

Menstrual Health:
Making the Case
for
Educational Interventions

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Shame,
Silence and
Secrecy

ATTENTION !

**WOMEN ARE NOT ALLOWED
TO ENTER THE TEMPLE
DURING MENSTRUATION**

THANK YOU

Photo Credit: Dominique Bergeron
Flickr CC BY 2.0

Artist: Satbir Kaur.
Courtesy of Binti International





constructs menstruation as
a failing, a shortcoming or
a handicap.



KEEP THAT
"JUST SHOWERED"
FEELING
ALL DAY LONG

WITH NEW ALWAYS DAILIES LINERS.

Stay fresh morning, noon and night with these flexibly thin liners.
Try it for a week, and feel the difference for yourself!



[illegible][illegible]

#WEAREDONE*whispering*

There are
over 5,000 terms
for period.





"The Hair Clip Study" (Roberts et al. 2002)

Women associated with the tampon were rated as **less competent and less likeable** than women associated with the hairclip





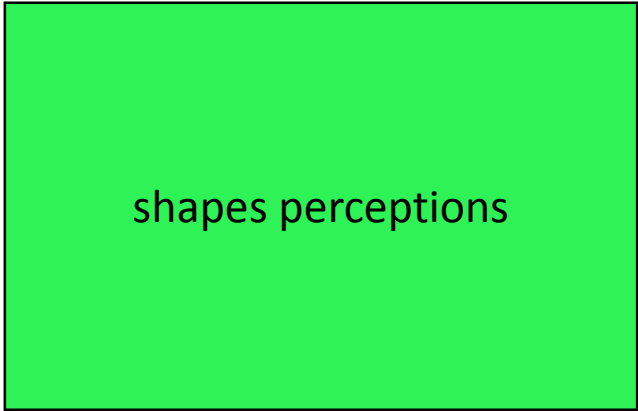
- Psychological health
 - Decision making
- [Johhston-Robledo et al. 2007)



IMPACTS

- Psychological health
- Decision making

[Johnston-Robledo et al. 2007]



shapes perceptions

- Lower social status

[Johnston-Robledo & Chrisler 2011]

- Irritable
- Impure

[Forbest et al. 2003]

Stigma

IMPACTS

- Psychological health
- Decision making

[Johhston-Robledo et al. 2007]

SHAPES

- Lower social status

[Johnston-Robledo & Chrisler 2011]

- Irritable
- Impure

[Forbest et al. 2003]

- Self –Consciousness

[Oxley 1998]

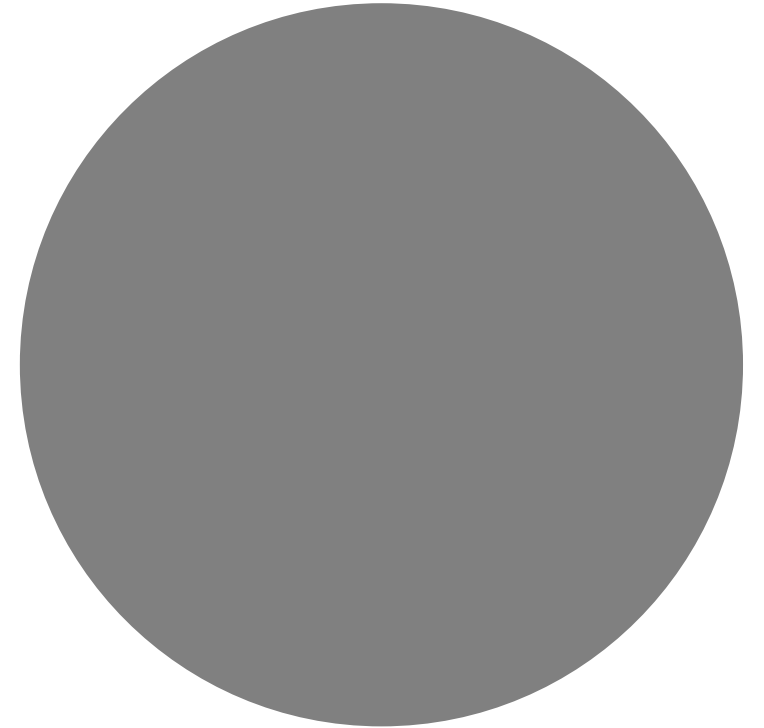
- Self-Monitoring

[Laws 1990; Young 2005]

INSTIGATES

“Girls learn that they must keep menstruation **clean and invisible**, and they are set out on a long and demanding path of **‘housekeeping’ their bodies** for their own comfort and the sensibilities of others.”

(Diorio and Munro 2010, 358)



“Girls across LMIC (Low and Middle Income Countries) have limited knowledge and understanding about menstruation prior to reaching menarche” (Chandra-Mouli and Patel 2017)


In Northeast Ethiopia, 49% of pre-menarchial girls lacked *any* menstrual knowledge.
(Tegegene et al 2014)

In slums & villages in 3 Indian states, “41 % of girls had no information (Mahon & Fernandes 2010)

In rural Kenya, it is common for girls to learn of menstruation only at menarche (Mason et al., 2013)

Girls' Misconceptions about Menstruation


97.5% of West Bengalese girls did not know the source of menstrual bleeding (Dasgupta & Sarkar 2008)




In a study in Nepal, 82% of girls regarded menstruation as 'a curse'; 6% understood menstruation as a physiological process (Adhikari et al. 2007)



In Maharashtra, India, all girls were aware of menstruation but 72% thought menstrual fluid was impure (Nemade, Anjenaya, & Gujar 2009)



In a study of a semi-nomadic tribe in Jammu & Kashmir, girls thought menstruation's purpose was the removal of 'bad blood' (Dhingra et al. 2009)



In a study in India, 39% of urban and 56% of rural girls regarded menstruation as a disease. (Dube & Sharma 2012)

What Do Girls THINK about their Menstruation?

In a study of in Kenya girls, expressed fear, shame, distraction and confusion associated with menstruation.

WHY? They fear stigma and embarrassment and see menstruation as the advent of their sexual status.

(McMahon et al. 2011)

In the US, girls have largely negative feelings about menstruation.

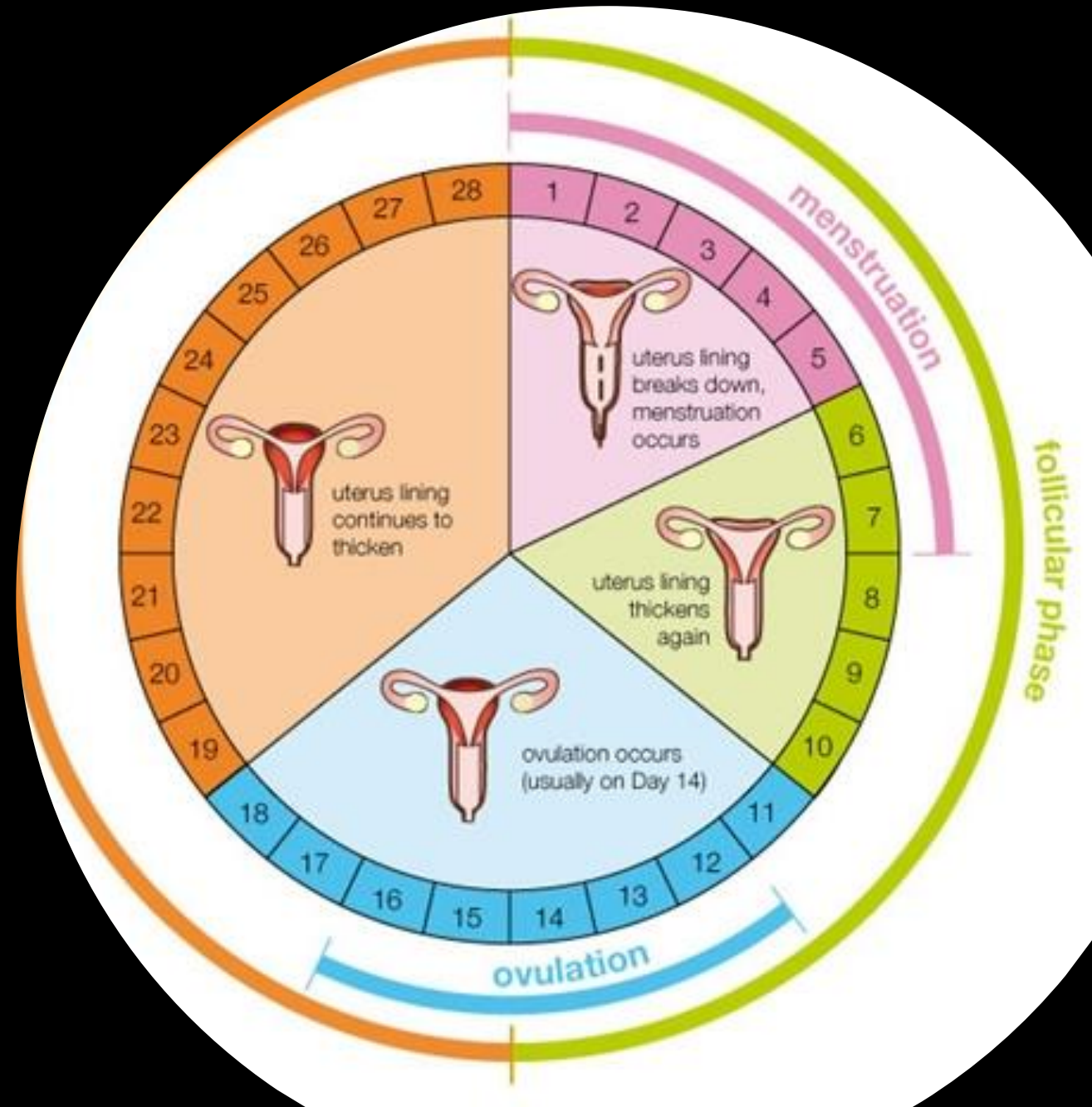
WHY? They see it as a marker of maturity and a source of embarrassment.

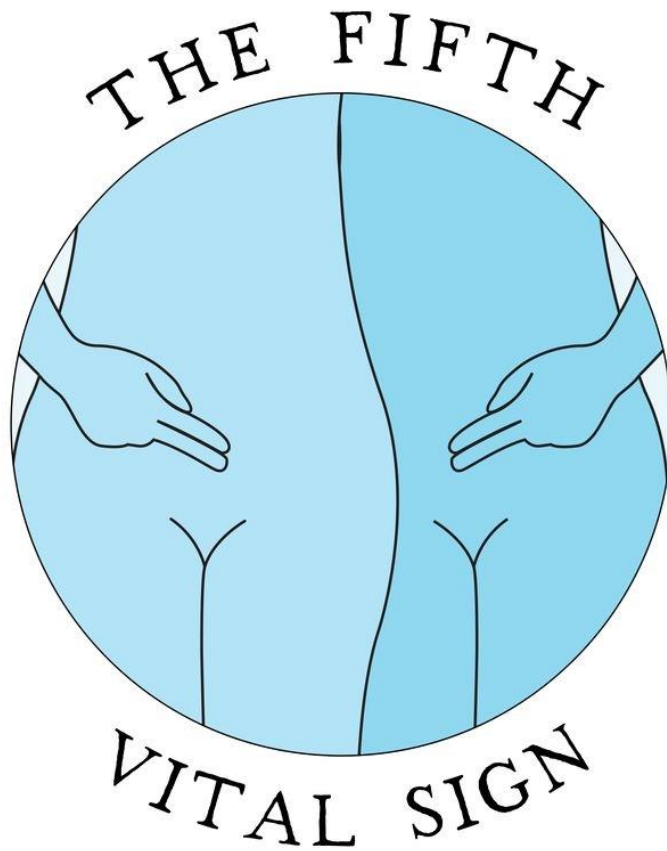
(Stubbs 2008)

'Men Take the Lead'
Event
Bangalore, India
organized by
Urmila Chanam.
Menstrual Hygiene Day
2017.



Menstrual Literacy: Read Your Cycle





“Practitioners [are urged] to use menstruation in girls and adolescents as a vital sign.”

(American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists, 2015; 2017; endorsed by The American Academy of Pediatrics).

<http://www.5thvitalsign.com/>



Menstrual
Literacy

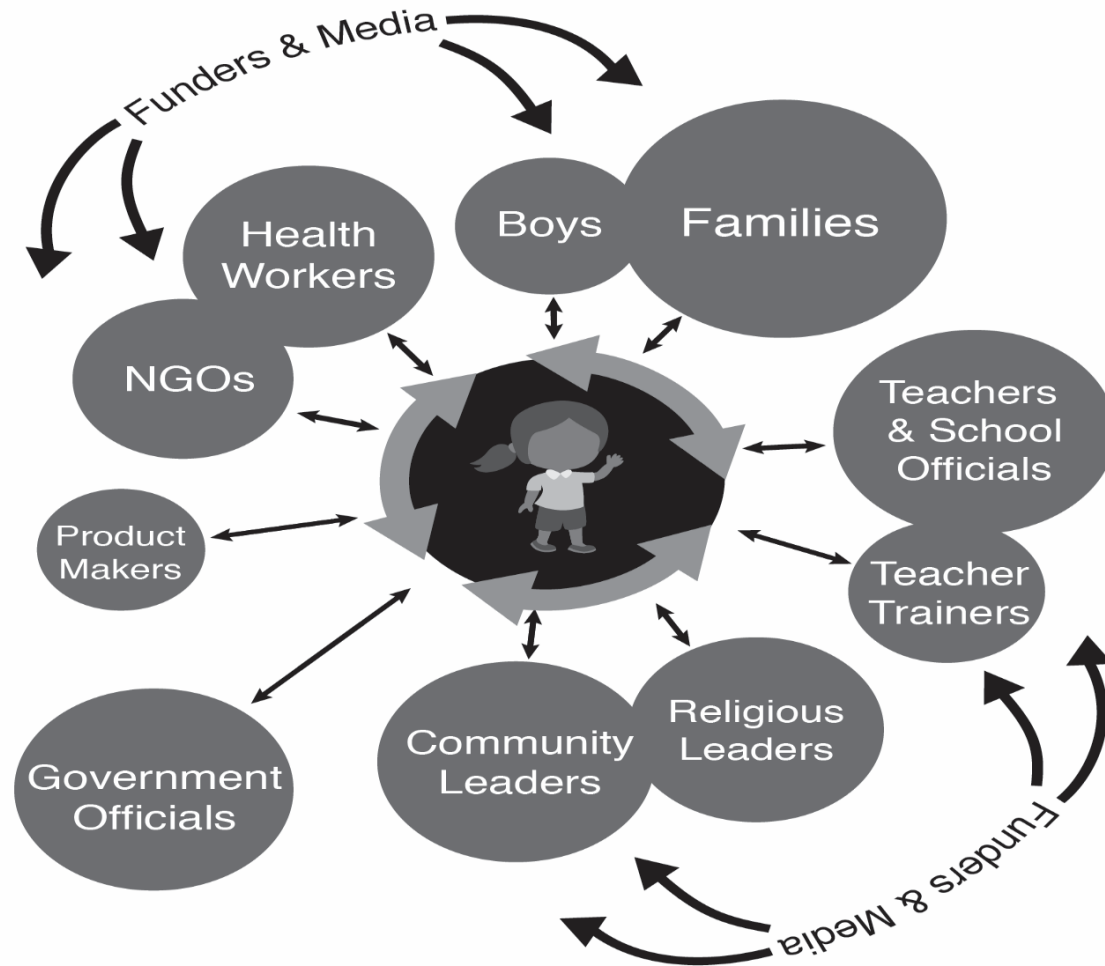
Embodied
Agency

Early Menstrual Experiences:

gateways to lifetimes of
dis/engagement with one's body

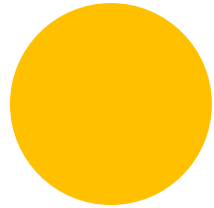
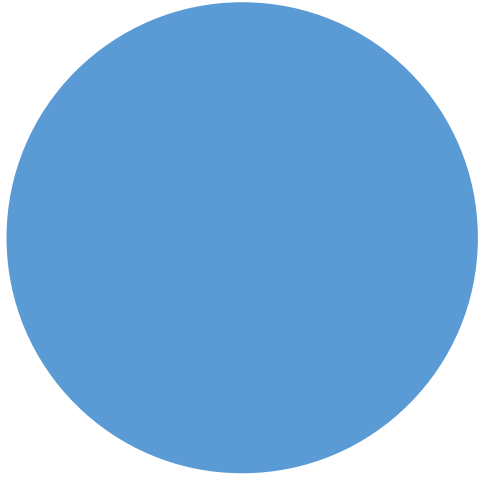


Challenging Menstrual Stigma through a 360° Approach



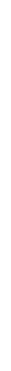
Bobel 2018

**Creative,
body-positive
culturally- sensitive,
high quality and
ONGOING menstrual
CYCLE education. . .
not only for girls but
for everyone in girls'
lives.**



Not *all* girls and women menstruate.

Not *only* girls and women menstruate



LANGUAGE MATTERS!

**Menstrual
Products/
Menstrual
Materials**

**Menstruation/
Menstrual Cycle/
Menstrual Period**

**Vagina
Vulva**

**Menstruators/
People with Periods**

***Menstrual Fluid/
Menses/
Menstrual Flow***



How can we keep girls safe?



How can we keep girls safe?

How can we promote menstrual cycle
facts without trampling on
traditional belief systems?



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traditional belief systems?

*How can we supportively
contextualize
menstrual health?*

Always put
menstruators
at the center