Menstruation with Dignity



Community Awareness and Support

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MH-NoW
Care. Confidence. Change

Menstruation with Dignity:
Community Awareness & Support

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Using the guide:

As Menstrual Health Champions, you play a vital role in promoting community awareness and support for menstrual health. The "**Menstruation with Dignity: Community Awareness and Support**" guide is a valuable resource designed to facilitate dialogue sessions with community leaders and members. It provides key menstrual health messages, discussion points, stories to stimulate learning, improve understanding, and spark open discussions about menstruation.

To effectively use the guide, begin by familiarizing yourself with its content and structure. Identify the key messages that resonate with your community's specific needs and concerns.

During your dialogue sessions, encourage community members to share their experiences, ask questions, and provide feedback. Be sure to create a safe, non-judgmental space for open discussion, actively listening to and addressing the concerns of all participants. Use the guide's stories to illustrate the importance of menstrual health and dignity.

By leveraging this resource, you will empower your community to prioritize menstrual health, promote positive attitudes, and create a supportive environment for girls and women to thrive.



Stages of Life



Stages of Life

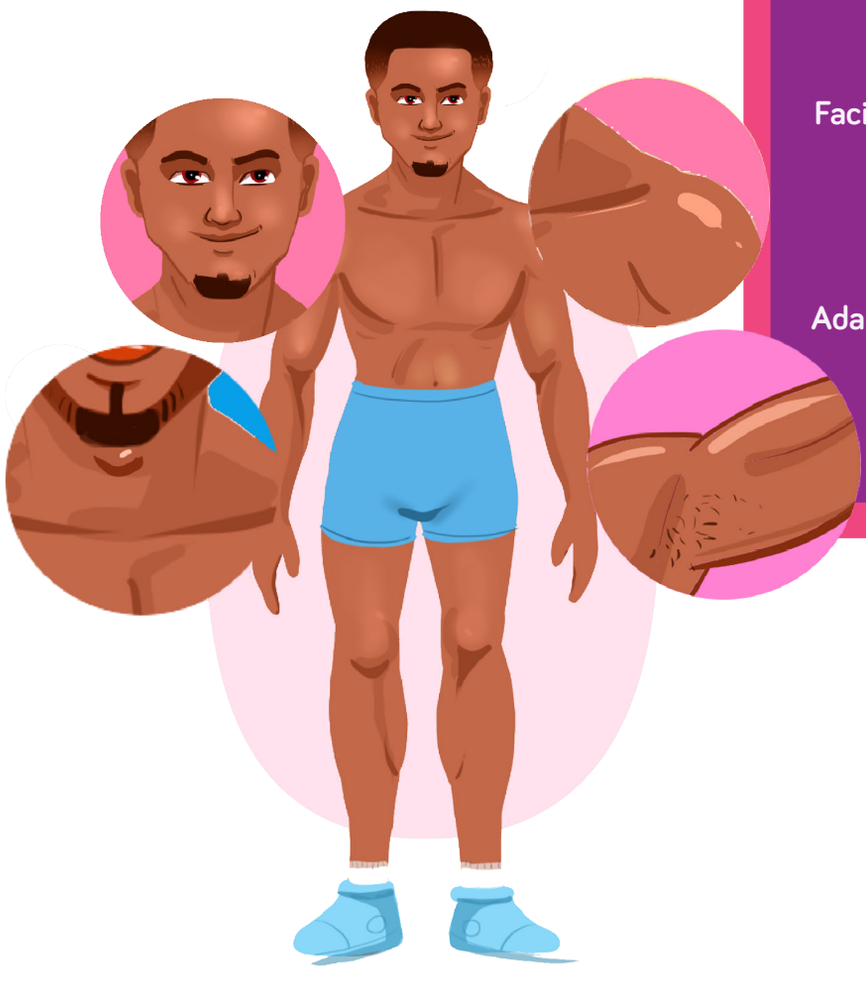
- Describe what you see in the picture.
- What stages of life do you see here and where do you fit in here?
- What stage do school and community girls fit in here?
- What comes to your mind when you hear or think of the word ‘adolescent’?
- What are their general experiences?
- Adolescents go through different stages and changes.

Key Messages:

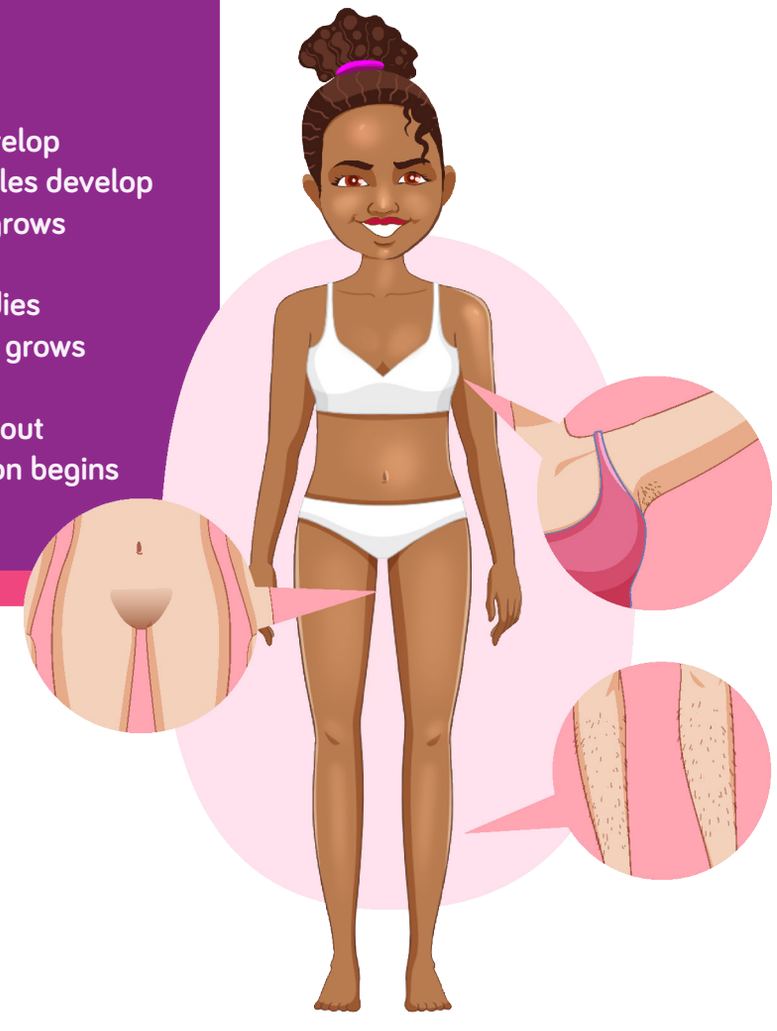
Puberty is a natural part of growing up.
Changes like menstruation are a normal part of growing up.
Support and guide young people through puberty.



Understanding the Body: Puberty Changes

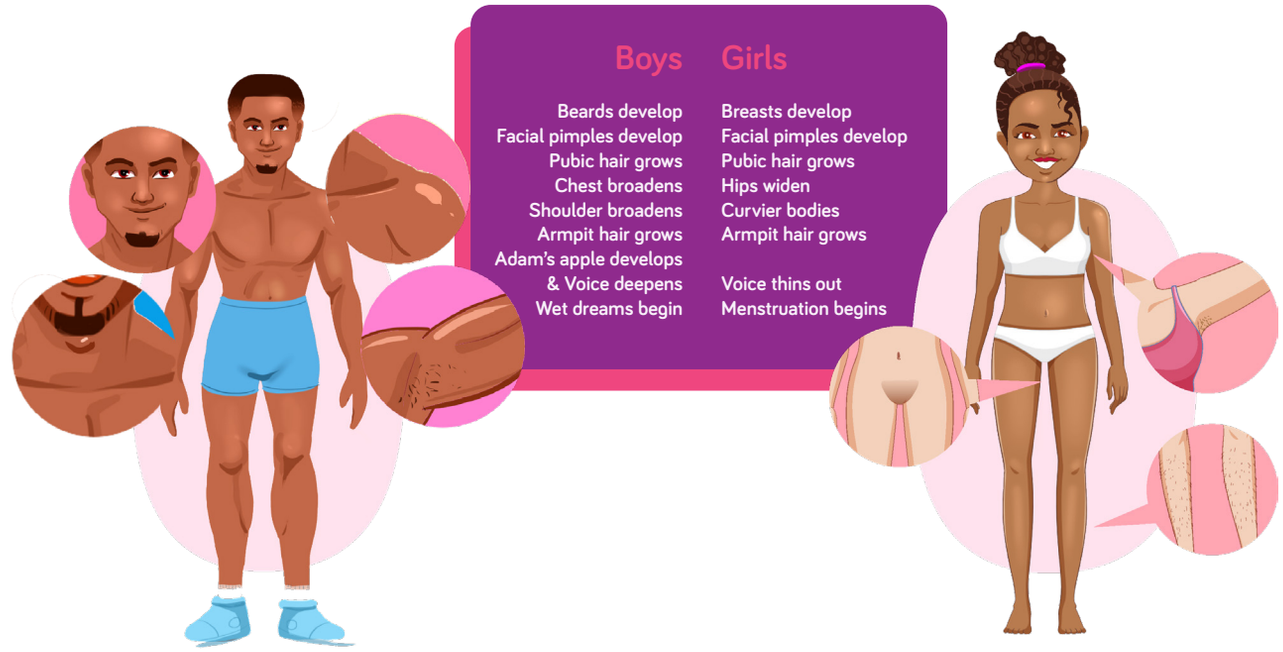


Boys	Girls
Beards develop	Breasts develop
Facial pimples develop	Facial pimples develop
Pubic hair grows	Pubic hair grows
Chest broadens	Hips widen
Shoulder broadens	Curvier bodies
Armpit hair grows	Armpit hair grows
Adam's apple develops & Voice deepens	Voice thins out
Wet dreams begin	Menstruation begins



Understanding the Body: Puberty Changes

- Describe what you see in the picture.
- Briefly talk about puberty and the changes: Puberty signifies a transition from childhood to adulthood.
- Usually characterized by physical, emotional, behavioral and social changes.
- It is a period where boys and girls attain maturity, when sexual organs are matured and they are able to have children.
- Girls reach puberty earlier than boys: Girls attain puberty between 8-12 years while Boys attain puberty 10-14 years.
- Puberty occurs in response to hormones in males- testosterone and in females- estrogen and progesterone.



Key Message:

Both boys and girls experience puberty but one of the important changes that girls experience is MENSTRUATION.

Menstruation with Dignity



Menstruation with Dignity

Menstrual health signifies that people who menstruate can have their periods safely, with dignity and without shame.



It includes:

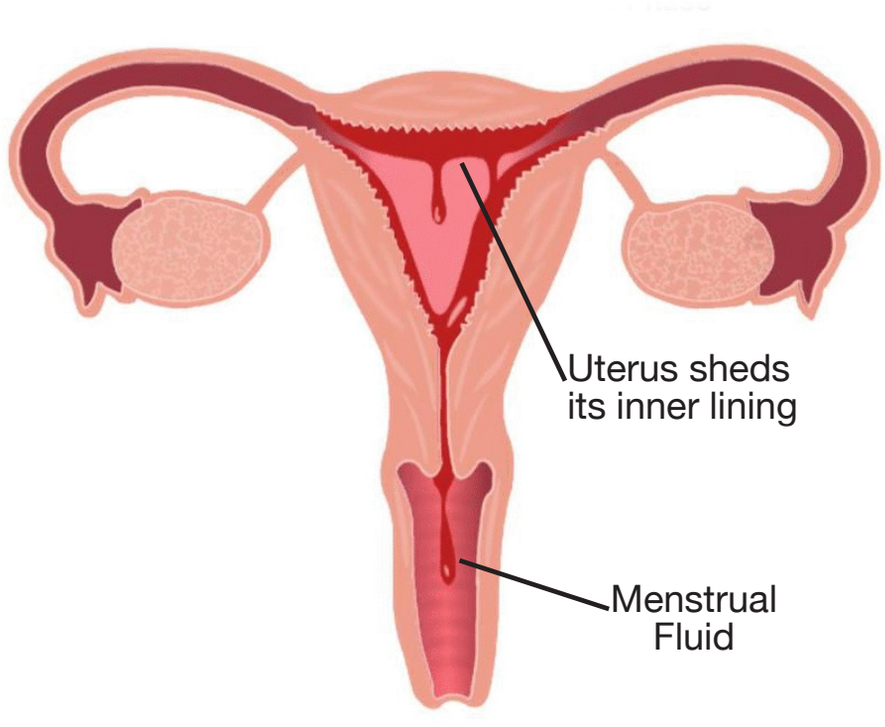
- Having the right and comprehensive information.
- Access to safe and quality products and facilities.
- Getting proper healthcare for any menstrual problems.
- Freedom, strength and confidence to manage their periods without discrimination or barriers.
- Being in an environment where menstruation is understood and supported.

Key Messages:

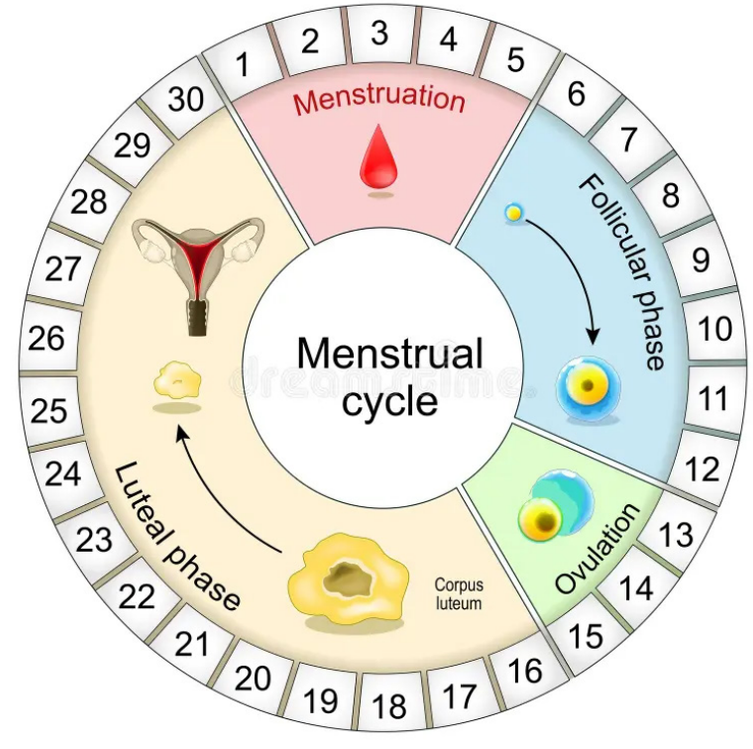
Menstruation should be managed without shame but with dignity and confidence!
Support and promote safe and dignified menstruation.

Menstruation- What I need to know

The process of menstruation



The menstrual cycle

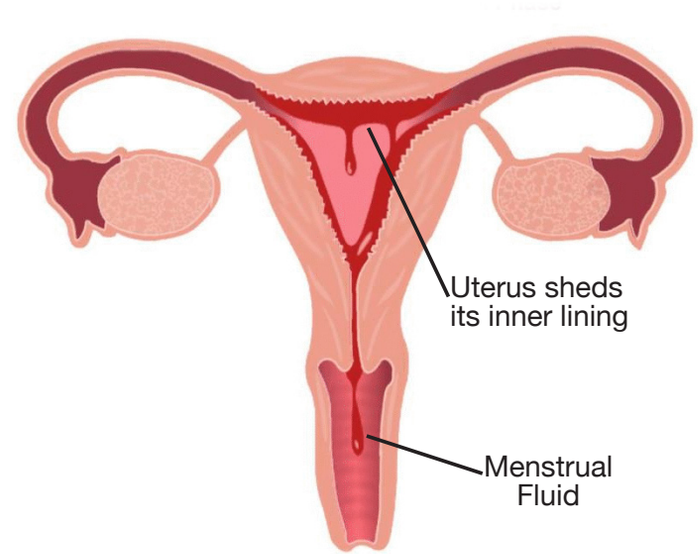


Menstruation- What I need to know

What is Menstruation?

- Menstruation, is commonly referred to as a “period” or “menses“.
- Menstruation is a natural process that occurs in the female reproductive system of girls and women during puberty.
- It is the monthly discharge of blood and unfertilized egg through the vagina.
- It occurs from puberty till menopause due to hormonal changes in the body.
- A girl/woman bleeds for 2 to 7 days.
- Menstrual cycle is between 21-35 days.
- What other names is menstruation called in your community?

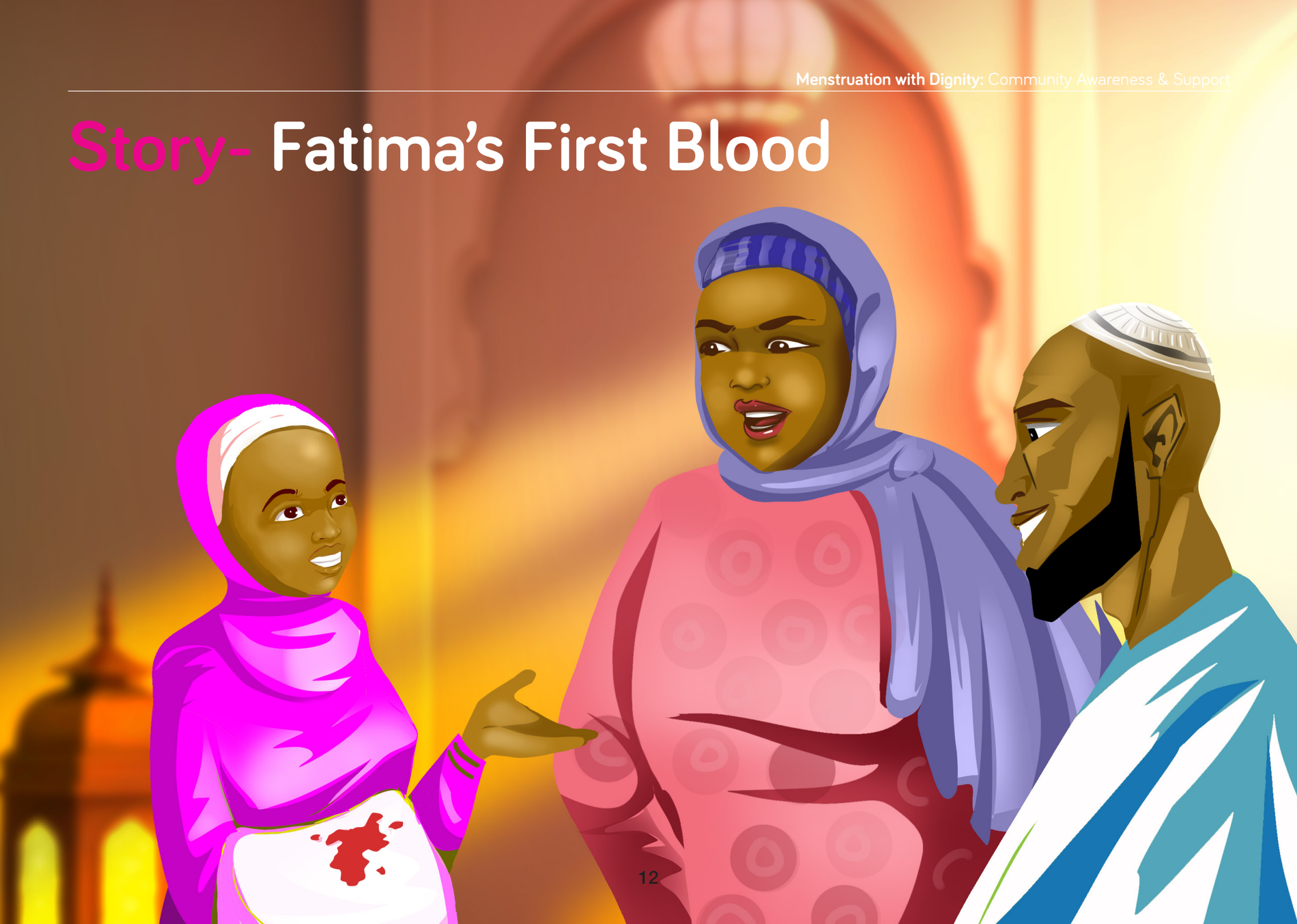
Menstrual Phase (Day 1-5)



Key Messages:

Menstruation is a natural, healthy process. Every girl or woman experience it differently.
It is not a sickness but an essential biological process that occurs due to hormonal changes.

Story- Fatima's First Blood



Story- Fatima's First Blood

Twelve-year-old Fatima woke up, startled by the distant crow of the rooster. She knew she was late for school. In a hurry, she tossed aside her thin blanket and swung her legs off the mat. But something felt different—something wet. She panicked. Did I wet the bed?" she thought, her heart beating fast.

She reached down to touch the dampness on her nightdress and brought her fingers to her nose, expecting the familiar smell of urine. But the scent was different, it was strange and metallic. Quickly, she grabbed the dim oil lamp beside her bed and moved it closer to see blood. Fear gripped her as she remembered the whispers she had heard in the market from older girls. They had spoken in hushed voices about "menses," about how one day, without warning, blood would come. Some said it was a sign of sickness; others said it meant they were now women, but none of them said what to do when it happened.

While still thinking, a sharp knock broke the silence. "Fatima! Fatima!" her mother's urgent voice called. As the door opened, Fatima quickly tried to pull her blanket over the stain, she was embarrassed. Her mother stepped inside and noticed Fatima's tense posture. Without a word, she moved closer and pulled back the covers. Her mother said, "So, it has come" . Fatima was shy. Before she could utter a word, her father stepped into the room.





“What’s going on here?” he asked, his eyes shifting between his wife and daughter. Fatima’s mother turned to him. “Our daughter has just started her period“. Her father’s expression remained unreadable for a moment. Then, he nodded and said, “Good, It’s time for marriage.“ Fatima’s stomach twisted. Marriage? Tears ran down her eyes as she shook her head. “No! I don’t want to get married!” she cried out. Ignoring her, her father turned and walked out of the room. Fatima’s mother sighed deeply. She grabbed an old piece of cloth and handed it to Fatima. “Use this,” she said. Then, she rushed after her husband.



Discussion

What are the misconceptions and negative behaviors in this story?
What is the impact of Fatima's father's decision on her education and well-being?
How do girls in your community navigate this challenge?
How can they be supported?
What should Fatima's mother have done and what can mothers do in such situations?
Highlight the use of appropriate and safe menstrual products.

Menstrual Myths



Menstrual Myths

What are the myths, misconceptions, or menstrual norms you have heard or that are common in your community?

What are your personal experiences with such norms and what was done?

- Identify the issue , barrier or restriction
- Clarify the issue by probing further.
- Empathize with their concerns while showing respect.
- Analyze and discuss the impact of the myth, misconception or menstrual norm.

Discuss the impact of the identified myth or menstrual norm on girls, women, family and the community.

Highlight the role of individuals, families and communities in addressing these myths and misconceptions.



Key Messages:

Menstrual Health is a community responsibility.

Case Study: Menstrual Exclusion & Stigma





Case Study: Menstrual Exclusion & Stigma

In a family consists of a man, wife and their children. The husband belongs to a tribe different from the wife's. During her menstrual period, the woman accidentally stained the bed sheet she shared with her husband. While cleaning the bed, her husband saw her and became irritated by the sight. He sent her off the bed and ordered her to sleep on the floor separating her from him. Also, the man refused to eat the food she cooked saying that she was unclean and can't eat her food. The wife felt humiliated by her husband's reaction.

Discussion

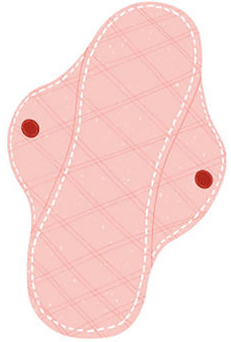
- What are the cultural beliefs and stigmatizing behavior (s) in this case.
- What is the impact of this behaviour on the woman and other women's physical and emotional health?
- What should the man and woman do?
- How can we as community and traditional leaders promote positive attitudes towards menstruation and challenge harmful stigma?

Conclusion

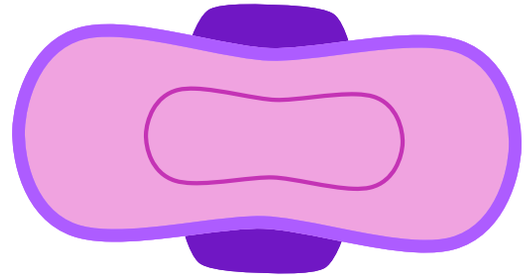
This case highlights the urgent need to address menstrual stigma and promoted inclusive attitudes towards menstruation.
Community and traditional leaders play a vital role in shaping cultural norms and promiting social change.
Open dialogue about menstruation creates a society that values and respects girls' and women's reproductive health and dignity.

Menstrual Hygiene Management

Reusable Pad



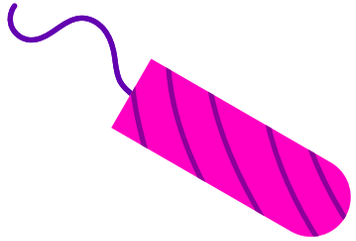
Disposable Pad



Menstrual Cup



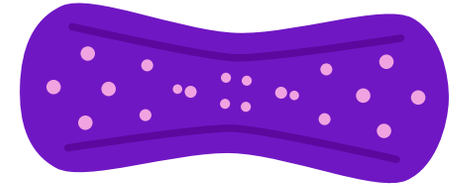
Tampon



Period Wear



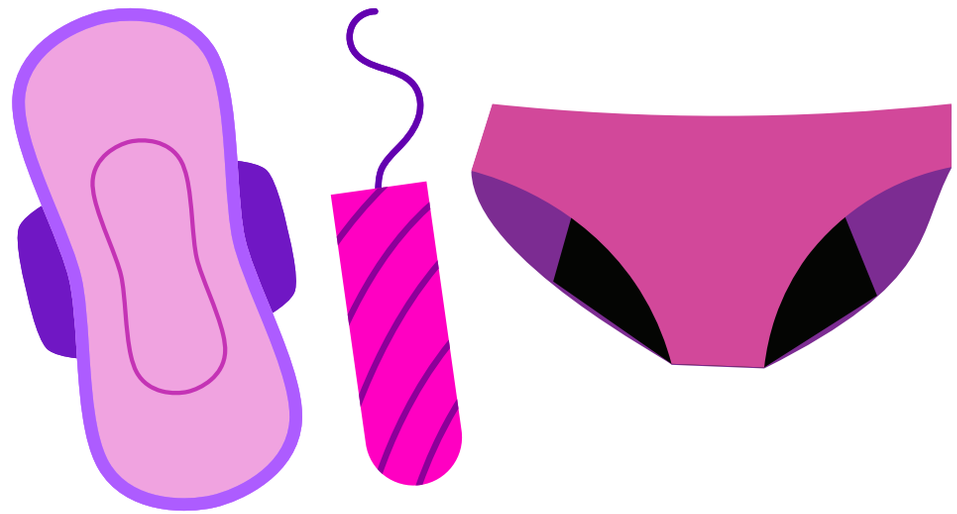
Contoured Panty Liner



Safe menstrual products to use

Menstrual Hygiene Management

- It is important to manage menstruation with proper hygiene materials and practices to ensure comfort, and health.
- There are health risks associated with poor menstrual hygiene.
- Use clean and dry disposal or re-usable materials.
- Wash your hands with soap and water.
- Change used menstrual product regularly, at least 4 times per day especially on heavy flow days.
- Dispose used product properly (follow manufacturer's instructions).



Key Messages:

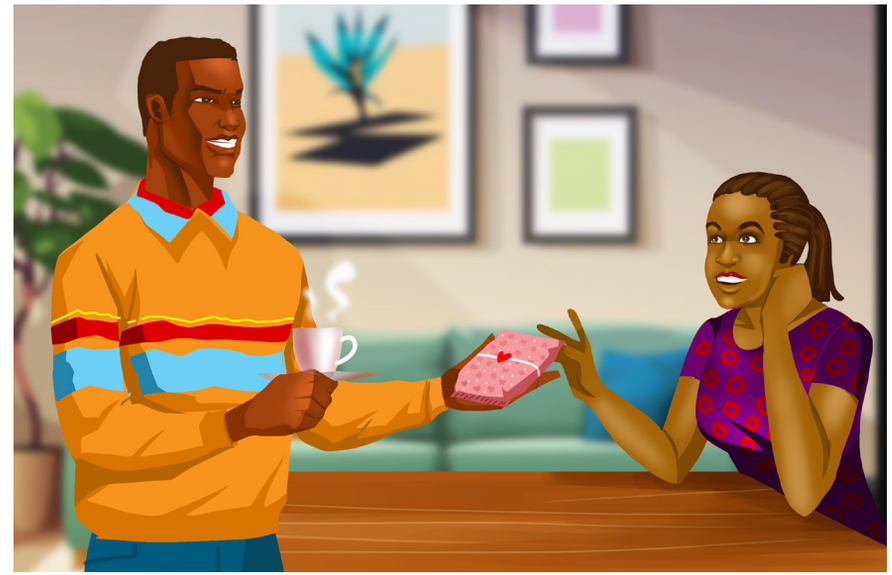
Menstrual products are safe and appropriate for use during menstruation. They help girls stay healthy.
You can get a safe product in your community.
Refer girls and women to MH Champion or an identified local vendor within MH-NoW's network).

Engaging boys & men in MH discussions



Engaging boys & men in MH discussions

- Describe what you see in the pictures.
- What are your opinion about involving boys and men in conversations about menstruation.
- Do boys and men find it difficult engaging in such conversations? If 'yes', why? How can they address the difficulties?
- Briefly discuss the benefits of involving boys and men in conversations about menstruation.
- How can boys and men contribute to promoting menstrual health and hygiene?
- Explore their contributions and the benefits to the lives and health of girls and women.
- Emphasize that supporting girl's and women improves their health and increases men's respect in the community.



Key Messages:

Fathers, brothers and male partners support your girls' and partners' menstrual health, by providing emotional and practical support.
Real boys and men support girls and women during menstruation.
It enhances healthier relationships with girls and women.

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