or share a personal story or experience, you can speak in the third person about 'someone I know', 'a friend', 'a situation I've heard about/read about'
- ▶ Everyone has the 'right to pass', or not say anything if they don't want to
- ▶ Confidentiality: 'what is said in the room, stays in the room' except if anyone mentions something which could be harmful or put them at risk – then will have to pass the information on to help keep them safe



## Female external organs - labelled



## Female genital mutilation



Listen to, or read,  
the extract from  
*Desert Flower*  
by Waris Dirie

## Female genital mutilation

### What is female genital mutilation?

Female genital mutilation comprises all procedures involving partial or total removal of the external female genitalia or other injury to the female genital organs for non-medical reasons.

It has no health benefits and harms girls and women in many ways.

Statement from the World Health Organization, 2011



# Female genital mutilation

Think again!

Watch the **film** and then complete

Reasons given by people for performing FGM:

Arguments against performing FGM:

 [www.youtube.com/watch?v=kzBNTtR7toE](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kzBNTtR7toE)



## Female genital mutilation



What might Zainab's friends say?



## Female genital mutilation

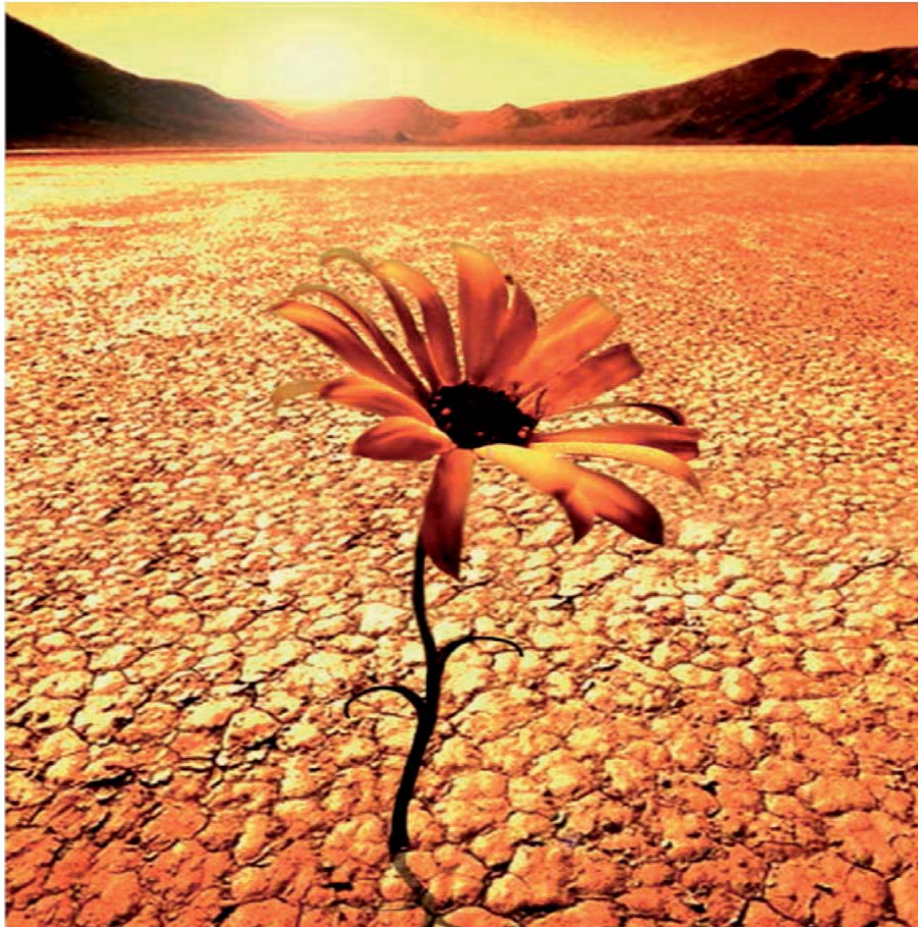
### What can you do if you are worried that someone is at risk?

If you are worried, it is very important that you do something to stop FGM from taking place. Do not stay silent.

- ▶ Talk to a trusted adult about the situation – a teacher or school nurse or close relative who you know can intervene.
- ▶ The teacher who is taking this lesson has a list of organisations that can help.
- ▶ If the girl is at immediate risk, call the police on 999.
- ▶ If you are abroad you can still contact the nearest British Consulate, Embassy or High Commission for help.



## Female genital mutilation



Listen to, or read,  
the extract from  
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## Female genital mutilation

So ... how do schools respond?

- ▶ Schools feel strongly that it is important to teach about
- ▶ Some teachers already discuss it with pupils – mostly with older girls
- ▶ Initial concerns from schools about parents' reactions but although we wrote to parents there was no reaction – and no pupils withdrawn
- ▶ Teachers have been quite cautious and needed some convincing; so far all have wanted to tweak the resources in some way



### So ... how do pupils respond?

- ▶ Trialled it in several classes now
- ▶ Pupils were very engaged throughout the lessons and had lots of questions
- ▶ I did some detailed evaluation with the first two classes:
  - the vast majority of pupils (32 out of 38) had not heard of FGM before the lesson; afterwards they could accurately say what it was;
  - Many (23) gave relevant / accurate further information  
e.g. *“That it’s illegal. It’s not at all safe. It doesn’t have to be done.”*
  - Some (8) expressed views that FGM was wrong e.g. *“You have to stop it.”*



## Female genital mutilation

So ... how do pupils respond?

- ▶ They had mixed feelings about the lesson:
  - many (12) expressed empathy with women who have had FGM  
e.g. *“I felt their pain. I wouldn’t want that to happen to me.”*
  - others (12) felt sad, shocked or worried



## Female genital mutilation

So ... how do pupils respond?

- And a number qualified their feelings e.g.

*“It kinda made me feel uncomfortable but I’m glad that I know just in case FGM comes up in life.”*

*“I felt a little bad for people who had had it done, but the teacher made me feel comfortable”.*

- BUT the overwhelming majority (36/37 answers) thought it was important for young people to learn about FGM



### So ... how do schools respond?

- ▶ Significantly, the teacher felt that it was now a subject that she would be happy to teach
- ▶ The school has embedded the lesson within their Year 7 SRE scheme of work on puberty
- ▶ Other schools locally have also begun to trial and embed the lesson
- ▶ Working with other agencies to support schools to teach it



As one pupil put it:

*“Once the whole of year seven and on are aware, together (with adults and so on) we could hopefully stop FGM.”*

