

# Self-reflective guide

## Forced marriage

### Overview

You will watch a short video to explore the topic of marriage and reflect on it.

### Objectives

- Understand the difference between arranged and forced marriage.
- Learn about the role of choice, pressure, and the concept of free and full consent.
- Understand the personal, social, and legal impacts of forced marriage.
- Know where to get help and support.

### Definition: forced marriage

When a person gets married without freely and fully consenting because of coercion, threat or deception or because they're incapable of understanding the nature and effect of the marriage ceremony because of age or mental capacity, or the individual is under the age of 16 years.



### Background to the story

15-year-old Sara lives with her parents and three siblings - one older brother, a younger sister, and a younger brother. Sara's parents migrated to Australia when Sara was two years of age to provide a better life for the family. Sara wants to be a marine biologist when she grows up. She has a lot of career aspirations and wants to do well in life and make her parents proud. Sara is very close to her parents.

 **Ripples of a Promise:**  
[youtu.be/ELFmSOKrto8](https://youtu.be/ELFmSOKrto8)  
(watch the video)

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### Scene 1: Breaking the news

**Q 1: What is happening in this scene?**

**Reflection:**

Think about how the father is making decisions and whether Sara is given much choice in the decision.

**Q 2: Do conversations about marriage usually happen like this?**

**Reflection:**

Is there a discussion here or is it decided by the parents. What about the concept of choice, and how does it play out in arranged vs forced marriages?

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### Scene 2: Talking to friends

**Q 1: How might family, cultural and traditional expectations influence Sara's ability to say no?**

**Reflection:**

Obedience, fear of shame, or family promises might prevent her from speaking up, and how these might be some of the reasons behind someone agreeing to a marriage even if they don't want to.

**Q 2: What might happen if Sara is to go ahead with the marriage?**

**Reflection:**

Dropping out of school, losing independence, health risks, early pregnancy, mental health issues, domestic, family and sexual violence, financial dependency, domestic servitude, limited or no career prospects.

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### Scene 3: Family pressure

**Q 1: How do Sara's parents try to convince her?**

**Reflection:**

Love, saying that Zac comes from a good family, future security. Reflect on whether they are trying to guilt her, express love, or talk about what's best for her. Reflect on coercion and how it is being used to persuade Sara into accepting the marriage.

**Q 2: Does Sara have a genuine choice in this situation?**

**Reflection:**

What does free and full consent look like, and, whether there is room for Sara to say no without pressure or consequences.

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### Additional reflection questions (optional)

- What have I learned about free and full consent?
  - How can I use this knowledge to support others or raise awareness in my community?
  - Who can I talk to if I see or suspect a situation of forced marriage?
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### What does the law say

- Forced marriage is illegal in Australia and it carries jail time.
- Marriage under 16 years of age falls under forced marriage.
- Irrespective of age, for a marriage to be legal, one must freely and fully consent to the marriage. Coerced consent does not equal to free and full consent.

To learn more visit:

[mybluesky.org.au/i-might-be-getting-married](https://mybluesky.org.au/i-might-be-getting-married)

### Where to get help

- **My Blue Sky**  
[mybluesky.org.au](https://mybluesky.org.au)
- **Forced marriage specialist support program**  
[lwb.org.au/services/forced-marriage-support/](https://lwb.org.au/services/forced-marriage-support/)
- **The Additional Referral Pathway**  
[salvationarmy.org.au/additional-referral-pathway/](https://salvationarmy.org.au/additional-referral-pathway/)

*To further enhance your knowledge and understanding about modern slavery you can undertake this free e-module developed by Anti-Slavery Australia*  
[open.uts.edu.au/uts-open/study-area/law/modern-slavery/](https://open.uts.edu.au/uts-open/study-area/law/modern-slavery/)

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