



Period Poverty

Optional activities



WaterAid/James Kiyimba



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Contents

This resource contains 3 optional activities which accompany the main Period Poverty pack. Each activity has suggestions for where it can fit into the core sessions.

Optional activities

1. Talking lines
2. Myth busting
3. What happens when you have a period?

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Talking lines

Time needed:
15 minutes

What you'll need:
Conversation topics – the conversation topics should be printed / copied and put onto cards or slips of paper. There should be enough to hand out to half of the group. You may need more than one set depending on the size of the group.

Aim of the activity

To create a safe place to talk openly about periods.

To get everyone started on talking about periods.

What girls will get out of it

Starting your period can be a daunting experience. Although not everyone is comfortable with talking about periods openly, having someone to talk to about periods will help you to become less stressed about it and more aware of what is happening to your body and why. You will then be more in tune with what is happening to your body and be able to make choices about how best to manage it.

Where does this activity fit in?

This activity works well after “Let’s get talking!” from session one.

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Talking lines

What to do

Leaders should make sure that girls don't feel pressured to talk about personal experiences, but they are welcome to if they want to.

1. Ask the group what would need to happen to make them feel comfortable when they are talking about periods (especially as it is about a sensitive topic). Girls can shout out their suggestions to be written up. These could include 'listening without interrupting', 'being respectful of other people's ideas and thoughts', 'not being judgemental' and so on.
2. Give out the conversation topic cards to half of the group. They should stand in two lines facing each other. On one side should be all the girls with the conversation topics. Give them a few moments to think about how to start the conversation then give them one minute to speak to the person opposite about the topic on their card.

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Talking lines

3. After the minute is over, ask the line of girls with the topic cards to move down one place, with the girl on the end of the line moving to the front of the line. They should all be in front of someone new. This time they should give their card to the girl opposite so that they can start the conversation. Give them one minute again.
4. When they have finished ask the following questions:
 - How did it feel?
 - Do they think it's a good idea to talk about periods openly or not? Why? Explain that periods are something that you should be able to talk about openly, because it's nothing to be ashamed or embarrassed about. It's a natural change that happens in our bodies.
 - How did they feel about starting the conversation? What kind of things did they say to get started?



Talking lines

5. Explain that often the more you talk about something, the easier it gets but it can be nerve wracking at first. Ask them to share some of the things they talked about in their conversations.

Conversation topics

Who would you be happy to discuss starting your period with?

How do you think you would feel / did you feel when you started your period? Excited, embarrassed, proud, relieved, sad...? What would make you feel this way?

Do we need to become more open talking about periods?

Do you think it's a good idea to talk about periods openly or not? Explain your reasons

If you want to find out about periods, where would you look? Who would you ask?

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Myth busting

Time needed:
15 minutes

What you'll need:

Myth or fact statements printed or written out on individual pieces of paper or cards.

Aim of the activity

To understand that when a subject is considered to be a taboo, it can lead to incorrect information being spread about it and myths being created.

To bust common myths about periods.

What girls will get out of it

You will be confident in your knowledge of periods and be able to spot a myth which could potentially cause you harm, or prevent you from living a full and happy life even when you are on your period. You will become a fully-fledged period myth buster!

Where does this activity fit in?

This activity works well after “Is that a fact?” from session one.

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Myth busting

What to do

1. Ask the girls what is meant by the word 'myth'? Explain that myths are stories that often widely believed but are not true. Ask if they know of any myths – the Loch Ness Monster for example.
2. Explain that sometimes it is not clear whether something that is believed is a myth or a fact. There are lots of myths about periods because it is a taboo subject. As people will not speak openly about periods, myths are easily created and believed. Sometimes these myths can be bad for your health, or prevent you from doing what you need or want to do when you are on your period.
3. Split the unit into pairs or small groups and give each one a statement. They should take turns to act out the statement to the rest of the group. So for example if the card read 'do no exercise' girls could pretend to do sport and then stop and shake their heads.
4. The rest of the group should stand up if they think it is a myth, or sit down if they think it is a fact. Tell them the correct answer for each one.

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Myth busting

4. Share with the girls some of the myths about periods from home and abroad. After reading, them, have a discussion about what they think about the myths they have just heard and whether they know of any myths themselves. What could they do to help with busting these myths? How might talking openly about periods help with this?
5. Explain that by speaking up about periods and busting myths, women and girls can continue to have full and happy lives when they are on their period. Tell the girls that myths about periods are common all over the world which is why it's important to talk about periods so that everyone has the right information to deal with them. Read out the myth busting stories from Nepal. Reiterate that periods are something that many girls and women have in common (but that not every girl and woman will have a period and not everyone who has periods is a girl or woman). By working together on important issues to do with periods, things can improve.

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The WaterAid logo, featuring a blue water drop icon to the left of the text "WaterAid" in a bold, sans-serif font.

Myth busting

6. Ask the girls what they have learnt from the stories and what they think they could do to bust period myths in this country? They could come up with some ideas and dedicate a future session to putting them into action and become period myth busters in the UK.

Myth or Fact statements with answers

You should not take part in sport when you are on your period.

MYTH – In the past, periods were treated like an illness and women and girls were expected to rest and not take part in strenuous or physical activities. This is not true as periods are a natural body function. In fact, taking part in sport can sometimes help relieve period pain.

You should not take a bath when you are on your period. MYTH – Some people believe that by taking a bath when you are on your period, you could become infertile. This means that you could end up not being able to have children. However, this is not true. In fact it's really important to wash and keep clean when you are on your period as it can help avoid any infections. Baths can also help ease any pain.

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Myth busting

You are not clean when you are on your period. MYTH – Some people believe that periods are dirty and so when you are on your period you should be kept away from special places such as churches, mosques or even school. Periods are a perfectly natural bodily function. As long as you are washing yourself and your hands, and changing your pad or tampon regularly, you will remain clean and healthy and cannot spread disease or germs to anyone.

You should not wear trousers when you are on your period. MYTH – What you wear when you're on your period is entirely up to you. As long as you're comfortable then it's fine to wear trousers.

You can contaminate food when you are on your period, so you should not cook or prepare food. MYTH – Periods are natural and as long as you wash your hands and remain clean and healthy, you cannot contaminate or spread disease or illness through handling food.



Myth busting

You can make men and boys sick if you are in close contact with them when you are on your period. MYTH – Periods are not an illness. You may feel under the weather, but this cannot be spread from person to person.

Remind the girls that if they have any questions about anything to do with periods, they can post them into the period knowledge box. Set some time aside to answer the questions, or set them as a fact finding mission between sessions.

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What happens when you have a period?

Time needed:
15 minutes

What you'll need:
Period symptom relief cards printed / copied and cut out.

Aim of the activity

To find out what happens before and after a period arrives.

To discover and share ways of dealing with symptoms before and during periods.

What girls will get out of it

You'll discuss and learn ways to deal with some of the symptoms that you may experience before and during your period.

Where does this activity fit in?

This activity fits in well after "What do we know about periods?" from session two.

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What happens when you have a period?

What to do

1. Ask the girls if they know what sort of symptoms they may experience before and during their period. You could let them know common symptoms, any symptoms you experience when if you have periods and are willing to share or girls may want to share their own experiences with the group. Scribe the symptoms on a large sheet of paper. These may include:

Develop spots

Tummy ache

Feeling tired

Headache

Feeling emotional

Feeling irritable

Feeling uncomfortable

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What happens when you have a period?

2. Explain to the girls that all these symptoms are normal. Some will experience all of the symptoms, some a few and others none.
3. Stick the period symptom relief cards up on the walls around the room. Read out each symptom and ask girls to move in front of the relief cards that they think might help relieve the symptoms. Remind the girls that there may be more than one right answer and not everyone has to agree. There may be more than one answer for each. They can also call out their own ideas.

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What happens when you have a period?

Period symptom relief cards 1

Left to right – hot water bottle, do some exercise, drink water, lay down, sleep, rub tummy



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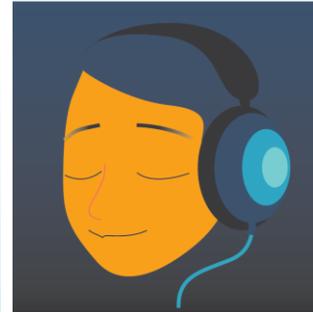
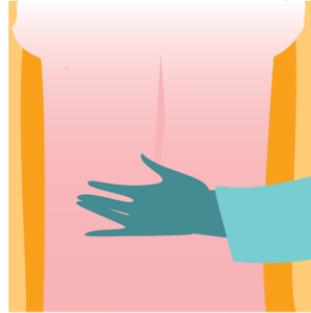
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What happens when you have a period?

Period symptom relief cards 2

From left to right – eat a nice meal, have back rub, hot drink, talk to someone, mindfulness exercises, listen to music



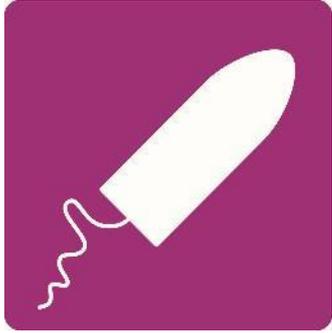
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