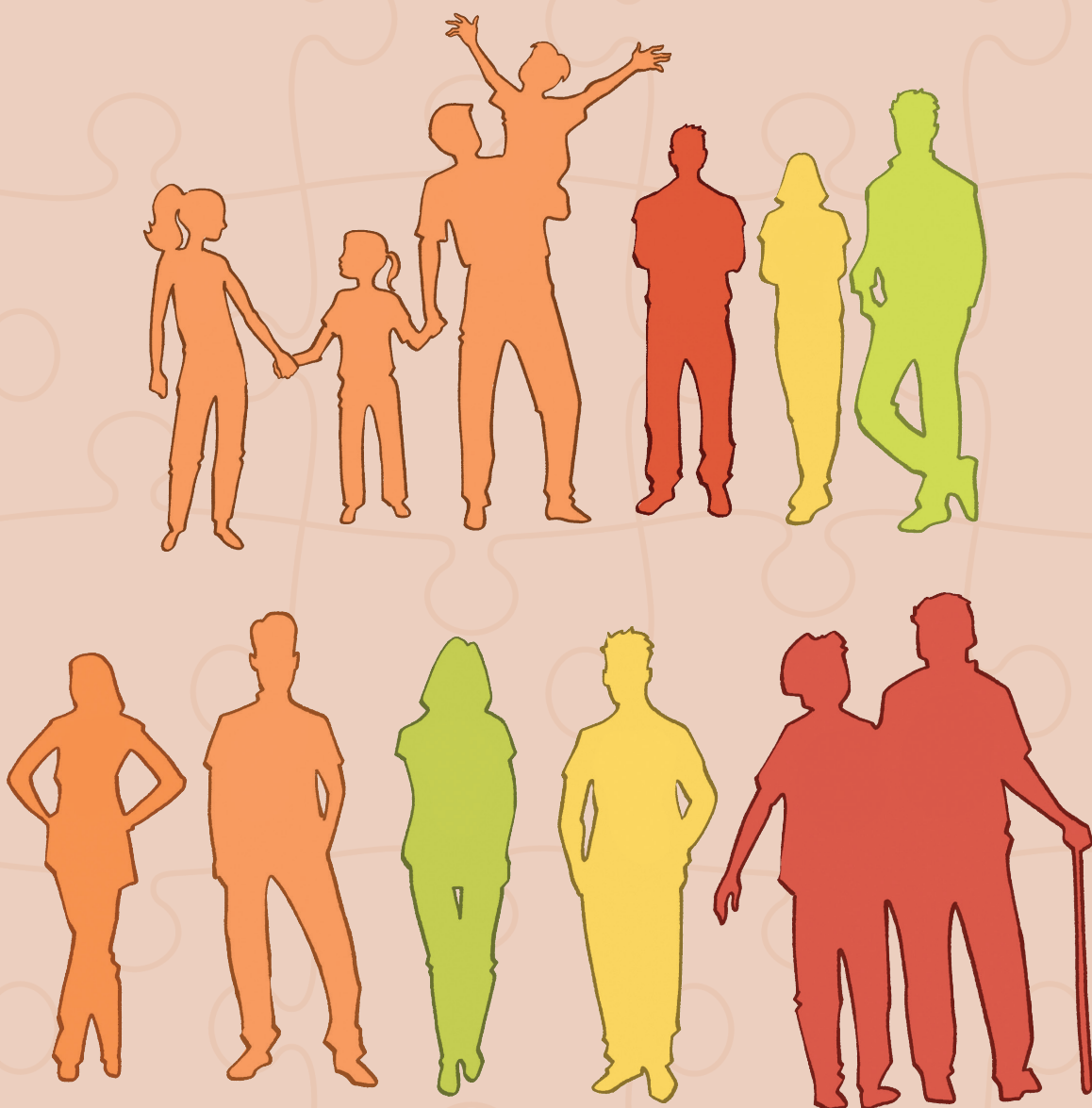


MENSTRUATION



Ресурсни центар за специјалну едукацију

INTRODUCTION

This lesson plan is for educators and support people working with young people with intellectual disability and/or on the autism spectrum. It focuses on understanding and managing *Menstruation*, following the International Technical Guidance on Sexuality Education (ITGSE) framework under the theme *Human body and development*. The lesson explains what a period is, why it happens, and how to manage it using pads or other products. It also talks about common symptoms like cramps or mood changes in a clear and supportive way. This lesson helps students feel more confident, build independence, and take care of their bodies, while challenging shame and stigma around periods.

This lesson plan uses evidence-based practices (EBPs), which are recognised as best practice for teaching students with intellectual disability and/or on the autism spectrum. It supports teacher delivery through structured resources, scenario-based activities that incorporate modelling, task analysis, visual supports, and age-appropriate educational videos developed by [Amaze.org](https://amaze.org).

This lesson is part of *Sex education for students with intellectual disability and on the autism spectrum: A practical methodology guide*, a resource that supports educators to deliver accessible, inclusive, and trauma-informed sex education to students aged 15 and over with intellectual disability and/or on the autism spectrum. Grounded in evidence-based practices, the Guide promotes the rights of students to sexual autonomy, safety, and well-being, aligning with the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities and the Sustainable Development Goals, which call for inclusive education, gender equality, and good health for all. The lesson content also reflects the key concepts outlined in the International Technical Guidance on Sexuality Education (ITGSE), ensuring that teaching is comprehensive, rights-based, and responsive to the learning needs and aspirations of students with disability.

[Full Guide](#)

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Menstruation



What does it mean?

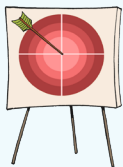
When a person with a uterus is of reproductive age (this includes trans men as well as cis women), an egg comes out of the ovaries and travels to the uterus every month. If the person does not get pregnant in that time, their uterine lining will shed, which results in bleeding from the vagina. This is known as menstruation or “having your period”. Menstruation can last for 3-7 days and nights. During this time, it is important to use sanitary items such as pads, tampons or menstrual cups. Menstruating can cause abdominal cramping and pain, as well as headaches, feeling bloated and being irritable. When a person is at the age where they are getting their period, it means that they can get pregnant. It is a natural part of human development which should not be considered taboo, it should not be stigmatised. The best way to do this is to have open communications with your students about menstruation.



Why is it important?

Women with intellectual disability have experienced a history of their menstrual suppression, often without their consent, due to fears of unplanned pregnancy and beliefs that women with intellectual disability will not be able to effectively manage menstrual bleeding every month¹. This has included the use of long-acting contraception and hysterectomies. People with disability have a right to their personal and bodily autonomy. It is the job of educators to support their students by providing accurate and evidence-based information to support them in developing self-determination skills. Teenagers with intellectual disability and/or on the autism spectrum should be taught about menstrual hygiene management². For high school students with intellectual disability and/or on the autism spectrum, understanding and managing menstruation can be challenging and may require specialised support. Educators should provide clear, straightforward explanations about what menstruation is, why it happens, and how to manage it. Using step-by-step guidance can help students understand the physical changes they experience and learn the necessary hygiene practices. Addressing menstruation in a sensitive and supportive manner is essential to ensure these students feel comfortable, confident, and capable of managing their menstrual health independently.

Learning outcomes based on teacher's and student's perspectives

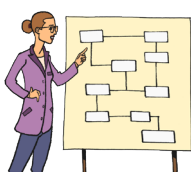


Learning outcomes

Students can recall the basic definition of menstruation and identify its biological purpose.

Accessible learning outcome

I know what getting your period means and why people with a uterus get them.



EXAMPLE LESSON PLAN

Topic: **Menstruation**

Note for teachers:

Teach this topic to the whole class as this is an important topic for all students to understand,

regardless of their gender identity. It is then recommended that you provide a separate session with just the girls. This is so girls can ask questions they may not feel comfortable with asking in front of the boys. Students may have concerns about how much blood they will lose. The average blood loss during menstruation is 20-80 ml of blood over several days.

It is suggested to have a box of sanitary products (pads, panty liners and tampons) accessible to students in your class.

Discuss with parents that their child should have a period kit in their bag. This would include a change of underwear, a change of pants, spare pads, a plastic bag for clothing, and some pain relief if necessary.

Have a Private Question Box that students can put their questions in. This allows students to ask questions privately. It also gives you an opportunity to view the questions, assess if they are appropriate and relevant, and do some research before you answer them to confidently and accurately answer the questions.

Learning outcomes	EBP/teaching strategy	Resources needed
Students can recall the basic definition of menstruation and identify its biological purpose.	Modelling Task analysis Visual supports	Appendix 1: How to change a sanitary pad Private questions box

Lesson sequence

Introduction: Ask students what they know about menstruation.

Prompts:

- What does it mean?
- Why does it happen?
- Who will get their periods?
- Why do boys need to know about periods?
- Why do girls need to know about periods?



Activity 1: Private Question Box

Put a box at the front of the classroom, explain to the class:

Prompts:

- You can add questions to the box at any time whilst learning about this topic.
- It is private and anonymous, so no one will know you are the person asking the question.
- I will then read the questions after class and if the questions are relevant and appropriate I will answer them during the last lesson.

Hand all students a piece of paper and ask them to write down any questions they have. All students (even if they have not asked a question) will then put the piece of paper into the box.



Activity 2: All about getting your period

As a class, watch the [All about getting your period](#) video on Amaze.org.

What did we learn from this video?

Prompts:

- What are some of the changes women experience during puberty?

- How often do women get their period?
- Why do women get their period?
- How long does a period last?
- What are some things you can use to catch the fluid during a period?
- How often should you change those products?
- Do some women experience discomfort when they get their period?
- Are periods normal and natural?



Activity 3: How to change a sanitary pad

The teacher will display the task analysis ([Appendix 1: How to change a sanitary pad](#)) on the board. They will read out each of the steps of how to change a sanitary pad.

1. Bring a fresh pad with you to the bathroom
2. Wash your hands
3. Close the toilet door
4. Pull down clothes and underwear
5. Remove the used pad from your underwear
6. Fold the used pad up in toilet paper
7. Put the used pad in the sanitary bin
8. Unwrap the fresh pad
9. Put the wrapping of the fresh pad in the sanitary bin
10. Remove the strip on the back of the pad
11. Press the fresh pad onto your underwear
12. Pull up your underwear and pants
13. Wash your hands



Activity 4: Model how to change a sanitary pad

The teacher will model how to change a sanitary pad to the class. The teacher will need to be wearing pants and have a pair of clean underwear to put on top of their pants. The teacher will follow the task analysis, reinforcing the learning for students.



Activity 5: Private Question Box – Answer time

Prior to this activity it is important that you go through all the questions and evaluate if the questions are relevant and appropriate to the topic.

If you are unsure of how to answer some of the questions, please see the resources that are provided in this guide. It is important to provide students with accurate, age appropriate and evidence-based information.

Read out the questions you have selected are suitable for this topic from the Private Question Box. Ask students if they think they know the answer the question. Answer the question, providing accurate, age appropriate and evidence-based information.

Conclusion: Recap the learning from this lesson. Emphasise that menstruation is a natural and normal part of going through puberty.

Ask students if they can explain what a period is, why people with uterus' get them.

Ask students what one product is that they can use to manage a period.



Teacher reflection

Reflect on the lesson asking yourself:

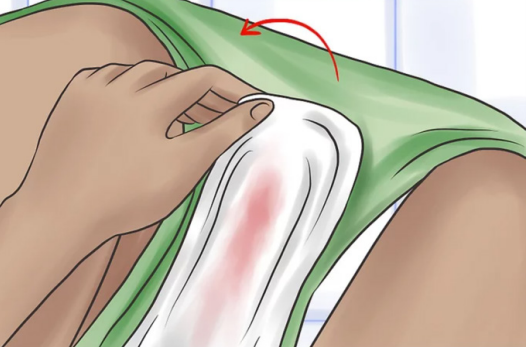
- Did the lesson cater to the diverse learning preferences and needs of the students?
- How can I build on this lesson to support students to continue to develop their knowledge, understanding and skills understanding menstruation and how to manage it?
- How frequently should I revisit this topic as my students continue to go through puberty?
- Are there some products I should have available for my students in the classroom? Such as pads, panty liners or tampons.
- If I am a male teacher, did the students respond to this topic being delivered by a male teacher or would they have felt more comfortable discussing it with a female teacher?
- How can I follow on from this activity in a 'girls only' session?
- Were there any parts of this lesson that should be recapped or repeated to help students consolidate their learning?

References

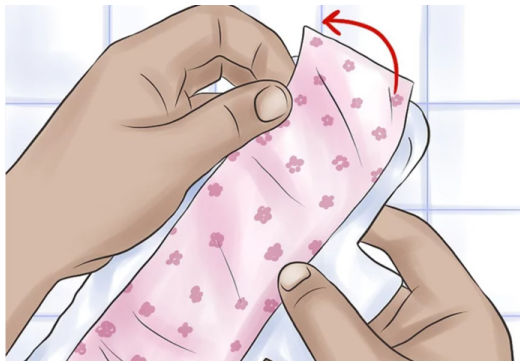
- 1 Retznik, L., Wienholz, S., Höltermann, A., Conrad, I., & Riedel-Heller, S. G. (2023). 'It gives me, as her caregiver, a sense of security.' Young people with intellectual disability and their experiences with sexuality, menstruation, gynecological treatment and contraception: A follow-up analysis of parents' and caregivers' perspectives. *Sexuality and Disability*, 41(1), 97-116. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11195-022-09770-y>
- 2 Altundağ, S., & Çalbayram, N. Ç. (2016). Teaching menstrual care skills to intellectually disabled female students. *Journal of Clinical Nursing*, 25(13-14), 1962-1968. <https://doi.org/10.1111/jocn.13215>

Appendix 1: How to change a sanitary pad

[BACK](#)

	Bring a fresh pad with you to the bathroom
	Wash your hands
	Close the toilet door
	Pull down clothes and underwear
	Remove the used pad from your underwear

Illustrations in this Guide come from the following source: wikiHow: <https://www.wikihow.com/Change-a-Sanitary-Pad#:~:text=Things%20You%20Should%20Know&text=Grab%20a%20clean%20edge%20of,your%20underwear%20so%20it's%20centered.>

	Fold the used pad up in toilet paper
	Put the used pad in the sanitary bin
	Unwrap the fresh pad
	Put the wrapping of the fresh pad in the sanitary bin
	Remove the strip on the back of the pad

	Press the fresh pad onto your underwear
	Pull up your underwear and pants
	Wash your hands