

# **Menstruation Management Training & Selection of BanaPads Female Champions**



**Facilitators Manual**

# 2015

## **Introduction**

### **Prayer**

### **National Anthem**

### **Introduction**

**Brief about the workshop/meeting:** This workshop is a dialogue session with women and girls about menstruation management. The discussion will focus on challenges related to menstruation, how girls cope with menstruation related challenges, and desired support for girls and women to help them cope with menstruation related challenges.

### **Participants Expectations**

### **Workshop Objectives**

1. To build the capacity of girls and young women to manage menstruation related challenges.
2. To advocate for creation of an enabling environment at home to manage menstruation related challenges.
3. Identify and select BanaPads female champions to train more community members on menstruation management and market and sell BanaPads sanitary pads.

## **Menstruation Defined**

**Participant definition of menstruation:** What is menstruation?

**Menstruation** or **Menstrual Period** is the monthly shedding of the uterine lining releasing blood and tissues from the uterus through the vagina. The contraction of the uterine muscles is what causes menstrual cramps. All girls and women of reproductive age (between puberty and menopause) should have menstrual periods except during pregnancy.

Things to note about menstruation:

- Girls do start their periods at different ages. Some girls start their periods as early as 10 years old, others may reach 15 years of age without starting their periods. However if a girl has not started her period by 17 years, she needs to visit a doctor.
- Girls may have periods starting on different days of the months.
- Some girls have “light” periods and others have “heavy” periods.
- Some girls have short periods lasting for 3 days and others have long periods lasting even up to a week. However if your period lasts for more than a week, you need to see a health care provider.
- Some girls have very painful periods while others mild pain and others have painless periods.

**Participant views on the importance of menstrual health education:** Why is it important for girls to understand menstruation?

Girls need to be educated about menstruation so that they:

- Appreciate that menstruation is a normal process experienced by all women of reproductive age. Girls can be proud about menstruation and talk about it freely since it shows they are healthy.
- Are able to manage menstrual periods and the physical and emotional changes which occur during the menstrual cycle.
- Can keep track of when their next periods are due so that they make enough preparations and are not caught by surprise.
- Can keep proper hygiene during their menses to avoid fungal and bacterial infections.
- Can prevent unintended pregnancy by not having unprotected sexual intercourse during the days they are most likely to get pregnant (fertile days) days in case they are sexually active.
- Can educate their peers and younger girls about proper hygiene during their periods and how to manage the physical and emotional changes during the menstrual cycle.

## **Group Discussion**

1. What menstrual challenges do females face?
2. How do these menstrual challenges affect women's lives?
3. What materials do women use during menstruation? What are the challenges related to the materials mentioned?
4. What kind of support do your parents/husbands give you during menstruation?
5. What additional support would you want your parents/husbands to give you to manage menstrual challenges?
6. What myths do people in this community hold about menstruation?

## Coping with Menstrual Challenges

Challenge	Coping with the challenge
Menstrual pain	Place a hot water bottle wrapped in a towel on the area of pain or take a warm bath, take a pain killer like Panadol, get plenty of exercise, and avoid caffeinated drinks like tea, coffee and soda.
Weakness	Eat a variety of fruits and vegetables and drink plenty of water.
Dizziness	Drink a lot of water and eat green vegetables to replenish lost nutrients. If you are extremely dizzy, see a health worker.
Lack of knowledge about menstruation	Talk to a trusted adult (parent, teacher, health worker, aunt) or join a community health club. Consult your senior woman teacher or a health worker to learn about what is happening in your body and how to manage your period.
Lack of sanitary materials	Talk to parents/husbands about buying you pads, soap, water and painkillers.
Bacterial infections, bad smell	Keep proper menstrual hygiene by bathing yourself often and changing pads every few hours.
Unexpected period	Keep track of your menstrual cycle and always carry one or more sanitary pads with you.
Reaching age 16 and not yet menstruating	Visit a doctor.
Heavy/long periods lasting more than 7 days	Visit a doctor.

## **Menstruation Management and Hygiene**

### **Menstruation Management**

Menstruation management involves managing menstrual flow to prevent menstrual blood from soiling the clothes, maintaining proper hygiene during menstruation, knowledge about sanitary pads and materials and ability to handle all menstruation related challenges.

Different women use different materials during menstruation.

**Participant ideas of menstrual hygiene:** What sort of materials do you use while you are menstruating? What do you think are some potential health risks of using these materials?

### **Menstrual Hygiene**

During menstruation, the pH of the vagina is less acidic making fungal and bacterial infection more likely. It's important to maintain good hygiene during menstruation to avoid poor menstrual hygiene related problems.

## Potential Effects of Poor Menstrual Practices

Bad practices	Potential health risk
Using unclean sanitary materials	Supports the growth of unwanted bacteria that may cause infections or travel up the vagina and enter the uterine cavity, leading to dangerous reproductive diseases.
Having unprotected sex during menstruation	Increased risk of transmission of blood-borne diseases like HIV or Hepatitis B, in addition to unplanned pregnancy.
Wiping from back (anal area) to front (vaginal area) following urination or defecation	Makes the introduction of harmful bacteria from the rectum (bowel) into the vagina or urethra more likely, which can cause urinary tract infections (UTI).
Not changing sanitary materials or pads often enough	Wet, blooded sanitary materials will cause skin irritation and can lead to fungal and bacterial infections as well as sores.
Douching (washing inside the vagina) or washing with medicated soap	Upsets the normal balance of bacteria and can cause rashes and discomfort.
Unsafe disposal of used sanitary materials or pads	Risk of infecting others, especially with Hepatitis B.
Not washing hands before and after changing sanitary materials or pads	Facilitates spread of infections such as Hepatitis B or Candidiasis.
Inserting unclean material into the vagina (unclean old cloth, papers, etc)	Makes it easier for bacteria to access the cervix and the uterine cavity, which can lead to serious infections that may cause reproductive diseases.

## **Recommended Menstrual Hygiene Practices**

**Participant ideas of menstrual hygiene:** What are some healthy habits that you should practice during menstruation to maintain proper hygiene?

It is important to practice good personal and environmental hygiene during menstruation:

- Change the sanitary pad or cloth every 3 or 4 hours for normal flow. If the menstrual flow is heavy, change the pad every 2 hours.
- Always wash your hands with soap before and after changing the pad.
- Try to take a bath at least once a day.
- Always carry one or two emergency pads in your bag while you are out of the home to avoid staining your clothes/uniform with menstrual blood if your period comes unexpectedly or is very heavy.
- Wash the genital area with plain water (no soap) after using the toilet (even after urination), wiping from the front (vaginal area) to the back (anal area).
- Don't douche (cleaning inside your vagina) or wash your vagina with medicated soap. The vagina has its own self-cleaning mechanism which should not be disturbed.
- Use cotton panties. Cotton panties are preferred to synthetic panties, which absorb moisture and heat, making them a breeding ground for bacteria.

With good menstrual hygiene, you will be able to stay in school, concentrate in class, participate in sports and avoid embarrassing or stressful situations where menstrual blood leaks onto your cloth.



## How to Use a Pad

Hand over the pads and knickers to the participants and ask two or three volunteers to demonstrate how to use a sanitary pad.

1. With clean and dry hands remove the strip of the pad to reveal the sticky part in the middle.
2. Press the sticky part of the pad in the middle of the knickers. If the pad has wings, also remove the strips on the wings and wrap them around the underside of the knickers.
3. Wear the knickers and pull it up to see if the pad is well applied. It must cover the vagina.
4. Keep checking whether the pad needs changing. Remove and replace the pad if it's wet on the surface and can no longer absorb the flow.
5. Fold the pad and dispose it properly in a pit latrine or in a sanitary bin or incinerator for burning. Wash your hands with soap.



Source: [beinggirl.com](http://beinggirl.com)

## Desired Support from Others

Stakeholder	Expected Support
Older Girls	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Be a role model</li><li>• Manage own menstruation hygienically</li><li>• Manage own physical and emotional changes during menstruation</li><li>• Share information on good menstrual hygiene practices to help younger girls prepare for menstruation.</li><li>• Equip younger girls with skills of menstruation management</li></ul>
Boys	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Consider all girls as your sisters</li><li>• Support them during their menses instead of laughing and making fun of them</li></ul>
Parents	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Share information on good menstrual hygiene practices</li><li>• Ensure girls have safe sanitary materials and soap</li><li>• Understand moodiness from cramps and hormones</li></ul>
Husbands	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Provide money for wives/daughters to purchase pads, soap, painkillers and healthy food</li><li>• Understand moodiness from cramps and hormones</li></ul>

## Group Quiz

1. Q: What is menstruation?

A: Menstruation is the monthly shedding of the uterine lining, releasing blood and tissues from the uterus through the vagina.

2. Q: Who menstruates?

A: All girls and women of reproductive age (between puberty and menopause) should have menstrual periods except during pregnancy.

3. Q: What are cramps?

A: The contraction of the uterine muscles is what causes menstrual cramps.

4. Q: How can you manage painful cramps?

A: Place a hot water bottle wrapped in a towel on the area of pain or take a warm bath, take a pain killer like Panadol, get plenty of exercise, and avoid caffeinated drinks like tea, coffee and soda.

5. Q: What should you do if you keep getting your period unexpectedly?

A: Keep track of your menstrual cycle (start and end date) and always carry one or more sanitary pads with you.

6. Q: Why is it dangerous to use old cloths instead of pads?

A: Using unclean sanitary materials supports the growth of unwanted bacteria that can cause infections or travel up the vagina and enter the uterine cavity, which can lead to dangerous reproductive infections.

7. Q: What can you do to maintain good menstrual hygiene?

A: Change your pad often, wash your hands before and after changing your pad, bathe at least once a day, carry extra pads with you at all times, rinse the genital area with water after using the toilet, wipe from front to back, and wear cotton panties.

## **BanaPads Female Champion**

### **BanaPads**

BanaPads is a social enterprise that manufactures affordable and eco-friendly sanitary pads, helping to create jobs for local women and keep village girls in school.

### **BanaPads Female Champions**

We are going to select BanaPads Female Champions who will be distributing the BanaPads in this area. At the moment, the BanaPads are being manufactured for this community. When they are ready, they will be available for purchase.

BanaPads Female Champions are rural household women heads, with low or zero income and with little to no experience of equal opportunities. Champions are women who are ready to work with communities. Champions harmonize social action with economic development.

The roles of Champions are to:

- *Educate* about menstruation and proper menstrual hygiene
- *Advocate* the use of sanitary pads
- *Sell* BanaPads sanitary pads to the local community

Key Qualities of Successful Champions:

- Enjoys working with people
- Active and enthusiastic
- Confident
- Team player
- Self-motivated
- Responsive to customs
- Creative and flexible
- Can take direction and adhere to the mission
- Knows how to read and write
- Strong marketing and sales skills
- Has existing network of potential customers

### **Question & Answer**