Lesson Plan 2: Menstruation

**40 minutes**

**Lesson Description**

The focus of the lesson is to know experiences of first menstruation, become familiar with the term menstruation, myths and misconceptions related to menstruation. This helps students to talk confidently and accurately about menstruation.

**Learning Outcomes**

 By the end of this session, participants will be able to:

1. Define the term Menstruation
2. Tell the Importance and facts on menstruation
3. Discuss the myths and misconceptions about menstruation

**Materials**

* Flip chart paper
* News Print
* Markers
* Meta cards
* Power Point

**Preparation**

* Write the session Learning outcomes on flip chart paper
* If using the PowerPoint, prepare the files and projector for display
* Prepare poster images or PowerPoint images
* Prepare Power Point of general information about menstruation and its relation to reproductive health

**15 minutes**

**Introduction: Menstruation- Experience sharing**

1. Inform participants that they are going to hear the story of Rani and continue the story as follow:

**Rani’s story:**

Rani, an 11 year old girl, was studying in class 7. One day, she was preparing to go to school. But suddenly, she found herself with blood in her underwear. She got frightened. Due to the bleeding, she thought that she was suffering from some chronic disease and would die soon. She became restless and kept checking her underwear. She could not gather enough courage to share her concerns with her parents.

Rani was unaware about menstruation. No one had shared the appropriate information with her before. Today is her first menstruation.

1. Inform participants, as that of Rani, all of female participants have their experience of their first menstruation.
2. Providing a meta card to each participants, ask female participants to write about their experience of first menstruation. And male participants are to write, how come they know females in their house or school are menstruating.
3. Collect the meta cards and read-out few points (try to explore both good and bad experiences) and discuss it in large group. Inform participants that they are going to explore more information on menstruation throughout the day.
4. Share the learning outcomes of the session.

**Menstruation-Definition, Importance and myths 20 minutes**

1. Inform participants that they are going for a group activity. They will be divided into 3 groups and 5 minutes time will be given for discussion. A different topic is given to each group and they have to present their ideas on newsprint paper and finally present it in a large group.
2. Divide the participants into 3 groups and provide news prints and markers.
3. Provide the topic to each group as follow: Group-1 “Menstruation” (What, When, Whom), Group -2 “Importance and facts on menstruation” Group-3 “Myths and Taboos on menstruation”.
4. Provide 5 minutes for the activity and after, ask groups to stop and present their outcomes.
5. Ask a group to present their idea on large group. Summarize and add more information on the topic (if needed).
6. Repeat same process with other two groups and add on more points.

***Optional,***

*Add more information with the help of power-point presentation.*

**5 minutes**

**Review**

1. Ask the participants to make pairs.
2. In their pairs ask the participants to discuss about a point or two that they find interesting in the session.
3. Give 2 to 3 minutes for discussion.
4. Ask few volunteers to share their answers in a large group.

**Reflections on Lessons**

**Trainers Notes:**

***Menstruation****: is a natural, normal biological process experienced by all adolescent girls and women, yet it is often not spoken about openly causing unnecessary embarrassment and shame.*

**Menstruation**, or a **menstrual period**, is the periodic shedding of the lining of a woman's uterus. It is one of the phases of the **menstrual cycle**. The uterine lining breaks down into a bloody substance. It then passes down through the cervix and exits through the vagina. The process usually lasts from three to five days. The amount of menstrual blood can vary from period to period and from woman to woman.

**Adolescent age:** Adolescence describes the transitional periods between childhood and adulthood. Girls aged 10 to 19 are adolescent

**Menarche**: first occurrence of menstruation. Girls typically start to menstruate between 9 and 16 years old

**Menopause**: the time in a woman’s life when her menstrual period stops at an average of 45 years of age and she is no longer able to have children.

**Menarche** and **Menopause**: can vary from woman to woman and these changes may occur over several years.

**Importance of menstruation:** When a girl starts to menstruate then she is capable of bearing a baby. So, menstruation is a way ahead for dignity and pride for a girl. **Menstruation** is part of **woman's** reproductive cycle.

Every month, in response to reproductive hormones – mainly estrogen and progesterone, a **woman's** womb gets ready for pregnancy. The inner lining of the womb, known as the endometrium, prepares for an embryo to implant in it. If the egg doesn't get fertilized, that lining is released from the body as blood through the vagina.

**Facts about menstruation**

* The average woman menstruates for 3,000 days in her life, that is, 8 years in her lifetime.
* 1 out of 3 school girls from south Asia were not aware of menstruation prior to menarche.
* Only 2.5 % of schoolgirls in south Asia knew that menstrual blood comes from the uterus. (WASHfunders.org)
* 52% of the female population is of reproductive age and most of them are menstruating every month (SSWM).
* 69% of schools in Nepal have separate toilets for girls and 80% of the schools have at least one toilet facility. (Department of Education 2013)
* Study done by UNICEF and Department of Education in 2012 found that female students face particular MHM challenges. 3 quarters of schools have at least one toilet but only 36% have separate toilets for girls. 30% of girls in upper level, miss class due to lack of sanitation facilities.
* 53% of adolescent girls lack appropriate information about reproductive health and proper menstrual management.

**Myths and Misconceptions about Menstruation**

* The Menstrual blood is impure
* Menstruating girls should not take baths. Bathing or washing your hair during a period will increase your flow.
* Prohibition of eating particular foods during menstruation
* Women lose liters of blood during their periods
* Exercise is also prohibited during menstruation.
* The clothes used during menstruation should not be shown to male family members.

**Reference for explaining why these are simply myths and taboos**

 1. The Menstrual blood is impure

Considering Menstrual blood as impure and a menstruating women impure has been a result of a lot of misconceptions, taboos and practices which has been followed by people all around the world without being aware of the actual cause. While a women is menstruating, to make sure that the girl/women gets proper rest, she was not allowed to work in kitchen or do any house hold work, sometime a girl/women would also be sent to separate huts to spend their time in privacy and peacefully.

All these precaution got exaggeration and one started assuming that since a girl is impure during her periods so she should be secluded. Menstrual discharge is accompanied by abdominal pain in some women. All of this too makes the menstrual fluid appear as dirt, something that the body rejects and thus a menstruating woman is impure and anything she touches becomes impure.

Scientifically, the menstrual blood is a uterine lining made of tissue and blood vessels. This lining is called endometrium, if the egg (ovum) gets fertilized this lining nourishes the embryo. So, logically this fluid that comes during one period is a source of life for the embryo, so instead of it being impure, it has the capability of giving life.

 Menstrual Discharge looks dirty and when it stays in contact with air it begins to give out foul smell.

<http://questions.menstrupedia.com/questions/20/is-menstruation-related-to-some-impurity>

1. Menstruating girls should not take baths. Bathing or washing your hair during a period will increase your flow.

Bathing is very important during menstruation to maintain hygiene. In some of the culture, women should bath every day. While having your periods maintaining hygiene is the most important thing, so you should want to bathe even more to feel fresh and clean.

1. Prohibition of eating particular foods during menstruation

During menstruation, it is more important to maintain healthy diet and should eat more nutritious food however eating sour and spicy foods can rise or worsen menstrual cramps (abdominal pain).

1. Women lose liters of blood during their periods

The average adult has about 1.2 to 1.5 gallons (4.5 to 5.5 liters) of blood circulating inside their body, said Dr. Daniel Landau, a hematologist and oncologist at the University of Florida Cancer Center – Orlando Health.

Although a girl's or woman's menstrual flow can vary from light to heavy, the average amount of blood lost during a period is nearly 3 tablespoons, notes the University of North Carolina's Department of Obstetrics & Gynecology. However, many women can experience frequent heavy bleeding during their menstrual cycle, and this can lead to anemia. In some cases, abnormally heavy bleeding may be a symptom of an underlying condition.

https://www.reference.com/health/much-blood-girl-lose-during-her-period-f1bda9fd1392de5b?qo=contentSimilarQuestions

1. It is a taboo that in our culture menstruating girls should not participate in festivals, religious activities and touch flowering plants

It is believed that women didn’t use sanitary pad during menstruation, hence might be practiced to prevent spread of diseases or contaminations.

Scientifically, there is no valid reason behind it. It might be due to unhygienic smell of blood during menstruation that result so.

1. Exercise is also prohibited during menstruation.

It helps with annoying period-related symptoms

It may seem like the last thing you want to do when you have your period, but working out can help relieve the symptoms that make getting your period so annoying in the first place. ”The more active you are [overall] and more regular you are with your activity, the better your periods end up being—less cramping, less heavy flow,” explains Stacy Sims, PhD, an exercise physiologist for USA Cycling Women’s Track Endurance Program and co-founder of Osmo Nutrition.