

## **Lesson Plan: Menstrual Health Education for Older Girls**

### **Objective:**

**To deepen the understanding of menstruation, emphasize menstrual hygiene, and equip older girls with knowledge about managing their periods and reproductive health.**

### **Target Audience:**

**Girls aged 15-18 or those who have been menstruating for a few years.**

**Duration: 1 hour**

### **1. Introduction (5 minutes)**

- **Objective Overview:**
  - Briefly explain the focus of the lesson: deeper understanding of the menstrual cycle, advanced menstrual hygiene practices, and self-care strategies.
- **Discussion Starter:**
  - Start with a question: “What’s one thing you wish you had known about periods when you first started?” This helps engage them and sets the tone for an open conversation.

### **2. Advanced Understanding of the Menstrual Cycle (15 minutes)**

- **Phases of the Menstrual Cycle:**
  - Explain the four phases: menstrual, follicular, ovulation, and luteal. Discuss how each phase impacts the body and mind.
- **Hormonal Fluctuations:**
  - Describe how hormones like estrogen and progesterone rise and fall throughout the cycle and their effects (e.g., mood changes, energy levels).
- **Cycle Tracking:**
  - Introduce the concept of tracking their cycle using apps or journals. Discuss how tracking can help in understanding patterns, predicting periods, and identifying irregularities.

### **3. Menstrual Hygiene and Health (20 minutes)**

- **Product Selection:**
  - Discuss the pros and cons of different menstrual products: pads, tampons, menstrual cups, and period underwear. Encourage trying different products to find what works best for them.
- **Environmental Considerations:**

- Introduce the idea of sustainable menstrual products, like reusable cups and cloth pads. Discuss the environmental impact of disposable products.
- **Proper Hygiene Practices:**
  - Emphasize the importance of changing products regularly, maintaining cleanliness, and being mindful of potential issues like Toxic Shock Syndrome (TSS) with tampons.
- **Managing Discomfort:**
  - Explore natural and medicinal ways to manage cramps and PMS symptoms, including dietary changes, exercise, and over-the-counter pain relief.

#### **4. Addressing Menstrual Irregularities (10 minutes)**

- **What's Normal and What's Not:**
  - Explain what constitutes a “normal” cycle (21-35 days) and what might be considered irregular (missed periods, extremely heavy or light flow).
- **When to Seek Help:**
  - Discuss when it might be necessary to see a healthcare provider, such as if they experience severe pain, very heavy bleeding, or irregular cycles.
- **Conditions Related to Menstruation:**
  - Briefly introduce conditions like PCOS, endometriosis, and amenorrhea, and stress the importance of medical advice if they suspect any issues.

#### **5. Self-Care and Emotional Well-being (5 minutes)**

- **Emotional Health:**
  - Talk about the emotional impact of the menstrual cycle, including mood swings and PMS. Encourage them to develop self-care routines that support emotional balance.
- **Body Positivity:**
  - Reinforce the idea that menstruation is a natural and healthy part of life. Discuss how societal attitudes can influence perceptions of menstruation and how to combat negative stereotypes.

#### **6. Myths, Facts, and Peer Support (5 minutes)**

- **Debunking Myths:**
  - Tackle any lingering myths or misconceptions they may have heard (e.g., you can't get pregnant during your period, tampons break virginity).
- **Peer Support:**
  - Encourage them to be a source of support for each other. Discuss the importance of sharing experiences and information openly among friends.

## 7. Sexual and Reproductive Health (5 minutes)

- **Menstruation and Fertility:**
  - Discuss how the menstrual cycle is related to fertility and when they are most fertile in their cycle.
- **Safe Practices:**
  - Provide basic information on safe sex practices and how menstruation might affect sexual health. Encourage them to seek further information from reliable sources if they are sexually active.

## 8. Closing and Recap (5 minutes)

- **Recap Key Points:**
    - Summarize the key takeaways from the session.
  - **Resources:**
    - Provide information on where they can get more detailed information (e.g., websites, books, local health services).
  - **Final Encouragement:**
    - End with a positive message about embracing their bodies and the natural processes that come with menstruation.
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### Materials Needed:

- Diagrams of the menstrual cycle.
- Samples of various menstrual products.
- Apps or journals for cycle tracking.
- Handouts on menstrual health and self-care tips.
- Contact information for local healthcare providers or counselors.

### Follow-Up:

- Offer an optional follow-up session or one-on-one discussions for any girls who have specific concerns or questions they didn't want to ask in the group.

This lesson plan is designed to empower older girls with a comprehensive understanding of their menstrual health, equipping them with the tools and knowledge to manage their periods and overall reproductive health confidently.