Do No Harm is critical principle for empowering and protecting women and activists working to end female genital mutilation (FGM). It provides a shared vision and set of approaches to help unify and grow the movement to end FGM – and protect vulnerable groups from harm and resistance.

**PHOTOGRAPHY AND IMAGES**

**Photography and images communicate a clear message about what you believe and value.**

**We...**

- Never use graphic imagery (e.g. bloodied razor blades or children in pain) which can prompt flashbacks for survivors and stigmatise and/or disrespect the dignity of those who have undergone FGM.
- Always share positive images of women and girls. We ask ourselves the question - does this image respect the women and children involved? Does it communicate their dignity and value?
- Make sure people in images have given their consent.

**What we say and how we say it**

- Ask if we’re writing for this community, rather than about them.
- Tell someone’s story using their own words.

**Examples of inappropriate language and imagery**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Risk of harm</th>
<th>Why it should be avoided</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Poor little girls are subjected to FGM</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Language patronises rather than empowers girls</td>
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<tr>
<td>Can alienate individuals who might otherwise be activists for the cause</td>
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<tr>
<td>Frames FGM as solely a health issue</td>
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<tr>
<td>Can promote medicalisation rather than abandonment of FGM</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Can trigger traumatic flashbacks for survivors</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

**AVOID FOCUSING NARROWLY ON HEALTH IMPLICATIONS OR THE LAW**

Focusing too narrowly on the health consequences of FGM may lead to medicalisation (health workers carrying out FGM) or shifts to types of FGM that are perceived to be less severe, rather than total abandonment.

- All forms of FGM are violence against women and girls, and an abuse of their human rights. Laws against FGM are important but do not succeed in isolation.
- There is no silver bullet. A holistic response to ending FGM is required: community approaches and social change initiatives are needed to complement the law.
- Think about how ending FGM can be integrated into broader efforts for child welfare, health and development e.g. child, early and forced marriages, maternal health, and education.
- Safeguard children, survivors and others

**PROMOTE LOCALLY-LED CHANGE**

- If communities feel that change to end FGM is being imposed from afar, this may result in increased support for FGM. Effective change to end FGM is locally led, and based on deep local knowledge and visible local leadership.
- Use locally-led and culturally relevant communications to spark discussion and dialogue, rather than lecturing people.