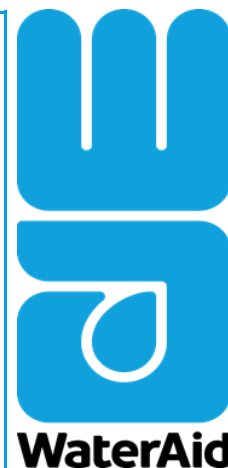


Periods: A private or open topic?

Background:

WaterAid is an international not-for-profit organisation, determined to make clean water, decent toilets and good hygiene normal for everyone, everywhere within a generation. Every month, 1.8 billion people across the world have a period – but millions have to manage theirs without essential clean water, decent toilets and good hygiene knowledge. Not having access to these can be both embarrassing and unsafe – and can have far-reaching impacts for women and girls, acting as a disadvantage in their lives as they are forced to stay home every month, missing vital chances to go to school, earn a living, and to take control of their futures.



Time needed:

20 minutes

Materials:

2 large paper sheets (or whiteboard split in 2); one labelled 'open', the other 'private'
Sticky notes
Optional: Shoe box or container labelled as a 'Period box'

Learning Objective:

To consider reasons why people feel uncomfortable talking about periods.

To think about why it is a good idea to talk about periods openly.

Aim:

To get thinking about how we and other people feel about discussing periods.

What to do:

1. Stick the two large sheets of paper onto the wall and label them 'Open' and 'Private' (or label the whiteboard) This activity aims to differentiate between topics we are happy to talk openly about, such as the weather, and things we might only talk about in private, such as our feelings about people. Emphasise that there are no right or wrong answers.
2. Split the group into two. One team is thinking of open topics and the other team will think about private topics. Each group stands in a line, in front of their assigned sheet of paper (or section of the whiteboard).
3. In a 2 minute relay race, students write topics they think are open or private (depending on their group) on to their sheet. The next person can only go once the first person has returned to the back of the line. The aim is to write as many examples as they can.
4. After, look at the 'open' topics and ask the group to explain why they placed them there. Follow this with an analysis of the 'private' topics. How would they feel talking about these topics openly? Ask them why they feel this way?
5. If periods haven't already come up, write 'periods' onto a sticky note and ask them to place the sticky note under the heading they feel it belongs under. Ask them for reasons.
6. Ask them what these observations tell us about talking about periods? Generally, periods aren't talked about openly. People can find talking about periods difficult because of where they are or who they are talking to. Students may prefer to privately talk about periods.
7. Ask if they can think of reasons why it might be good to talk about periods openly? If not openly discussed, misinformation may spread affecting health or leading to people not understanding periods, or what to do when they start.
8. Optional: Period box - explain that throughout the sessions, they can post questions about periods into the 'period box'. The box could be left out to allow for anonymous questions. After each activity open the box, read the questions and try to see if they can be answered.