

Lesson Plan: Menstrual Hygiene



60 minutes total

Lesson Description



This lesson uses a role-play activity to introduce the challenges that many women and girls have in managing their menstrual hygiene, and the impacts on their health and education. Participants will identify solutions to meet the menstrual hygiene needs of women and girls at home and in school.

Learning Outcomes



At the end of this session participants will be able to:

1. Discuss the challenges of menstrual hygiene management for women and girls
2. Discuss the impact of poor menstrual hygiene on health and education
3. Identify solutions to ensure menstrual hygiene-friendly homes and schools

Materials



- Flip chart paper
- Markers
- Tape
- Small sticky notes or stickers
- Role-play cards
- Flip chart paper with Problems – Solutions Charts
- Flip chart paper with drawing of uterus
- Local products used for menstruation (for example, sanitary pads, cloths)
- Local education materials used to teach boys and girls about puberty and menstruation
- Optional: PowerPoint Presentation on Menstrual Hygiene Management

Preparation



- Review topic in Technical Brief: Menstrual Hygiene Management
- Print and cut out the role-play cards for the introduction activity (1 card per participant). Depending on the size of the group, 1 or 2 people can play the student with the object stuck to them role, 1 or 2 people can play the bully role, 1 or 2 people can play the supportive friend role, and the remaining participants can be general students in the classroom.
- Identify participants who would be comfortable actively participating in the role-play as the student with the object stuck to them, bully, and supportive friend. If possible, have at least one man play the role of the student with the object and one woman to play the bully. Speak with these participants individually about their roles the day before or in the morning before the workshop begins so that they are prepared, but do not tell them that this activity is about menstrual hygiene management. Give the the participant the object to stick to their clothes in advance so that the others are unaware of what is happening.

- Rearrange tables and chairs to create a traditional classroom setting. Try to find props to help you transform your appearance into a more traditional classroom teacher (ex: put on a tie or a suit jacket, pull back your hair, or put glasses on).
- Ask the host about local words or phrases used to describe menstruation, practices used for menstrual hygiene, and social and cultural attitudes.
- Find examples of local products that girls and women use for menstruation (for example, sanitary pads, and cloths).
- Find examples of local education materials that are used to teach boys and girls about puberty and menstruation. Books used in schools in Tanzania, Ghana, Ethiopia, and Cambodia can be downloaded for free from: www.growandknow.org/books.html
- Draw a large image of a uterus on flip chart paper (see image below for reference)
- Draw 4-5 blank 'Problems – Solutions Charts'. (1 per 3-4 participants) (See end of lesson plan)
- Optional: cue and prepare PowerPoint presentation on Menstrual Hygiene Management
- Optional: Write the Learning Outcomes on flip chart paper

Introduction
10 minutes

1. Ask the participants to imagine that they are back in school.
2. Stand at the front of the room and teach a simple lesson to the students that is appropriate based on the participant's existing knowledge. Be authoritarian, for example, make students raise their hands and then stand up when they have a question.
3. After a few minutes, ask the student(s) with the object on their clothes to come to the front of the classroom and do something in front of the other students. For example: ask them to write something on the board or flip chart or recite some text.
4. When the student(s) ask for permission to leave the classroom, make them stand up and explain why they need to leave. Make them feel uncomfortable and embarrassed.
5. Do not reprimand or punish the participants who are playing the role of the bully when they identify the object on the student's clothes. You can also tease the student about the object. If the bully is not able to identify the student after a few minutes, then you can identify the student and tease them about the object.
6. After the role-play is finished, do not present the lesson description or the learning outcomes.
7. When the role-play is over ask participants to leave the room. Rearrange the chairs into a circle, return to your original appearance, and then invite the participants to re-enter the room.

Role-play Debrief
10 minutes



1. Ask the group to sit in a circle to make the debrief activity more intimate.
2. Ask the participants playing the role of general students to describe what they observed.
3. Ask the participants playing the general students to describe what they felt.
4. Ask the participant(s) with the object to describe how it felt to hide their object from others and then be teased about it. *Stressful, difficult, couldn't concentrate on teacher and lesson, wanted to leave to make it easier to hide the object*
5. Ask the bully to describe how it felt to tease the other student(s).
6. Ask the friend to describe how it felt to support the other student(s) when they were being teased by the teacher and bully.



7. Ask the group to discuss what impact this could have on a student's attendance at school and their education.

- *Stay home, avoid school, easier to hide object from others, poor education decreases chances for job opportunities and perpetuates the poverty cycle (discussed on the first day of the workshop)*



8. Ask the participants: "What did the embarrassed person need to be able to cope and not be affected by a situation like this?" You may use the following 2 categories to help with the discussion:

- *Personal (Internal): Motivation, courage, confidence, self-esteem, determination*
- *Outside (External): Encouragement, support, knowledge, skills, rewards/incentives, consequences, environment, social influences*



9. Ask the participants: "How is this role-play activity similar to real life?"

- *Menstrual hygiene for women and girls.*

10. Present the lesson description or learning outcomes.

Menstruation Facts

10 minutes



1. Optional: start the PowerPoint presentation.
2. Ask the participants: "How comfortable are you talking about menstrual hygiene management?" Ask participants to use 5 fingers for very comfortable and 1 finger for not very comfortable.
3. Explain to participants that men and women are equally responsible for talking about menstrual hygiene management. We all have to become as comfortable as possible talking about menstrual hygiene, for the sake of the good health of the women and girls in our own lives.
4. Display the image of the uterus and fallopian tubes.
5. Use the diagram to explain a woman's reproductive system and menstruation and present the following facts:



- *Menstruation, commonly called a period, is the natural process of shedding the lining of a woman or adolescent girl's uterus. During menstruation, blood flows*

from the uterus and passes out of the body through the vagina. This process happens for 2–7 days every month as part of a normal menstrual cycle.

- *Girls begin to menstruate usually between the ages of 9 and 14. Menstruation usually stops when a woman is in her late 40s or early 50s, which is called menopause. A woman will menstruate for about 3,000 days during her lifetime.*
- *Having regular menstrual cycles is a sign that important parts of the female body are working normally. The menstrual cycle provides hormones, which are important body chemicals, to keep women and girls healthy. It also prepares the body for pregnancy each month.*



Trainer Note: This information may be review for participants or new information depending on their background and culture. Try to use local words and expressions if you know them.



6. Discuss that menstruation is a natural process; however, if not properly managed it can result in health problems. Optional: Hold up a rag, cloth, or other local sanitary product. Ask participants to imagine not being able to properly clean it with soap and water, hanging it in a dark place, and then putting it against your skin for a whole day. Ask the participants to imagine how that would feel.
7. Ask the participants: “What might be the impact of poor menstrual hygiene on a woman or girl’s health?”
 - *Reports have identified links between poor menstrual hygiene practices and the following health impacts in women and girls: rashes and irritations; urinary, vaginal, and perineal infections; complications with reproduction and pregnancy, complications associated with female genital mutilation or cutting.*

Problems – Solutions Chart

30 minutes



1. Divide participants into groups of 3 or 4 people.



Trainer Note: Try to split up the groups by gender. A great point of discussion is showing how men and women have different ideas of the problems and solutions related to menstrual hygiene management.

2. Using 1 of the Problems – Solutions Charts as an example, explain to participants that the bottom octagons, like stop signs, are the problems, challenges, and barriers to having good, safe, and respectful menstrual hygiene management. The top rectangles are the solutions. The problems and solutions are divided into 3 columns: home, school, and both.
3. Explain to participants you only want them to discuss as a group and fill out the ‘Problems’ section of the Problems – Solutions Chart. You will be working on the ‘Solutions’ part later in the lesson.



4. Hand out a ‘Problems – Solutions Chart’ to each group.
5. Give the participants 10 minutes to complete the ‘Problems’ section.



6. Ask each group to present their ‘Problems’. Discuss the challenges and barriers with the large group.
 - *Lack of sanitary products*
 - *Lack of water and soap for cleaning*

- *Lack of access to appropriate sanitation facilities*
 - *Cultural and religious restrictions*
 - *Shame and embarrassment*
 - *Lack of information and awareness*
7. Ask the participants to return to their groups and brainstorm some solutions to the barriers and challenges. Ask them to record their ideas on the chart. Remind them that the solutions are divided into 3 categories: home, school, and both.
 8. After 10 minutes, ask the participants to present the “Solutions”.
 9. Discuss the solutions with the large group. Emphasize that both the hardware (for example, WASH facilities) and software (for example, information and education) are needed to encourage good menstrual hygiene at home, school, and both.
 - *Ensure sanitary products and underwear are available, affordable, and easy to access.*
 - *Provide access to water, sanitation, and hygiene at home and in public places, like schools and work. Women and girls need somewhere safe and private to change their sanitary products; clean water and soap for washing their hands, bodies, and reusable cloths; and facilities for safely disposing of used sanitary products or a clean and well-lit place to dry them if reusable.*
 - *Provide factual information to girls and boys, men and women to counter negative customs and give positive support to women and girls. Schools provide an opportunity to reach many girls (and boys) with information on menstrual hygiene.*
 - *Offer education programs for teachers and school authorities, as well as sensitization for parents and wider communities.*
 10. Ask the participants to discuss with a partner how they plan to address the issue with households as Community WASH Promoters. Give them 5 minutes to discuss.
 11. Ask the participants if anyone would like to share strategies on how they plan to address menstrual hygiene with households as Community WASH Promoters.
 12. Ask the participants to share any specific examples that they have seen or used in their work to support menstrual hygiene management. Show examples of local education materials that are used to teach boys and girls about puberty and menstruation.

Review
5 minutes

1. In pairs, ask participants to discuss how they might use this information on a personal level.

Reflections on Lesson

Introduction Activity: Role-play Cards

You are a 14-year-old student in a classroom with other boys and girls. You have an object stuck to your clothes which is very embarrassing and shameful in your culture. You need to try to hide the object from your classmates and teacher and not discuss it with anyone else.

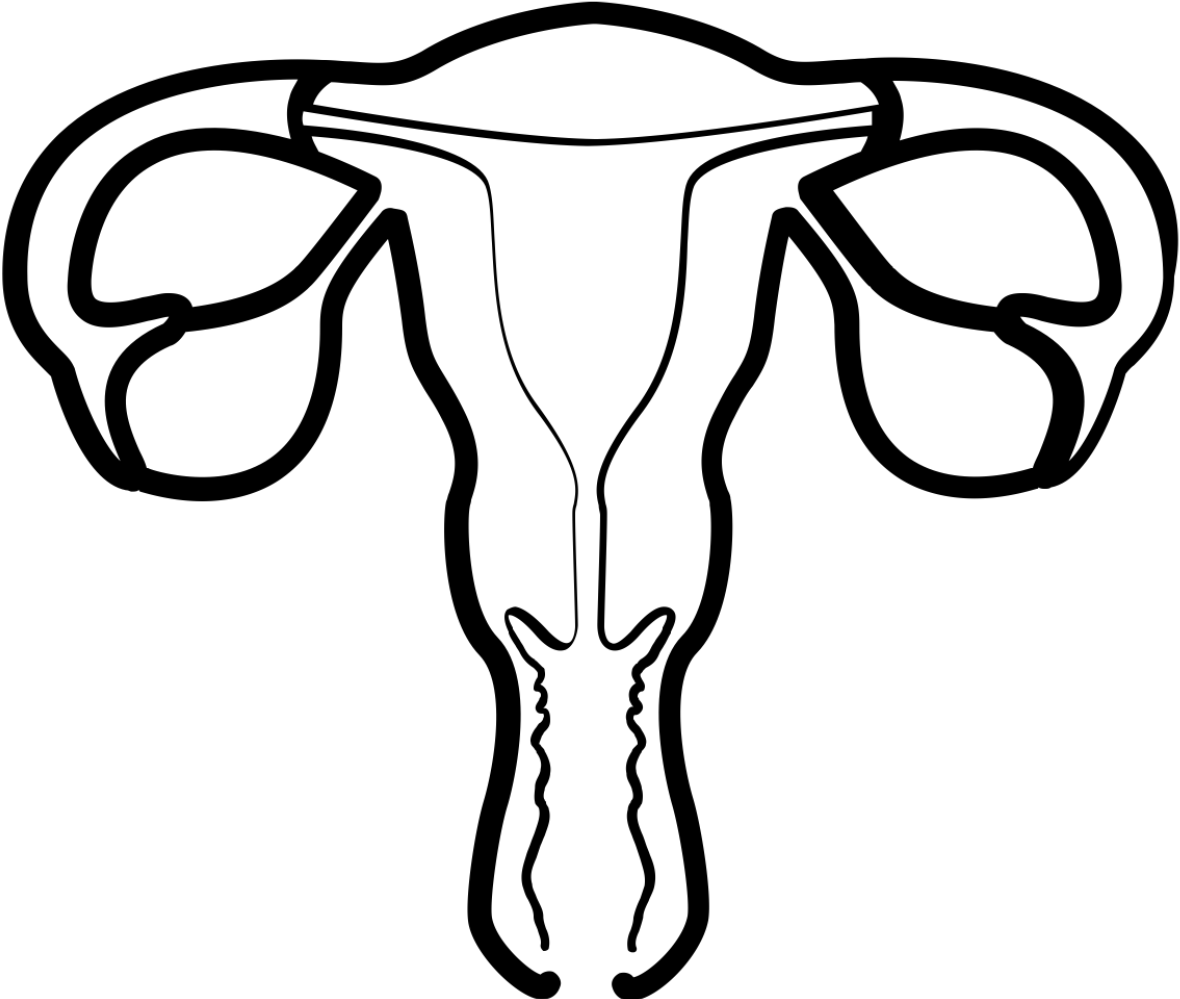
After a few minutes in the role-play, raise your hand to ask the teacher if you can leave the classroom for a personal reason. You secretly want to remove the object from your clothes, but do not say why you need to leave the class.

You are a 14-year-old student in a classroom with other boys and girls. One of your classmates has an object stuck to their clothes which is very embarrassing and shameful in your culture. They are trying to hide the object from everyone. Try to identify this student and tease them in front of the class when you notice the object.

You are a 14-year-old student in a classroom with other boys and girls. One of your friends has an object stuck to their clothes which is very embarrassing and shameful in your culture. They are trying to hide the object from everyone. Provide support to your friend if they are bullied by others and try to make them feel more comfortable.

You are a 14-year-old student in a classroom with other boys and girls. Participate in the lesson and follow the teacher's instructions.

Image of Uterus and Fallopian Tubes



The Problem – Solutions Chart

