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The purpose of the presentation is to counteract domestic violence and violence perpetrated by family members or other members of a household and to increase knowledge about the consequences of violence for the victims and for those who witness violence against others. The presentation also covers the work being done to counteract forced marriages and female genital mutilation. The presentation emphasis the fact that both forced marriages and female genital mutilation are prohibited under Norwegian law and that both practices are human rights violations.
Violence in close relations

- Violence is defined as all actions that cause harm, pain or fear to other people.
- Violence in close relations is violence committed by family members or members of the same household against:
  - present or former spouses, partners or girlfriends/boyfriends
  - their own children
  - the children of former spouses/partners
  - siblings
  - parents
  - other people for whose care they are responsible
**Physical or psychological abuse?**

**Case:**
Andreas doesn’t like his wife going out with her female friends unless he goes with them. He wants to control where she goes and who she goes with. If his wife objects, Andreas gets angry and threatens to hit her. His wife has now stopped seeing her female friends. She feels lonely and sad and is not sleeping well. Recently, she has also taken sick leave from work.

**Discussion:**
- In what ways can Andreas’ behaviour be described as abuse?
- What consequences could Andreas’ behaviour have for his wife and for Andreas himself?
Children who witness violence in the family

- Witnessing violence towards other members of the family can create a sense of insecurity in children.
- A sense of security is important in the development of a child.
- Witnessing violence can lead to extensive emotional and cognitive harm.
The penalty for violence in close relations

- A person who perpetrates violence in close relations may be punished by imprisonment for up to six years.
- A person who is complicit in violence may be punished just as severely as the person who perpetrates the violence.
- If the abuse is particularly severe, a prison sentence of up to fifteen years may be imposed.
Where can a person who is exposed to violence seek help?

- A person who is exposed to violence can get help from
  - the police
  - crisis shelters
  - the family doctor
  - the family counselling service
  - the child welfare authorities
Treatment and therapy for abusive behaviour

- Help is also available for people who commit violence and abuse
  - from the family doctor
  - from the family counselling service
  - from Alternative to Violence (ATV)
Marriage must be entered into voluntarily

- Marriage must be entered into voluntarily and both parties must consent to the marriage.
- Women and men have the same right to freely choose their spouses.
- The Marriage Act also applies to marriages entered into outside Norway.
Arranged marriage vs. forced marriage

- Arranged marriages, where the parents and families find spouses for their children, are permitted if both parties enter into the marriage of their own free will.
- A marriage where one or both parties is pressured into the marriage against their own free will is called a forced marriage.
Forced marriage

- Experience has shown that forced marriage occurs more frequently in communities in which it is customary for parents to exercise firm social control over children and young people throughout their childhood and youth.
- Firm social control limits the freedom of young people to make independent choices of their own.
- Girls are especially exposed to social control.
- Lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and intersexed persons (LGBTI) with minority backgrounds are also exposed to forced marriage.
Forced marriage is against the law

- Taking children/young people or others out of Norway to marry against their will in another country is against the law.
- A marriage entered into outside Norway where one or both of the parties is not present will not normally be recognised in Norway.
- Forced marriages are not valid under Norwegian law and may be dissolved.
- A spouse who has been forced to marry may file for divorce.
Choosing a spouse

Case:
Memona is unhappy. Her parents tell her repeatedly that they think it is time she got married. They have suggested several men from their home country who they believe would make good husbands for her. Memona is only 19 years old and wants to continue her studies. She feels that she is too young to marry and she is not even sure that she wants to marry a man from her parents’ home country. She wants the right to choose whom she marries. However, she is finding it difficult to tell her parents how she feels. Instead, she tells them that Norwegian law does not allow future husband to be brought in for her from outside Norway because she is too young and is not in full-time employment. When she tells her parents this, her mother starts to cry, telling Memona that she is too Norwegian in her ways and goes to bed. She says that if the law does not permit Memona to marry now, she can at the very least get engaged.
Choosing a spouse, contd.

Discussion:

- Talk about Memona’s situation. Why do you think it is so important to her parents that Memona should get married?
- Do you think that the parents will regard an engagement (a religious promise to marry) as an acceptable resolution of the marriage question?
- What effect would an engagement (a religious promise to marry) have on Memona’s life?
The penalty for forced marriage

- The penalty for forced marriage is imprisonment for up to six years.
- Complicity in a forced marriage is punishable in the same way.
- Enticing someone into travelling out of Norway and entering into a forced marriage is punishable in the same way.
- A forced marriage or child marriage entered into abroad is a criminal offence in Norway.
What is genital mutilation?

- Female genital mutilation is a general term for female circumcision.
- Female genital mutilation is a procedure in which all or parts of the external parts of a woman’s genitals are removed, without medical justification.
- Female genital mutilation is a traditional practice linked to local norms and values.
- Female genital mutilation is a serious form of abuse and a gross violation of women’s physical and psychological integrity.
Health problems caused by female genital mutilation and where to go for help

- Women who have undergone genital mutilation can suffer serious and extensive health problems.
- Pregnant women who have undergone genital mutilation are urged to seek help from a doctor or midwife early in their pregnancy.
Female genital mutilation is against the law

- Female genital mutilation is a violation of human rights and international conventions, such as the UN Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women and the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, Article 24.

- Taking girls who live in Norway to a foreign country to be circumcised is against the law.

- The staff of kindergartens, schools, after-school clubs, health and social care services, faith communities and others have a duty to attempt to prevent female genital mutilation, irrespective of their duty of confidentiality. They can do this by reporting their suspicions to the police or by reporting their concerns to the child welfare authorities.
The penalty for female genital mutilation

- Performing or being complicit in female genital mutilation is against the law.
- Female genital mutilation performed abroad is punishable in Norway.
- The penalty is imprisonment for up to six years.
- Gross female genital mutilation is punishable by imprisonment for 15 years.
- The penalty for failing to attempt to prevent female genital mutilation is a fine or imprisonment for up to one year.
Preventive measures

- The Norwegian authorities condemn female genital mutilation in the strongest terms and it is their responsibility to ensure that children and young people living in Norway are not subjected to this form of abuse.
Bodily integrity

- It is fundamental human right for everyone to have control over their own bodies, health and sexuality. Moreover, it is a criminal offence to restrict the freedom of movement of a spouse, partner or any other member of the household.