

---

## FGM/C Safety Plan Instructions and Resources

Our safety planning tool is designed to provide a compassionate and comprehensible guide that empowers girls-at-risk to make informed decisions about their well-being and give them agency over their situation.

We acknowledge the importance of cultural sensitivity and reject any form of racialization or stigmatization that could perpetuate harm. By focusing on education, awareness, and community support, we aim to foster a sense of agency and resilience. This tool is a resource that respects diverse perspectives and experiences. Our commitment is to approach this issue with empathy, recognizing the complex social and cultural contexts involved.

Most girls undergo FGM/C when they are young, and most have no idea what is in store for them when they travel abroad, or when a cutter is brought to their home. What we hope for, with the continued activism and awareness-raising activities of our network and the many organizations that are a part of it, is that more girls, even young girls, will become aware of the dangers and of their rights and options.

### **When to use a safety plan?**

After you have conducted a risk assessment using the FGM/C Risk Assessment and Intervention Tool and concluded that they are at possible or imminent risk of FGM/C. In a situation where they are at imminent risk you must also take the additional steps to protect the child by contacting child protection services.

### **What is a safety plan?**

A safety plan is a prioritized, written violence prevention plan that directs the user through ordered steps to help keep them safe in different scenarios. It should also contain a list of coping strategies and sources of support that individuals at risk of FGM/C can use before, during or after an FGM/C situation. It is best if the plan is written in their own words, and is easy to read and follow. Safety plans can be created in collaboration with trained professionals, or if this is not possible, individuals can create them on their own.



### **Who should have a safety plan?**

Any client (adult or child) who is at risk of FGM/C should have the comprehensive FGM/C Risk Assessment and Intervention Tool used to assess their case. Based on that assessment, counselors, social workers, clinicians, therapists, shelter workers etc, collaborate with the client on developing a safety plan.

### **How should a safety plan be done?**

Safety plans can be created in collaboration with trained professionals, or if that is not possible, individuals can create them on their own. Listening to, empathizing with, and engaging a client in the process can promote the development of the safety plan and the likelihood of its use.

**Please work with your client to create a personalized safety plan that takes into account their particular situation and needs.** Offer to be the “trusted adult” or friend referred to in the plan unless they prefer to leave documents and other information with someone else. **Consider your client’s age when thinking about accessing shelters, contacting authorities, and finding other age-related resources or services.**

Remember the [One Chance Rule](#) and make sure that the client does not leave your office without access to the safety plan and instructions, in case they do not get another chance to return and complete it with the service provider. She may leave your office and never get another chance to reach out to someone for help before she is taken abroad or faced with FGM/C at home. With this in mind, always:

- **GIVE** as much helpful information as you can. This may include giving her a copy of the safety plan, even if you have not yet had a chance to complete it together, or giving her a link to the safety plan online. It will include giving her a code word which she can use when she needs to call or text you but is being overheard or monitored.
- **GET** as much information about her situation as you can. If there is a possibility of her being taken abroad, get photocopies of all her documents, and a recent picture.



END FGM  
CANADA NETWORK

END FEMALE GENITAL MUTILATION/CUTTING

---

### **Additional Safety Plan Resources:**

- [6 Steps to Developing a Safety Plan](#) – Skyland Trail
- [Strategies for safety : considerations for individuals experiencing family violence \[2019\]](#)  
- Alberta Ministry of Justice and Solicitor General, Government of Alberta
- [My Safety Plan](#) – Steps to Justice
- 

### **If the FGM/C safety plan is for a minor please consult the following resources:**

- [Safety Planning with Children and Youth - A Toolkit for Working with Children and Youth Exposed to Domestic Violence](#) – Ministry of Justice, Government of British Columbia
- [My fill-in-the-blanks safety plan for any time](#) – Kids Help Phone Line
- [My safety plan to cope with abuse at home](#) – Kids Help Phone Line
- [Live Chat counselling](#) - Kids Help Phone