

Thank you for deciding to host a screening of the award-winning documentary *American Circumcision*!

Our goal with this discussion guide is to help set you up for success for your screening. Feel free to run your screening any way you'd like, to use the parts of this guide that work for you, and ignore those that don't. Take this as a suggestion based on a cross country tour, and seeing the film with dozens of audiences.

The only thing you are required to do is...

Required: Tell us about your screening.

****Email us at film@circumcisionmovie.com with the subject "Official Screening" and let us know when and where your screening is happening**

So we know this is a official screening you've paid for, send us an email at film@circumcisionmovie.com with your contact information and the screening information. This will let us know this is a screening you've paid for AND allow us to promote your screening on our social media and tell our fans they can come see the film at your event.

Screening Guide

Plan Your Screening

Select a venue.

Make sure you have a place to screen the film that is the right size for the audience you are expecting. Make sure the venue has what you need to screen the film and whatever discussion you have planned afterward.

Invite collaborators.

Is there a local birth group, activist group, college professor, etc. who'd like to sponsor your event or help promote it? Are there experts you could invite to speak after the film? Are there ways you could use this event to engage people and keep the conversation going after the film?

It's totally fine to just have a screening of the film, but if you got this screening, it's probably because you care about the issue. There may be other people in your area who care about it to. See if you can invite them to help you and use this event to create lasting dialogue and connections around this issue.

Promote your screening.

Tell everyone who might be interested about your screening. Email your friends. Post on social media. Create a Facebook event.

We have created a lot of materials you can share to promote your event which you can find at: <https://circumcisionmovie.com/screening-kit/>

Please feel free to use our trailers, memes, and posters in promoting your event.

You can find on social media here: <https://circumcisionmovie.com/subscribe/>

Optional: Contact local media.

Contact local media and tell them about your event.

If media want to write about it, be sure to direct them to our press-kit here: <https://circumcisionmovie.com/press-kit/>

Do a tech check.

Make sure the equipment is working and you have everything you need to play the film.

- Make sure your projector is working.
- Make sure your projector is bright enough, and no lights shine on it during the film.
- Make sure you have good speakers. (You would not believe how many people forget that movies have sound.)
- Make sure sound is coming through your speakers.
- Make sure you have a blu-ray or DVD player.
- Make sure your blu-ray or DVD player can read the film.
- Make sure your audio is right for your set-up - stereo or 5.1 sound. (If you're not sure, do stereo.)
- Make sure you have seating for everyone and that the film is visible and can be heard from all seating.

These may seem like obvious details, forgetting one can make it so the film doesn't play.

If doing a Q&A or panel discussion after the film, also check everything for that. Make sure you have working microphones or are in a space with good enough sound you won't need them.

Make sure you have a way for people to stay in contact.

Have a sign-in sheet, or some way people can give you their info if after the film they want to stay in contact or hear about future events. After the film, people may have to leave, so make sure this is available and clearly marked before the screening.

Get any cards, swag, or handouts you want to share with the audience.

You can find info cards and merchandise for our film on our website at:
<https://circumcisionmovie.com/store/>

Before The Film

Thank the audience for coming to see the film.

It takes bravery to explore controversial topics, especially those that might arouse strong personal feelings. Be sure to thank your audience for coming to see the film, and let them know you've got a great event in store for them.

Let them know if you have anything planned after.

If you're having a discussion after the film, be sure to let them know, so they don't dash out when the credits roll. If you have any local experts, birth professionals, or activist groups who care about this issue, let the audience know that there will be people there to talk with them about the issue and discuss any questions they may have.

Example: *"Stick around after the film, because we're going to have a great discussion with [your guests]."*

Optional: Survey the audience.

Depending on the group, it may be useful to take a survey of your audience.

For example, for potential parents, you might ask:

"By show of hands, who right now - before seeing this film - would circumcise their child?"

Pause and watch audience reaction.

"Who would NOT circumcise their child and keep their child intact?"

Pause and watch audience reaction.

"Who isn't sure, and that's why they came to see this movie?"

Hope this gets a laugh and watch audience reaction.

You might also survey their current knowledge:

"How many of you know what circumcision is?"

"How much do you feel like you already know about circumcision? Raise your hands high if you know a lot, a little if you know a little, and keep them down if you know almost nothing."

If you're planning on creating future events, it may be useful just to ask people coming in:

"How did you hear about the screening tonight?"

Get to know your crowd.

Make any announcements you want to make.

Not everyone will stay after the film, so if you have something to say about your group or the people sponsoring the event, be sure to say it now.

Warn of Graphic Content.

Depending on your audience, you may need to warn them that this film contains graphic content. Here is the disclaimer director Brendon Marotta would give on the *American Circumcision* film tour:

“This film contains graphic discussion of anatomy, sexuality, and trauma. We show the procedure of circumcision twice, with a warning on screen before each scene for those of you who have trouble watching some things.”

For many audiences, watching a circumcision can be difficult. At most screening on the *American Circumcision* film tour, one or two people would duck outside the theater during that scene. That’s okay, but a little warning beforehand might make them feel safe coming back into the theater after that scene.

Different audiences may need different levels of warning. For example, a conservative church group might need a bit more warning about the graphic discussion of sexuality than a sex-positive LGBT group. Know your audience and make sure they’ll feel like you were honest with them when the credits roll.

What NOT to do.

- We don’t recommend lecturing the audience about the issue before the film. Let the film speak for itself. Part of the power of this film is that it can take people from zero knowledge about this issue to expert within two hours. Do not put them on the defensive by bombarding them with opinions or information before the film has even started.
- Do not frame the film as taking a position on circumcision. We interview both sides in this documentary, and have taken great care to explore multiple conflicting perspectives. This is an independent documentary, not associated with any existing organization on either side.

Optional: Document the event for social media.

Take some pictures of the crowd and discussion so everyone know you had a great event and we can share it on social media.

Screen the film.

Enjoy!

After The Film

This is an intense film, so your audience may have things they want to talk about after this film. You may also have something planned out. However, if you're not sure how to get the discussion going, some of these questions may be useful. Feel free to pick and chose the ones that will work for your group.

Discussion Questions

Here are some discussion questions you might explore after the film.

General

- How much did you know about circumcision coming into this film? How much do you know now?
- What was the biggest thing you learned from this film?
- What image did you have of circumcision prior to this film? What image do you have now?
- What feelings did this film bring up for you?

For potential parents

- After watching this film, has your opinion or perspective changed on circumcision?
- If so - what changed your perspective and how?
- Would you have your child circumcised? Why or why not?
- Imagine ask at an older age, your child asks you about circumcision. What would you tell him?
- Were you aware of the issue of forced retraction before this film?
- If you see medical or birth professionals, what responsibility do you feel they to you around this issue? What information do you expect them to be aware of? What behavior do you expect?
- If other potential parents ask you about circumcision, what would you tell them?

Sexuality

- Before this film, how aware were you of the anatomy of the penis? Did you know the penis had multiple parts? How large did you think the foreskin was?
- What sex education, if any, did you receive about the foreskin?

- What cultural myths had you heard about circumcision or the foreskin? How does that compare to what you know now?

Men

- Prior to this film what was your view of men? Of male sexuality? Of men's feelings and the male experience?
- How has this film changed your perspective of men?
- What new thing were you surprised to learn about how men deal with or experience the issue of circumcision?
- If you are a man, what feelings did this film bring up for you? What support do you need to integrate those feelings?
- If you are a partner of a man, or someone who cares about men, what feelings did this film bring up for you? What do you need to integrate those feelings?
- How can we best support men who might have negative feelings around circumcision or grief over being circumcised?

Gender equality

- Do you feel male and female genital cutting (circumcision) are comparable? Why or why not?
- What are the similarities between female and male genital cutting? Differences? (if any)
- Should male circumcision receive the same treatment as female circumcision - or vice versa?
- After watching this film do you have a different view of gender issues or mens rights? Do you feel there are ways men are discriminated against, even on an institutional level?

For doctors, medical students, and birth professionals

- What does informed consent mean to you?
- Do you think parents and men are given adequate informed consent on circumcision?
- Can parents give consent for circumcision - for the non-therapeutic removal of body parts of their infant children?
- What responsibility do doctors have in educating people about this issue?
- Do you think American doctors should continue to perform circumcision? Why or why not?
- What training did you and your peers received around this issue? Was it enough?
- How aware are you of circumcision botches? Have you seen botches in your practice?
- Are you aware that you can be a conscientious objector to medical procedures you have an ethical objection to? Has anyone ever told you there are conscientious objectors to circumcision?
- If a parent came into your clinic and asked to have their daughter circumcised for religious or cultural reasons, what would you tell them? What if they wanted their son circumcised for the same reasons?
- What would the liability be to a doctor if an adult man was unhappy with the circumcision the doctor performed on him as an infant? (legal, reputation, money, ethics, etc.)
- What would the liability be to a doctor if parents discover that he or she did not give them the full information about circumcision? (legal, reputation, money, ethics, etc.)
- How can doctors better communicate with parents and the public about this issue?
- Is there a way refusing to do circumcision could be framed as something positive your practice offers, rather than something it doesn't offer?

For therapists and healing professionals

- What do you think the lasting impact of early life pain and trauma is?
- Do you consider circumcision a trauma?
- Does circumcision fit the existing definition of sexual assault? Are there men who might process it this way?
- What is the impact on men of the wider culture or healing professionals denying or not understanding their feelings around circumcision?
- How is this issue like other early life experiences one might try to heal or process? How is it different?

After The Discussion

Thank everyone for coming again.

Offer everyone a way to stay in touch.

If you give people a way to stay in touch, then you can invite them to future events or get together to do more work around this issue.

Optional: Email us at film@circumcisionmovie.com and let us know how it went.

We hope you have a great event!

circumcisionmovie.com