



Home Office



Foreign &  
Commonwealth  
Office

# **FORCED MARRIAGE**

## **Assisting those at risk**



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# WELCOME!



# Hi Everyone!

# Contents of Seminar

1. Test your knowledge
2. Understand the triggers and warning signs as professionals
3. Once you see it – what do you do?
4. Taking action: How to protect
5. Case Studies
6. Q&A

# TEST YOUR KNOWLEDGE



## MYTH BUSTING

# FORCED MARRIAGE

- 1. Forced marriages only happen to women?**
- 2. Forced marriages happen within uneducated families and communities?**
- 3. Forced marriages can also be arranged marriages?**
- 4. Forced marriages can result in murder?**
- 5. Forced marriages are simply arranged marriages and the person is reluctant?**
- 6. Parents are always the perpetrators of forced marriages?**

# FORCED MARRIAGE

7. **7. 1 in 5 of our callers are male?**
8. **8. The oldest FM victim was 75?**
9. **9. The majority of our cases involve minors?**
10. **10. We have more male victims with disabilities?**
11. **11. FM is limited to one major faith?**
12. **12. FM only happens in South Asian countries?**

# TRIGGERS

- ▶ Controlling unwanted sexuality (including perceived promiscuity, or being lesbian, gay, bisexual or transgender) - particularly the behaviour and sexuality of women.
- ▶ Controlling unwanted behaviour, for example, alcohol and drug use, wearing make-up or behaving in, what is perceived to be, a “westernised manner”.
- ▶ Preventing "unsuitable" relationships, e.g. outside the ethnic, cultural, religious or caste group.
- ▶ Protecting “family honour” or “izzat”.
- ▶ Responding to peer group or family pressure.

# TRIGGERS

- ▶ Achieving financial gain.
- ▶ Ensuring land, property and wealth remain within the family.
- ▶ Protecting perceived cultural ideals.
- ▶ Protecting perceived religious ideals which are misguided.
- ▶ Assisting claims for UK residence and citizenship.
- ▶ Attempting to strengthen family links/Long-standing family commitments

# WARNING SIGNS

**For young persons these may be warning indicators of forced marriage or other harmful practices:**

- **Mental Wellbeing:** Their behaviour may change – they may be more anxious, depressed and withdrawn... put this into the context of the year – is a school holiday coming up?
- They may display signs of being dishonourable and have been ‘punished’ for such behaviour – for example; having their hair cut/shaved off, being punished.
- **Self – Harm.** It is not just the harm itself but also the method that can be an indicator....household poisonous liquids are common, for example, Nail Varnish Remover, Bleach, Toilet Cleaner.

# WARNING SIGNS

**For young persons these may be warning indicators of forced marriage or other harmful practices:**

- **Change in behaviour – are they normally A Grade student and now their grades are slipping significantly?**
- **Are they tearful at school or work**
- **Are they late and distracted**
- **Is someone now picking them up and dropping them off**
- **They used to socialised and never do anymore.**
- **Are the family reporting them missing/truanting but this is not like them?**
- **Claims they are mentally unwell but you do not see yourself**

# LEARNING DISABILITY CASES (1)

**In the cases of some vulnerable adults who lack the capacity to consent, coercion is not required for a marriage to be forced.**

**IF THE PERSON LACKS CAPACITY, THEN THE MARRIAGE IS A BREACH OF THE MENTAL CAPACITY ACT 2005 AND IS NULL AND VOID.**

**This is classed as a forced marriage**

# LEARNING DISABILITY CASES (2)

## WHY DO THEY HAPPEN?

- ▶ To provide a carer for a son/daughter
- ▶ To 'normalise' a disability
- ▶ To obtain a settlement visa
- ▶ Financial agreement between families

# WARNING SIGNS



- ▶ Anyone, male or female, adult or minor, when facing a threat of forced marriage may become **anxious**, **depressed** and emotionally withdrawn with low self-esteem.
- ▶ A full list of warning indicators can be found on pg 13 [Multi-Agency Practice Guidelines](#)

## Specific Indicators related to learning disabilities

- ▶ Parents discussing marriage – is this reasonable? (Why is there a Deputy in place?)
- ▶ History of forced marriage in a family.
- ▶ Talk of weddings/parties overseas – wedding photos, gifts, mehndi henna
- ▶ Talk of family members coming to live with the family.
- ▶ Sudden unreasonable restrictions to home.
- ▶ Degree to how much the family interacts with the OPG – does this change pending a trip overseas?
- ▶ Does a trip overseas seem reasonable – possible health concerns?

# IN ALL CASES - EXPLORE FAMILY HISTORY

**A belief in forcing your child into marriage is rarely perpetrated against one child and not another sibling, therefore...**

**Think about the family history**  
**What is known about older siblings**  
**Make contact with the police for enquiries**  
**Have there been calls out to the address or issues with siblings before**  
**Family disputes**  
**Death of a parents – particularly father**  
**Suicide of older siblings**

# General action to be taken in all cases

## First steps....



- ▶ See them immediately and alone in a secure and private place – don't let the conversation be overheard.
- ▶ Explain all the options to them ...make sure you recognise and respect their wishes...VICTIM LED
- ▶ Perform a risk assessment - including CAADA/DASH
- ▶ Contact a trained specialist (forced marriage specialist)..FMU, KN, Freedom, designated case worker.
- ▶ Reassure the victim about confidentiality where appropriate ...you wont inform the family.
- ▶ Where appropriate, consider the need for immediate protection and placement away from family.

# Key principles in providing assistance - Managing Risks

- **Be aware of cases where the risk could be higher –**
- **Violence within the family already documented**
- **The victim is lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender**
- **The victim is NOT a British Passport holder and there are overseas risks**
- **The person is a vulnerable adult – there could be difficulties in them understanding their options, communicating or they have a disability that causes further complications**

# CASE STUDY 1

## *Desi - 17 year old British male with family ties to Uganda*

A family friend spotted Desi kissing a male goodbye. This friend informed Desi's mother, who is from a background where homosexuality is unacceptable. Desi's mother started to keep a track of Desi's movements and started looking at his phone when he was not around. On his phone she discovered 'sex' messages between him and a man called Nick. She confronted Desi and screamed that she would rather he be dead than gay. Desi ran out and stayed with friends that evening, and told them what had happened.

The next day his mum called him and apologised saying she had overreacted. He went home but promised he would let his friends know what had happened. His friends have not heard from him since and have reported him missing to police. Checks on his passport show that he is now in Uganda. Desi is normally very active on social media, but he has not posted anything since going to Uganda.

**What actions would you take?**

**Who would you consult?**

# CONSULAR CASES

# MEDIATION

- **Mediation, reconciliation, and family counselling as a response to forced marriage can be extremely dangerous.**
- **There have been cases of people being murdered by their families whilst mediation was being undertaken.**
- **In learning disability cases, there is a further risk that the person could then be taken overseas.**

# CHALLENGES FOR PRACTITIONERS

- **Concern around cultural sensitivity.**
- **Lack of understanding and awareness of issue and risk.**
- **Underground issue – reluctance of victims to come forward or capacity issues.**
- **Confidentiality & resourcefulness of perpetrators.**
- **Complexity – requires a multi-agency response.**

# Key principles in providing assistance

- **Remember how we can assist:**
- **If they are overseas & British Passport holder:**
- **Can they come to the BHC/Embassy?**
- **What reason can we give?**
- **What Intel do we need to make the reason for attending plausible?**
- **Can we be in direct contact?**
- **Is the source trust worthy?**
- **Do they know where they are?**

# CASE STUDY

- ▶ Ali, aged 16, calls to say that his school friend, Rubina has contacted him to say that she is in India and that her father is forcing her into marriage.
  - ▶ He says that the marriage is happening this weekend and the police need to contact her immediately to rescue her before the marriage takes place.
  - ▶ He is especially concerned as Rubina has breathing difficulties and may not be getting all of her medication. Ali is flying out to India later tonight to help rescue his friend but is concerned that it might be too late.
  - ▶ Ali says that Rubina just wants to return to college and see her friends again.
- 
- ▶ What advice would you give Ali?
  - ▶ What additional information is needed?
  - ▶ What issues need to be considered?
  - ▶ What action would you take?

# FINAL THOUGHT: ONE CHANCE RULE

## ▶ DO:

- ▶ Take concerns seriously
- ▶ See a person immediately and away from family
- ▶ Respect their wishes and reassure them
- ▶ Establish means of safe contact. (secret phone/sim/codeword)



## ▶ DO NOT :

- ▶ Send them away/minimise their concerns
- ▶ Approach members of the family or
- ▶ Community (\*interpreters)
- ▶ Share information without consent
- ▶ Attempt to mediate.



# ANSWER TIME!

1. False
2. False
3. False
4. True
5. False
6. False
7. True
8. False
9. False
10. True
11. False
12. False

