



HELPING SOMEONE TO ESCAPE FORCED MARRIAGE AND/OR HONOUR KILLING – A SAFETY CHECKSHEET

Forced marriages and honour killings are often intertwined. Marriage can be forced to save honour, and women can be murdered for rejecting a forced marriage.

The issue of 'honour' is also one of links with the community. Realise that the woman will be going up against her community and her culture and that she may not receive the support from her community and even extended family members that she needs to escape forced marriage without facing violence.

This is by no means an exhaustive list but here are a range of recommendations for assisting a woman or girl fleeing a forced marriage and/or an honour killing if she comes to you for help.

- Never underestimate the family's desire to kill in the name of honour
- Never reject a girl or send her away.
- Never seek advice from 'community leaders'; they may seem progressive, but may not speak honestly on the taboo subject of honour.
- Do NOT attempt mediation.
- Anonymity is fundamental. Some families hire bounty hunters or assassins to kill their children. You must never discuss them or their whereabouts.
- Never contact the family. It will result in the girl facing stricter surveillance and even violence.
- Address practical issues: how to keep hold of/get back the passport for example
- Maintain discreet contact. Check school times and use a password or safe word on the phone
- You must follow the wishes of the girl, even those who will accept a forced marriage rather than make the break from their families.
- When a girl asks for help, never speak to her in the presence of her family
- For girls under 18, seek the assistance of Child Protection services.
- Refer her to and ensure she reaches 'friendship networks' for survivors facing isolation
- Do not approach the family unless the individual expressly asks you to do so.
- Do not approach community leaders unless requested to do so by the individual.
- Do not share information with anyone without the express consent of the individual.

This checksheet has been prepared by The Pixel Project, a 501(c)(3) non-profit organisation.