

## STUDENT HANDOUT II: LEARNING ABOUT PERIODS: A GUIDE FOR BOYS

### *"No boys or men I know talk about periods. Why should I learn about them?"*

Periods (menstruation) affect mothers, sisters, friends, and classmates. Learning about it can help you:

- Understand that periods is a natural body process.
- Avoid believing or spreading myths and wrong ideas about periods.
- Break down harmful attitudes about periods and help others understand and accept it.
- Understand what girls and women in your family and school experience each month.
- Be of help to girls and women during periods instead of feeling awkward or making fun of them.



### *"I hear many unscientific beliefs about menstruation. What do I do?"*

Many communities have strong beliefs about menstruation that may not be true. If you hear statements like "menstruating women are impure" or "they should not touch food or plants," remember that menstruation is a biological process, not a sign of impurity.

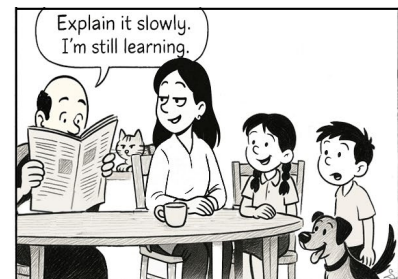
- Try to learn scientifically correct information about periods.
- Quietly question such ideas by asking, "Is there a scientific reason for this?"
- Share correct information, without arguing or insulting others.
- Accept that some people may need time to change their views.

### *"My family does not talk about periods. How can I learn about it?"*

Talking about periods is important. Menstruation is a sign of good health, not something dirty or shameful. But it can be a sensitive topic and it is normal to feel awkward at first. Here are some ways to begin:

- Choose a quiet and private time to talk.
- Explain why you want to learn. You could say, "I want to understand what you go through so that I can be helpful."
- Ask open-ended questions to encourage family members to share their experiences and feelings.
- Listen carefully without laughing or making judgmental comments.
- Accept that some family members may not want to talk about certain parts of their period experience. Some things are private and you do not need to know everything.

- Let your family members know that you are ready to help in any way you can.



**"I am not old enough to do much. How can I help menstruating family members having periods?"**

Support does not always require big actions. Small, caring steps can make a big difference. For example, you can:

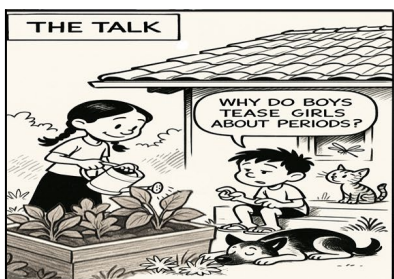
- Listen and offer comfort when someone wants to talk.
- Be patient if a family member feels tired, unwell, or irritable, and give them space to rest.
- Help with household work such as cooking, cleaning, or caring for younger siblings.
- Fetch water, groceries, or medicines when needed.
- Buy sanitary pads or other menstrual products if asked to do so.



**"Boys are not usually seen buying sanitary pads. Would it not be odd for me to buy them?"**

It is okay to feel shy about buying sanitary pads or menstrual products. But there is nothing wrong or funny about it. Focus on the fact that you are helping someone you care about. You can make it easier by:

- Keeping in mind that buying pads is just like buying soap, toothpaste, or medicine.
- Walking into the shop calmly and asking clearly for what is needed. You could simply say, "One packet of sanitary pads, please," or share the product name if you know it.
- Reminding yourself that shopkeepers sell these products every day. You don't need to explain yourself. You are not doing anything wrong or embarrassing.
- Taking a friend along. Supporting each other can make it easier the first time.
- Thinking about the positive role you are playing in reducing shame and supporting someone you care about.



### *"Some boys tease or make jokes about periods. What should I do?"*

Periods are not dirty or shameful, and girls cannot control when they start or stop. Teasing, laughing, or joking about periods can hurt classmates and make them feel embarrassed, ashamed, or unsafe. It can also encourage harmful attitudes and social taboos about periods. Even when you are not the one teasing, staying silent or laughing along can encourage bullying. You can help by:

- Not spreading rumours or jokes about periods.
- Changing the topic or walking away if someone starts joking about periods.
- Not teasing a classmate if she stains her clothes or feels unwell.
- Not joining in if someone else is teasing a girl. If you feel safe to do so, calmly say, for example, "That is not right. Leave her alone."



### *"I do not speak much to the girls in my class. Can I still support them during their periods?"*

Support does not always require words. You can help build a classroom culture where periods are treated as normal; not embarrassing. Remember, respect and sensitivity make school safer for everyone. Here are some things you can do:

- Do not use periods as a reason to insult, blame, or exclude someone.
- Do not ask personal questions or point attention to someone's discomfort. If a classmate looks uncomfortable or worried, give her space.
- Do not whisper, point, or spread rumours if you notice stains on someone's clothes.
- Cooperate, without making jokes or comments, if a teacher asks for help, for example, in fetching water or calling a classmate.

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