Vold i nære relasjoner | Engelsk

Her er noen ord du må forstå for å kunne lese dette heftet:
Important words in this brochure:

ansvar | responsibility
avhengig | dependent
barndom | childhood
barneoppdragelse | upbringing
barnevernet | child welfare
beskyttelse | protection
forbudt | prohibited
fysisk | physical
individ | individual
kjønnslemlestelse | genital mutilation
kriminalitet | crime
likestilling | equal rights
likeverd | equality
migrasjon | migration
nettverk | network
nære relasjoner | close relations
offer | victim
overgrep | abuse
overgriper | abuser
plikt | duty
psykisk | psychological
respekt | respect
tillit | trust
tillitsbrudd | breach of trust
trygghet | safety/security
tvangsektespak | forced marriage
verdi | value
vold | violence
ære | honour
årsak | reason
Alle mennesker har rett til å leve et liv uten vold
*Everyone has the right to a life without violence*
If people who are close to each other are to cohabitate positively, they have to treat each other with respect and love. Women and men, children and young people, all have the right to feel safe and secure in their own home.

We must be able to trust each other in our families. We want to give and receive love, support and respect from those who are closest to us.

Alle barn har rett til et liv uten overgrep og frykt
*All children are entitled to a life without abuse and fear*
Children are especially vulnerable. They are dependent on the care of the adults around them, who must also provide safety and protection.

Good and bad experiences in childhood will mark us for the rest of our lives. An insecure childhood can lead to many problems, even when we become adults.

Hva skjer når tryggheten i hjemmet forsvinner?
*What happens when the home is no longer safe?*
Experiencing violence at the hands of people who are very close to us breaks the bonds of trust. When we no longer feel safe, the home is no longer a place where we can find strength and be happy and at peace. Instead, we waste our energy on keeping an eye out for trouble and on avoiding situations that can lead to more violence.

Vold i nære relasjoner er et alvorlig samfunnsproblem
*Violence in close relations is a serious social problem*
Norwegian law forbids all use of violence. Society cannot accept any forms of violence, including violence in the family or violence from other close relations. This rule applies no matter what the reason for the violence.

This means that violence in the family or close relations is not a private matter. Forced marriage and genital mutilation are also examples of violence and cannot be accepted. Society is responsible for protecting and looking after all victims of violence.

The Norwegian government has made several plans for preventing and stopping violence, including violence in the family.

Public employees, for example teachers and health workers, have a duty to report to the child welfare services if they suspect violence in the family of a child they meet in the course of their work. The child welfare services will report the case to the police if necessary.

Enhver har rett til liv, frihet og personlig sikkerhet
*Everyone has the right to life, liberty and security of person*
The UN Universal Declaration of Human Rights, article 3 (1948)
FNs erklæring om menneskerettigheter, artikkel 3 (1948)
Look at the pictures. Is this violence? Se på bildene. Er dette vold?

What is violence? Hva er vold?
- Violence is the abuse of or assault against another person
- Violence includes all actions that cause another person injury, pain or fear
- Violence can be both physical and psychological

Examples of violence can be hitting, kicking, threats, bullying, strong control, deprivation of liberty and rape.

Can you find other examples of violence? Kan dere finne andre eksempler på vold?

What is violence in close relations? Hva er vold i nære relasjoner?
Violence in close relations means that the abuser and the victim are members of the same family, that they are friends, or that they are important to each other in everyday life in some other way.

Examples of close relations can be children and parents, man and wife, boyfriend/girlfriend and friends.

Can you think of other examples of close relations? Kan dere finne andre eksempler på nære relasjoner?

Look at the definition of violence. Do you agree with this way of describing violence?
Can the victim and the abuser have different opinions as to what violence is?
What is psychological violence? Can you think of examples of psychological violence?
Do you feel there are situations where it is necessary to use violence?
Discuss the difference between violence in close relations and other violence.
Can the idea of what violence is differ in various cultures?
What do we need to have well-being in the family?
11. Do all family members need the same?
12. What is the situation for members of a family where violence is practised?
13. Children need to be safe and secure to have well-being and to develop in a normal way. What does this mean?

Cengis has hit his wife and children on several occasions. Now his wife no longer dares to stay at home. She has to protect herself and her children. She needs help. Should she go to the police? Cengis would be extremely angry …

14. What do you think Cengis’s wife should do?

“Violence in close relations
• is a serious criminal offence
• can result in major health problems, both physical and psychological
• is a breach of human rights”

(Vendepunkt, Handlingsplan mot vold i nære relasjoner 2008–2011, Justis- og politidepartementet)

15. Look at the pictures. Is this violence?

**Individets rolle i familien og samfunnet**
**The individual’s role in the family and society**

Each person is an individual. We as individuals are shaped by our environment throughout our lives. From early childhood we learn the rules for what is right and wrong, and we learn how to live together with others. We adapt to the society we live in, and find our place in the family.

There are many ways of understanding the role of the individual in the family and society. Here are two of them:

**Individual-oriented**

- personal needs are most important
- independence is natural
- the individual defines his or her own role in society

**Group-oriented**

- the group’s needs are most important
- mutual dependence and responsibility are natural
- the individual’s role is defined by the family and society
16. Which of these two ways of understanding the individual’s role best describes how you live?

Abraham has been offered a job in another country. He has a wife and two young children. He wants his family to come with him to the new country. His parents and parents-in-law do not think this is a good idea.

17. Discuss what can happen in Abraham’s family based on an individual-oriented society and a group-oriented society.

Familiens betydning
The importance of the family in society

In the group-oriented society, the extended family takes the largest responsibility for individuals. The individuals then in turn have responsibilities and duties in relation to the extended family. Everyone in the extended family is dependent on each other. The family members know each other well and help each other when someone in the family has problems. The family members know which rules apply for each individual. If anyone in the extended family does anything wrong, it can affect the whole family.

The individual-oriented society has developed social patterns and systems over a long period of time where the individual is no longer so dependent on the extended family. This means that individuals can manage without help from the family with such things as childminding and nursing of the sick and elderly. The individual is entitled to help from society, but must also contribute to society. If necessary, society can protect the individual from his or her own family.

In the group-oriented society, members of the extended family often spend time together, or get together when something is to be celebrated. The extended family is the most important institution, and for some of the family members it is the only social network they have. It is therefore important to live the way the family wants.

In the individual-oriented society, friends and colleagues can be just as important as the family. The social network can change throughout one’s life according to one’s life situation. This means that the individual has several choices and is not so dependent on one particular group.

18. Discuss the importance of a social network and the family in various societies.
Ære
Honour

In many group-oriented societies, honour and rules of honour can be very important. A person who breaks the group’s rules of honour can thus lose his or her honour. As the extended family has a common honour, not only the person who broke the rules loses his or her honour, but the whole family does. Therefore, it is important that each family member avoids breaking the rules of honour. Those who lose their honour can lose everything. Honour is often about controlling the sexuality of girls and women.

In many individual-oriented societies, the notion of honour is not so important. Each individual is responsible for him or herself, and if you do something wrong, you are the only person who has to answer for it.

Discuss the concept of honour.

Look at the pictures. Is this violence?

Likestilling og likeverd
Equal rights and equality

Individets rolle i det norske samfunnet
The individual’s role in Norwegian society

Norwegian society is dominated by the individual-oriented mind-set. The idea about the importance of the individual has developed over the last two centuries, and Norwegian law has changed in step with this development. Contemporary Norwegian law focuses on the individual’s rights and responsibilities. The individual also has an important place in Norwegian society, both in the eyes of the authorities and the population at large.

“My life is my responsibility. My choices will direct my life. If I make the wrong choices, this is first and foremost my problem. I have the freedom to choose, but I’m also responsible for my choices.”

Rett til å ta selvstendige valg
The right to make independent choices

A basic value in Norwegian society is the individual’s right to make individual choices. This means that individuals make their own choices for their lives based on their premises, abilities, interests and wishes.
Likestilling mellom kjønnene
Gender equality

Equal rights and gender equality are also basic values in Norway. This means, for example, that women and men shall have equal opportunities in education and work, and shall also have financial independence. Responsibilities and duties shall be equally divided between the genders, and the adults in the family take important decisions jointly.

“Women in Norway have fought for equal rights and equality for more than a hundred years. It has been a long struggle. Men don’t surrender power voluntarily…”

21. Discuss the quotation above.
22. Is there a connection between equality, lack of equality and violence in the family?

“All human beings are born free and equal in dignity and rights. They are endowed with reason and conscience and should act towards one another in a spirit of brotherhood.”

The UN Universal Declaration of Human Rights, article 3 (1948)

“The authorities of the State must respect and ensure human rights.”

Norwegian constitution, section 110c (added 1994)

23. What do you think these drawings are trying to say about power, responsibility and the individual’s role in the family and society?
24. Do you think the idea of what violence is will be the same?
25. Do you think the idea of the use of violence will be the same?

Årsaker til vold
Reasons for violence

In spite of the values, laws and rights that protect the individual, abuse and violence occur in all groups in Norwegian society. Many people live with major problems in the family. Children, young people, women and men experience violence in the home. But why do some people abuse others?

Sediq is frustrated. After his family came to Norway, things have not gone so well. He has had trouble getting a job, and they don’t have enough money. When his wife nags him for more money to buy the kids new clothes, he gets hot under the collar. And then things explode…
 Reasons for violence in close relations could be:

- poor financial situation or generally poor living conditions
- experience of using violence as a "problem solver"
- lack of anger management
- the need to have control
- jealousy
- serious psychological stress, for example break-up of a relationship, migration, unexpected serious events etc.
- trauma
- division of power in the family
- oppression of women
- different traditions
- lack of knowledge on and understanding of the consequences of violence
- honour and shame
- drugs or alcohol

26. Why do some people become abusers?
27. What can be done to prevent violence in close relations?

Honour-related violence

The fear of losing honour can lead to strict control of family members, especially the women in the family. When someone uses violence to keep or regain honour, this is called honour-related violence. The police in Norway treat honour-related violence very seriously, and it is punished with a prison sentence in the same way as other types of violence.

Deprivation of liberty, forced marriage and genital mutilation are forms of honour-related violence and are forbidden in Norway.

28. Discuss examples of honour-related violence.

Violent upbringing

Some parents hit or use other forms of violence to raise their children. This was also fairly normal in Norway in the past. Now, doctors and other experts have discovered that children who have been beaten may have both physical and psychological problems. They can also have serious problems at school. For this reason it is forbidden to hit children in Norway, and anyone who hits their children can be reported to the police. Most people agree that we have to set boundaries for our children, but it is fully possible to do this without hitting them. Children are individuals, just like adults, and have the right to a life without abuse and fear.
Ulike former for vold

**Different forms of violence**
- physical violence
- psychological violence
- sexual violence, for example rape
- material violence
- threats of violence
- strong control over another person’s life and liberty

29. Can you find some examples of different forms of violence?
30. Discuss the quotation below. What do you think Gandhi meant?

“What you win with violence, you can only keep with violence.”
(Mahatma Gandhi)

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**Overgriperen**

The abuser

**Sitat 1**

First quotation

“Whether I’m sad, tired of something, lonely or feel pushed around – it comes out as anger. I get more and more provoked, more and more angry, I feel I’m getting pushed around more and more, becoming more and more powerless, until I can’t control myself … and then I hit. After I hit, I feel relieved and empty.”
(quoted from *Bjørnen sover* (The Bear Is Sleeping), 2007)

A person who
- hits
- thinks it is difficult to control his or her anger
- makes people around him/her afraid
- threatens his or her partner or children to do things they do not want to do
- says mean or hurtful things to the people closest to him/her
- breaks things, bangs the table etc.

– may have a violence problem.

**A person who has a violence problem must**
- understand that he or she has a problem that must be solved
- ask for help to work with the problem
- dare to see that the people around him/her are scared
- understand that the use of violence can have serious consequences, both for the victim and the abuser
- find alternative ways to solve problems
- stop using violence
Second quotation
“When I finally understood that I had a violence problem, I asked for help. I received a lot of help from a wise man in the family and much support from my doctor. Now I know that violence was my problem and my responsibility. Only I can change myself and the way I treat my wife and kids. Now I have apologised to them. They are happy that I have stopped hitting, and they actually have much more respect for me! But I understand that they need time before they can trust me again.”

Discuss the quotations above.

What do you think about the situations and feelings in the two quotations?

We can imagine that the same person is talking in both quotations. What do you think has happened between the first and second quotation?

What is a violence problem?

Does the abuser or the victim have a violence problem?

What do you think an abuser should do?

An abuser can, for example, receive help at the treatment centre Alternativ til vold / Alternative to violence. Go to www.atv-stiftelsen.no for more information.

Offeret
The victim

Both women and men can be abusers, and children, women and men can be the victims of violence, but statistics show that the vast majority of abusers in relationships are men. The repeated violence that men practise against women and children is often especially serious because it creates so much insecurity. Women, children and young people who experience so strong control that they lose all rights to a private life are also victims of violence. Anyone living in such a difficult life needs help. It is possible to change the situation.

First quotation
“I thought that it would probably get better. I just had to do things in another way. All I have to do is change. Because there was always something that I had done wrong. Big or small things, stupid things.”

(quoted from Bjørnen sover (The Bear Is Sleeping), 2007)
A: A victim of violence may need

- someone to talk to
- to ask for help from others to put a stop to the violence
- information about his or her rights
- to understand that violence is the abuser’s responsibility
- to know that she/he is not to blame for the violence
- protection for him or herself and his or her children
- peace and quiet to think about the situation

Second quotation

“I have talked a lot about it now. About something that isn’t easy to talk about. But it’s important to get it out in the open so you’re not sitting alone. And it’s important to show that you can turn over a new leaf. That’s why I’m telling you about this.”

(quoted from Bjørnen sover (The Bear Is Sleeping), 2007)

B: Some reasons why women continue to live in difficult family relationships:

- feeling of responsibility and the desire to keep the family together
- holding out hope that the situation will improve
- love and respect
- duty
- honour and shame
- dependency
- low self-esteem
- residence permit
- finances
- family belonging

SID 13:

37. Discuss the quotations above.
38. What can you say about the situation and feelings in quotations 1 and 2?
39. We can imagine that the same person is talking in both quotations. What do you think has happened between the first and second quotation?

A:
40. What do you think about this advice to a victim of violence?
41. Would you give other advice?

B:
42. Discuss the reasons why a person stays in a family with such serious problems.
Victims of violence can get help from their regular GP, from NAV (the Norwegian Labour and Welfare Administration) and from a crisis centre. You can receive counseling and advice, and financial and housing assistance. Visit the website www.krikesenter.no for more information.

“Violence against women is perhaps the greatest human rights violation. As long as this violence continues, we cannot claim to have made progress with respect to equality, development and peace.”

Kofi Annan, former Secretary General of the UN

Voldsspiralen
The violence spiral

The violence that occurs in close relations often follows a set pattern.

He flies into a rage. His fist comes at me suddenly. I duck and try to protect myself. Please don’t let the children wake up!

Afterwards he’s always so kind! He regrets what he did and says that he’ll never do it again. I want to believe him …

It’s going to happen soon. I don’t know when. I don’t know why. The worst thing is the waiting, you know it’s coming.

The drawings on page 14 show the pattern violence in the family often follows.

The phases in the violence spiral do not last as long for everyone, but it is normal that this spiral goes faster and faster as time goes on.

After the violence has occurred, there is a period when the abuser regrets what he or she has done and tries to be kind to the family again. After a while the regret is forgotten and the abuser becomes more and more aggressive. And then there is a new episode of violence.

Discuss the violence spiral.
Why do we use the term violence spiral?
How does the victim experience the phases of the violence spiral?
How does the abuser experience the phases of the violence spiral?
How do witnesses experience the phases of the violence spiral?
Does all violence between close relations follow the phases in the violence spiral?
Look at the sentences below. In which situations would these sentences fit?
Sorry!
He's really very kind …
Just wait until the children have gone to bed!
You can't go around dressed like that!
Think about what other people will say.
I didn’t mean it!

Hush, don’t disturb daddy now.
What’s happening? Stop!
Now I hope you’ve learned for the next time!
Never again…
Can’t we forget what happened yesterday?
Have you learned now?

Barn som lever med vold
Children who live with violence

Things are often not good in Miriam’s home. When daddy gets mad he hits mummy. Sometimes he also hits Miriam and her brother. Miriam is afraid. She has a bad feeling in her stomach almost all the time. At school, she finds it difficult to keep track of what the teacher says.

All parents want the best for their children. Parents want their children to respect them, and they want them to get a good education. They hope that their children will have a good life when they grow up, and many parents want their children to help them in their old age.

Children need to feel safe and secure to have well-being, develop in the way they should and do well in school. Children who are afraid have problems. They can have difficulty concentrating and doing their school work. They often have problems remembering things, and they often have nightmares. They also get sick more often because they live with worry and stress. Children do not have to be hit to be afraid or hurt. It is just as harmful to see others being beaten.

Hjernen påvirkes av vold og frykt
The brain is affected by violence and fear

The body has its own alarm system that is controlled from the brain. When children are used to being on the alert, the brain is constantly sending out danger signals. The brain of a child who is often afraid will adapt to a life of fear. If the child’s brain is to return to normal, he or she must live in a safe environment for a long period of time.
Barna forstår mer enn vi tror!

Children understand more than we think they do!

Parents often believe that their children do not notice the problems they are having. This is not always true. Research shows that children often understand what is going on. Even if the children do not witness the violence between the adults, they can be afraid. Even a baby notices when its mother is afraid and cannot make her child safe. Violence in the family means that children are on alert all the time. They are afraid of more violence, and they are worn out from never knowing what is happening at home.

“Children who are the victim of violence or the lack of care at an early age have a greater risk of becoming aggressive and violent. Violence in the family can cause permanent brain damage in children.”

Jens Grøgaard, chief physician and expert in children’s illnesses.

Barn trenger trygghet

Children need to feel safe and secure

54. Children need comfort and closeness. What do you think happens when the adults cannot help their children to feel safe and secure? Why?

Barn lærer å bruke vold

Children learn to use violence

55. Why might children who are the victims of violence become abusers themselves?

56. What can we do to counteract this?

Vold i barneoppdragelsen

Violent upbringing

Goran wants his eight-year-old son to be obedient. When Milos does not do what he says, Goran hits him. This happens often. “You have to learn early!” says Goran.

57. Is this violence?

58. Do you think that Milos is afraid of his father?

59. Do you think that Milos will be obedient?

60. What do you think Milos does when his father is not home?
Vold i nære relasjoner | Engelsk

61. What do you think Milos does when he is angry with his mates?
62. What could the consequences be if Goran hits his son?
63. What does Norwegian law say about what Goran is doing?
64. What can Goran do instead of hitting his son?

Grenser i barneoppdragelsen
Setting boundaries for children

Goran and his wife have attended a course on how to raise children. They have been given advice on how to set boundaries for their children without hitting them. Goran has tried to follow the advice and he thinks that a lot of it is working well. He is surprised that Milos shows just as much respect for him as before. In fact, he has become more obedient!

Goran and his wife were given the following advice:
• Give clear messages
• Hold eye contact with your child when you give him or her a message
• Be consistent
• Repeat the message many times
• Talk quietly, but in a determined way
• If you first say no to sweets, for example, you must not change your mind and say okay afterwards
• Listen to your child
• Remember that each child is an individual with his or her own thoughts and feelings
• Give lots of praise to your child when he or she has done something good

65. What do you think about this advice?
66. Is this advice difficult to follow?

Hvordan kan vi hjelpe barn som blir utsatt for vold?
How can we help children who are victims of violence
• Tell them that it is okay to talk about the violence
• Make sure that they know that the violence is never their fault
• Do what you can to stop the violence

67. What can we do to help children who are victims of violence?
68. Who can children talk to?
69. Why is it important for children to talk about what has happened?
Barnevernet er der for barn som trenger hjelp

The child welfare services are there for children who need help

• There is a child welfare office in all Norwegian municipalities. The purpose of this public service is to ensure that the Child Welfare Act is complied with
• The child welfare services shall ensure that children and young people have a safe development without violence. It is their duty to help and support children and young people who have difficulties
• The most important task of the child welfare services is to protect children, preferably in cooperation with the family
• The child welfare services have various assistance measures, for example counselling, respite care and support/outreach contacts
• If necessary, the child welfare services can find a new family for children who need protection from their parents
• Everyone who works with the child welfare services has the duty of confidentiality
• Everyone who works with children has the duty to report to the child welfare services if they suspect there is violence in the family

Discuss the role of the child welfare services in Norwegian society.

“It’s possible that there were some good things about my childhood, but I really don’t know what they would be.”

(quoted from Bjørnen sover (The Bear Is Sleeping), 2007)

Tvangsekteskap

Forced marriage

Hina is desperate. Now it has happened. Mummy has said that now it’s time to find a husband for her. Mummy mentioned several relatives in the home country who might be suitable. Hina does not feel ready for marriage yet, after all, she’s only 17 years old! And a man who doesn’t know Norway and the life Hina has lived – how is that going to work out? She feels helpless and doesn’t know what to do.

Å finne en ektefelle

Finding a spouse

In individual-oriented cultures, people normally find each other without guidance or intervention from the family. Love and affection are the most normal reasons for marriage. A marriage is an agreement between two individuals. 

In group-oriented cultures, it is normal to see marriage as an agreement between two families. Therefore it is natural that the family is involved in or makes the decision as to who their children are going to marry. Arranged marriages are a tradition in many parts of the world.
In individual-oriented cultures, more and more people are choosing to live alone without getting married. Many also choose to live alone after a divorce or if their spouse dies. People in group-oriented cultures often do not have the same possibility to choose to be single.

Discuss various ways of finding a spouse.

Why is who the children marry important for the whole family in some cultures?

Discuss the possibility of living alone in various cultures.

The ideas of equality, equal rights and the right to take independent choices are important values in Norway and other societies. Are these values incompatible with the tradition of the arranged marriage?

Living in two cultures

Many children and young people in Norway have one foot in the individual-oriented society and the other foot in the group-oriented society their parents represent. This is a consequence of migration and can lead to strife between the generations. When it comes to choosing a spouse, this strife can reach quite an impasse.

Discuss how families can be influenced by migration.

In what way can migration be important when it comes to the choice of spouse?

Hina dreams about making her own family with a husband and children in the future. But first she wants an education and a job. She wants to choose herself, both when she will get married, and who she will marry. But now mummy and daddy are talking about marriage every day. Hina feels she is being pressed into a corner. She understands why her parents are nagging her, and she knows very well what is expected of her. She would like to be a good daughter. But, Hina says to herself, why can't mummy and daddy listen to me too? Do my wishes and feelings mean so little to them?

Discuss Hina’s situation.

What options does Hina have?

What options do her parents have?

Hina feels pressured. Is she being forced?
The Marriage Act

Women and men have the same right to choose a spouse freely. They shall contract the marriage of their own free will and by their own consent.

When someone is pressured into getting married we call this forced marriage.

“"No culture, ideology or religion is holier than people and their liberty. Forced marriage is a deprivation of liberty."

Hana Senter Mot Tvangsåtteskap / Hana Centre Against Forced Marriage

侧面22:

- How can you be so ungrateful?
- We’ve found a good husband for you.
- We’ve promised the family that your cousin can come to Norway.
- What kind of daughter are you that won’t listen to us?
- The neighbour saw you together with a boy. Who was it?
- You’re destroying your reputation and our honour.
- He and his family are reputable and have money. What’s the problem?
- This marriage has been decided since you were a little girl.
- You’ve become too Norwegian!
- We just want what’s best for you!

侧面23:

Can you distinguish between arranged and forced marriages?

Most people agree that it is wrong to force someone to get married. But what is force? The discussion on forced marriage and what constitutes force is a hot topic of debate in Norway.

Some believe it is not possible to distinguish between arranged and forced marriages because young people will always be subjected to some amount of pressure from the family.

Others believe there is a clear difference between the two, where young people can say no to an arranged marriage if they do not want to marry the person their parents have found for them.
Is it possible to distinguish between arranged and forced marriages?
Where do we draw the line between advice and pressure?
Where do we draw the line between pressure and force?
What can we do to help young people who are being forced to marry against their will?

Det er forbudt å tvinge noen til å gifte seg  
*It is unlawful to force anyone to marry*

Norwegian law is very clear that it is prohibited to force anyone into marriage. The Norwegian authorities take cases dealing with forced marriage very seriously and have made action plans for preventing forced marriages. They have also established several programmes to help young people who are or are at risk of being forced into a marriage. Go, for example, to the website www.ung.no.

**Norwegian Civil Penal Code, section 222, second paragraph:**
Any person who by force, deprivation of liberty, improper pressure or any other unlawful conduct or by threats of such conduct forces anyone to enter into a marriage shall be guilty of causing a forced marriage. The penalty for causing a forced marriage is imprisonment for a term not exceeding six years. Any person who aids and abets such an offence shall be liable to the same penalty.

What does improper pressure mean? Can you find examples of this?
What does it mean to threaten someone?
What is aiding and abetting?

Women and men shall be ensured the same right freely to choose a spouse and to enter into marriage only with their free and full consent.

UN Women's Convention, article 16

**Kjønnslemlestelse**
**Genital mutilation**

Hva er kjønnslemlestelse?
**What is genital mutilation?**

Genital mutilation, or female circumcision, means the damaging or removing of the external genitalia. This applies no matter how much or how little is damaged or removed. Genital mutilation is an example of violence in close relations and is prohibited by law.

“In my culture there’s a long tradition of circumcising girls. Some say it is part of our religion. We do it to protect the girls’ honour and to control their sexuality. But when I witnessed the pain my own daughter felt, I was distressed by what we had done. Circumcision is a harmful tradition! Why should we put our daughters through such pain?”
There are good and bad traditions. Some traditions are also a health risk. Both women and men must receive information and learn about dangerous traditions. Research, greater understanding of the problems involved and the encounter with other cultures and traditions may make it necessary to change old traditions.

What can make it necessary to change a tradition?
Is it possible to change traditions?
What do we need to do if we are to change traditions?

Genital mutilation is harmful

“Earlier, I never questioned this tradition. I was proud of tolerating the pain and of being a woman. I thought all women had a great amount of pain in their genitalia. Now I know that’s not true. They damaged my body when I was a little girl, and this has created a wound in my soul that will never heal. A part of me is gone.”

Problems that can arise during the operation:
• heavy bleeding (in the worst case the girl can bleed to death)
• infections (which can have major complications)
• fractures
• injuries that lead to trauma

Problems and disorders that can arise after the operation:
• chronic problems in the genitalia
• pain
• infections
• complications when giving birth
• painful and long menstruation periods
• difficulty passing water
• pain when having intercourse
• difficulty getting pregnant
• difficulty walking
• psychological disorders

Some of the injuries can be healed by a doctor, but the parts of the body that have been removed are gone forever. Women who have had their genitalia mutilated can go to the doctor, midwife or hospital to ask for help for treatment of some of the problems. It is important that women who are pregnant talk with a midwife or doctor well in advance of the birth.

Farhida says: “We must understand why female circumcision is a health risk. We have grown up with circumcision as part of our lives. We think it’s normal and harmless.”
“My mother and my sisters say that my daughter must be circumcised. But I don’t want her to experience the same pain I did. Circumcision is prohibited in Norway. This makes it easier for me to refuse to let my daughter be circumcised when I talk with my family back home.”

Norwegian society is founded on such values as gender equality and equal rights. This means that women have the right to decide over their own bodies. Genital mutilation breaks both with these ideas of equality and equal rights and with international conventions. Genital mutilation is prohibited by law in many countries, including countries where this tradition is widespread.

Genital mutilation is an example of violence and a serious failure to provide care. The use of violence is prohibited by law. In 1995, Norway introduced the Act against Genital Mutilation. This act applies to everyone living in Norway.

In the Act of 15 December 1995 no. 74, section 1 lays down that genital mutilation is prohibited.

The Act lays down that:

• wilfully damaging the genitalia of girls and women is prohibited
• it is prohibited to aid and abet in the damaging of the genitalia of girls and women
• it is forbidden to take a girl out of Norway to mutilate her genitalia abroad
• even if the girl or woman says yes to genital mutilation, it is still prohibited
• the penalty for breaking the law is imprisonment for a term not exceeding eight years

Anyone who through his or her job becomes suspicious that a girl may have been subjected to genital mutilation has the duty and obligation to report this. If they do not do so, they can be liable to imprisonment for a term not exceeding one year. This also applies to religious leaders.

What do people do to maintain the tradition of genital mutilation in countries where genital mutilation is practised, and in Norway?

What can people do to stop the tradition of genital mutilation in countries where genital mutilation is practised, and in Norway?
Discuss these statements:

• It is important that both women and men counteract the tradition of genital mutilation
• The environments that practise genital mutilation must themselves stop this tradition; the change must come from within
• No parents want to cause harm to their children
• No husband wants his wife to be in pain
• The female body is perfect the way it has been created; it is not necessary to change it
• Women and men who receive information on how harmful and dangerous genital mutilation is will want to put a stop to this tradition
• The threat of imprisonment stops many parents from subjecting their daughters to genital mutilation
• No religion demands the genital mutilation of women. Genital mutilation is a tradition, not part of a religion

“A basic principle in Islamic law is that one shall not do anything that can cause illness or damage health. Unfortunately there are many who do not see the difference between culture and religion. Circumcision is a cultural phenomenon, not a religious one. Islamsk Råd Norge (the Islamic Council of Norway) is absolutely against any and all forms of female circumcision.”

Senaid Kobilica, head of Islamsk Råd Norge.

Nyttige internettadresser

Useful internet addresses:
www.atv-stiftelsen.no
www.bufetat.no
www.dixi.no
www.kirkens-ressurscenter.no
www.mirasenteret.no
www.nkvts.no
www.seif.no
www.voldsoffererstatning.no
www.kridesenter.com
www.redcross.no
www.udi.no
www.ung.no
www.tvangsekteskap.no

Nyttige telefonnumre

Useful telephone numbers:
Alternativ til vold, Oslo-kontoret 22 40 11 10
Krisesentersekretariatet 23 01 03 41
Telefonen om tvangsekteskap 815 55 201
Støttetelefon for kriminalitetsfor 800 40 008