

TERMINOLOGY & DEFINITIONS

GENERAL TERMS

Female genital mutilation (FGM)

Female genital mutilation (FGM) is the terminology used in international law, by EU institutions and by the End FGM European Network in its advocacy and communication. When engaging with communities and rights holders we advise to use wording that they use and understand.

Rights holders

People (individuals and groups) whose human rights have been or are at risk of being violated, upon whom a decision or process may impact.

Duty-bearers

State and non-state actors with legal obligations to respect, protect and fulfil individuals' and groups' human rights.

Empowerment

Aims towards redressing the power imbalance. A process through which rights holders develop the necessary skills, knowledge, experience and confidence they need to know their rights and to influence decisions and processes that affect their rights.

Affected communities

This wording includes women, girls, men, boys, religious and community leaders from communities where FGM is prevalent. The terminology "practising communities" is sometimes used to refer to this population. However, the End FGM European Network prefers to refer to affected communities, because the term also encompasses those who wish to leave the practice behind.

MEDICAL TERMS

Deinfibulation

Surgical procedure to open the narrowed vaginal passage of a woman who has been infibulated, to improve health and well-being, allow intercourse or facilitate childbirth.

Dissociation

Dissociation is one way the mind copes with too much stress, such as during a traumatic event. If the patient dissociates, she may feel disconnected from herself and the world around her. For example, she may feel detached from her body or feel as though the world around her is unreal.

Dysmenorrhoea

Difficult and painful menstruation.

Dyspareunia

Painful intercourse, defined as persistent or recurrent genital pain that occurs just before, during, or after sex.

EMDR (Eye Movement Desensitisation and Reprocessing)

Treatment for painful memories, involving a moving object tracked by the eye while the therapist and patient engage in deconditioning therapy.

Episiotomy

Surgical procedure involving incision of the area between vagina and anus (perineum), carried out during the last stage of labour to expand vaginal opening and prevent tearing during delivery.

Introitus

Entrance/orifice in a cavity of the body, such as the vaginal introitus.

Fistula

Permanent, abnormal connection between two organs of the body or between an organ and the exterior of the body.

The most common type of fistula after a difficult labour and childbirth is a vesico-vaginal fistula, in which the woman's vagina is connected to the bladder, causing urine to leak from the vagina and resulting in vaginal and bladder infections. Fistulas may also develop between the vagina and the large intestine, causing faeces to leak from the vagina.

Keloid

Overgrowth of scar tissue at the site of a skin injury, particularly a wound or surgical incision.

Lochia

Discharges from the vagina (blood and tissue debris) following childbirth.

PTSD (post-traumatic stress disorder)

Anxiety disorder caused by exposure to an intensely traumatic event.

Characteristics include re-experiencing the traumatic event through recurrent, intrusive recollections, nightmares or flashbacks.

Symptoms include avoidance of trauma-associated stimuli and a general numbing of emotional responsiveness, hyper-alertness and difficulties sleeping, remembering or concentrating. The onset of symptoms may occur months or years after the event.

Reinfibulation

Procedure to narrow the vaginal opening in a woman after she has been deinfibulated (i.e. after childbirth); also known as re-suturing.

Q-tip test

Cotton swab or Q-tip is used to carefully apply pressure to mapped-out areas within the vulvar and vestibular regions. The test helps determine pain and sensitization levels.

Voiding dysfunction

Inability of bladder to evacuate urine.

ACRONYMS

<i>CoE</i>	Council of Europe (with 47 Member States)
<i>CSOs</i>	Civil Society Organisations
<i>END FGM EU</i>	End FGM European Network
<i>EP</i>	European Parliament
<i>EU</i>	European Union (with 28 Member States)
<i>GBV</i>	gender-Based Violence
<i>NGOs</i>	Non-Governmental Organisations
<i>UN</i>	United Nations
<i>VAWG</i>	Violence Against Women and Girls