

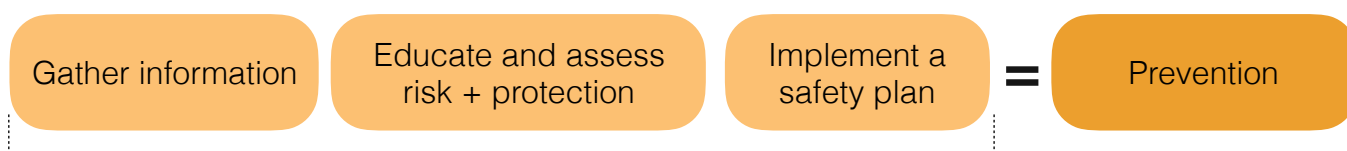
# Gathering Information

## Setting the Scene

- Consider the best place to meet the girl/woman/family, which may not always be in the family home. Explore other places such as an office or a children's centre.
- Put the girl/woman and family at ease; be mindful of your verbal communication and body language as this can impact on survivors who may already feel traumatised.
- Be mindful of the different needs of each family, adapt your approach accordingly to each individual circumstance and don't treat all FGM cases as the same.
- Don't make assumptions based on a girl's or family's cultural or religious background.
- Remember that some women and girls may not be aware that they have had FGM (especially if they have undergone the practice as babies)
- See the the girl or woman alone wherever possible.
- The women/girl may not know what "FGM" means, so it is important you explain the definition of what is considered FGM in the UK. You can use the terminology guide (Appendix 3) to help with this conversation.

## Working with Girls and Women

- To begin building a rapport, ask about girl's progress at school, likes/dislikes, life back home (if they have come to the UK from overseas), what they miss etc.
- Be aware that the girl may not want to embarrass/dishonour or bring shame on the family by talking openly about FGM.
- If the girl has disclosed information about FGM, explore if she may be at risk of facing repercussions from family members. For example the family may blame her for alerting the authorities and having them involved in the family's life.
- What are the feelings and wishes of the girl(s) and their understanding of risk?
- Inform a girl/woman/family about how she will be protected in the UK and what options may be open to her (eg: FGM Protection Order). You may wish to develop a support and safety plan with the girl/women/family.
- You may wish to talk to the family about the research you have done about FGM in their country and see what their views are on it.
- If a girl (under 18) discloses that she has been subjected to FGM, explain that social workers are under a mandatory duty to report this to the police. Reassure the girl that she has not done anything wrong.



### Intervention