



Our Selves Our Daughters (OSOD) Project

Purpose, Goals and Objectives

The purpose of “Our Selves, Our Daughters“ is to continue to work closely with women of African heritage and allies in their communities to enhance educational, health and socio-cultural supports for women affected by female genital cutting, and address prevention among daughters. The project activities include 3 series of 10 workshops each for women from three targeted national groups and a 4-week series for a multicultural (or multinational) group. In order to engage with newcomer women, the sessions are held in first language or in English with interpretation. The project also targets young women from 18 to 25 years old with a 4-week series developed and delivered as a result of specific issues concerning them. These sessions are meant to examine the ways cultural and family worldviews influence their sexuality (including FGC) and relationships, and the ways in which social and cultural changes, including migration, affect change of views and practice of FGC and sexuality in general. With this context in mind, it is hoped that the sessions would provide a place for youth to examine the factors that influence their decision-making and communication about sexuality. Also, project activities include sessions tailored for an audience of young men of 18 to 25 years old in a two-part series to engage them in conversations around sexuality, culture and FGC. Workshops and presentations with health and social service providers continue to be a pillar of this project. With the intention to raise awareness on women's health issues and access to health care services, training workshops on FGC, notions of cultural competence and safety and care to women from FGC affected countries are delivered each year. This project is delivered in collaboration with two Community Co-Facilitators. Their contribution is crucial in understanding what occurs on the ground as they engage with community members around this project, but also on the topics of sexuality and FGC in general. Their ongoing insights and questions help confirm some of the paths taken by the project, and also expand our ways of working with diverse communities. The project model working with the Community Co-Facilitators includes many capacity building sessions.

Project Goal:

To build knowledge and capacity for increased socio-cultural supports, health education and access to services for newcomer women that will improve their overall health and wellness and address prevention of female genital cutting (FGC) in the next generation.

Strategies:

1. To work closely with newcomer communities at multiple levels to ensure the project is meeting community needs and is culturally competent in approach
2. To provide educational supports to newcomer women and their allies, addressing FGC and change
3. To conduct community-based research to guide the project and provide tools for communities that support prevention and change
4. To provide training for service providers in health, settlement and social services to increase their capacity to deliver culturally competent care
5. To support in-house development of increased SERC staff capacity to better understand and integrate project learnings into practice
6. To support ongoing dissemination of project learnings through a variety of means that will access a cross-section of audiences

**Project Objectives:**

Objective 1:

To hold culturally competent educational sessions that address female genital cutting (FGC) for women in some African national communities in Winnipeg.

Objective 2:

To hold capacity-building sessions (e.g., dialogue-based training) with Community Co-Facilitators (CCFs) to build skills, knowledge and analysis for co-facilitating women's education sessions.

Objective 3:

To sustain engagement with community leaders and grassroots members in social settings and at community gathering around project updates, possible involvement, etc.

Objective 4:

To complete community-based research with two communities holding focus groups with young men, young women, and adult men.

Objective 5:

To enhance the capacity of Winnipeg service providers (health and social services) and systems to be more responsive and culturally competent in providing care to women affected by FGC.

Objective 6:

To support processes that are participant-driven and culturally responsive so that participants feel the services provided, and the project as a whole, are accessible and that their community, culture, gender and values are respected.

Objective 7:

To address sustainability of the project by building individual and community capacity

Outcomes:

1. Increased knowledge and self-efficacy among women in identifying and addressing health impacts of FGC
2. Increased awareness and analysis of FGC and interconnected issues at an individual and community level, supporting change and prevention of FGC
3. Increased capacity among key community members to provide peer-based information and awareness on women's sexual and reproductive health including FGC and prevention
4. Service providers and SERC staff have enhanced ability to provide culturally competent services to newcomer women affected by FGC