

# Question guide for professionals

## Exploring culture, faith and belief within an assessment

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Developing excellence  
in response to FGM and  
other harmful practices

### Using this document

This question guide can be used by multi-agency professionals to explore culture, faith, or belief with families within a holistic assessment of risk in any case of child protection. It is important to make consideration to an individual and family's home context as child-rearing beliefs and practices have strong associations with an individual's culture, faith or belief, socioeconomic status, and immigration background. In order to understand a family holistically, it is important to consider parenting practices, and the ways in which culture, faith or belief has influenced an individual's parenting. One way to do this is to ask families about their backgrounds.

The following questions are designed as prompts to open further conversations. Professionals should use their professional judgement regarding which questions are relevant and appropriate to ask.

### Questions for parent(s)/carer(s) – ***culture***

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- Where were you born and raised? Where have you lived throughout your life? What was it like to grow up in your home country/community?
  - Do you belong to any particular ethnic group/tribe/social class?
  - What are the types of foods you serve/eat? Do you serve/eat any particular foods at any specific time of the year associated with cultural/faith-based events? Are certain foods restricted based on gender? If so, what are they and why?
  - Do you have a particular traditional dress?
  - What was it like to grow up in your family and how has this affected your view of parenting and family now?
  - What are some things you do as a parent that are the same as what your parents did? What are some of the things they did, which you do not do?
  - What is the role of the women in your society/community/family? How are they expected to behave in private and public?
  - What is the role of men in your society/community/family? How are they expected to behave in private and public?

- Who is generally the head of the household? What makes them the head?
  - Who has most power in your family to make decisions? Is it the older generation? Are you able to override their decisions?
  - Who is responsible for childrearing?
  - Do you have different expectations for your daughter and son? If so, how do you raise your daughter and son differently?
  - What is the role of the child(ren) in the home/outside the home? Is children questioning or challenging something seen as acceptable? If not, why, and how would it be perceived?
  - How do you perceive luck vs misfortune? How can they be explained?
- What language(s) do you speak?
    - Can you speak multiple?
    - Do you think in your native language or English?
    - Do you speak to your child(ren) in English or your native language, or both? What was the first language they learnt?
- What are some of the cultural traditions you hold/practice?
    - How would a visitor be welcomed to someone's home?
    - Are there any particular celebrations throughout the year you celebrate? How are they celebrated?
    - Does your child(ren) follow the same traditions? Which ones do you follow? Who else in your family/network follow these traditions?
    - What are the norms around weddings? births? deaths?
- Is change considered positive or negative?
    - What kind of changes a person might experience are considered positive? Can you give me some examples?
    - What types of changes would be deemed negative? Can you give me some examples?
- Does your culture have a perspective on mental health? Does mental health exist?
    - What are the views of mental health within your community?
    - What are the words associated to mental health in your language/community?
    - Are mental health diagnoses, for example depression, accepted in your culture? If not, how are they explained?

- Where do you or your family get help or support from when a family member is having a hard time? For example, when they are sad or upset. What do you do when this happens?
- What, if any, are the types of things that are done in your home country that help people with distress?
- How are bad experiences or trauma perceived and handled in your culture?

## Questions for parent(s)/carer(s) – ***faith or belief***

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- Do you and your family have a faith or belief?
  - If yes, what is your faith or belief? Please tell me more about it
  - Is it a sub-section of a faith?
  - What kinds of spiritual or religious beliefs are important to you/your household, and how do your beliefs affect your everyday life?
- Does your child(ren) hold the same faith or belief?
  - If no, what faith or belief do they hold?
  - If no, how do you feel about that?
  - Has your child ever changed their faith/belief? If yes, why?
- How did the faith or belief impact on your upbringing?
  - How did you experience parenting yourself in relation to faith or belief? Are there any parts you still hold on to today which influence how you now parent?
  - Are there any influential faith or belief figures within or outside the family?
  - Who are the main people who provide guidance around your faith or belief now?
  - Who in your family take part in any activities related to faith or belief? *Explore what activities these include.*
  - How does your faith or belief and the community around it support you in times of need?
  - Do you attend a place of worship and/or do you practice your faith at home? In which ways do you practice your faith? E.g., do you pray? Are there specific prayers said? Do these prayers have to be conducted at specific times?
- Is there anything else about your background, culture, faith or belief that you think is important for me know?

## Questions for children and young people

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- What is your home life like?
  - Do you have any responsibilities in your home? Does your sibling(s) have any responsibilities?
  - Are there differences in what males and females are expected to do in your family?
  - Do you take any responsibility for your sibling(s)? What does this look like?
  - What are some of the rules in your house?
  - Are there things which you would want to do, or currently do, that your parents disagree with? If yes, why do they disagree?
- Can you tell me about some of the traditions your family participates in? Do you have any special celebrations or ceremonies?
  - Do your beliefs match your family's? If yes, how? If not, how are they different?
  - Is there anything you would change about your family traditions or practices?
  - What is important for me to know about how you grew up?
  - Where do you or your family get help/support when a family member is having a hard time?
- Do you have a faith or belief?
  - If yes, what is your faith or belief? Please tell me more about it.
  - What do you think other people think about your faith or belief?
  - How does faith or belief impact on your life/your family's life?
  - Do your beliefs match your family's? If yes, how? If not, how are they different? Do your parent(s)/carer(s) mind that they are different?
  - Who are the main people you would go to for guidance/support around your faith or belief?
  - Do you attend a place of worship? Tell me more about it
  - What do you like or dislike about the place of worship or your faith?
  - On a scale of 1-10 with 10 being the highest how important is faith or belief to you.
  - What ceremonies/events/festivals are part of your faith or belief?
  - Do you do anything special for these events/festivals?
  - How else do you express your faith or belief?
- Is there anything else about your background, culture, faith or belief that you think is important for me know?

Get in touch for more information on the work of the National FGM Centre or to enquire about training:



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