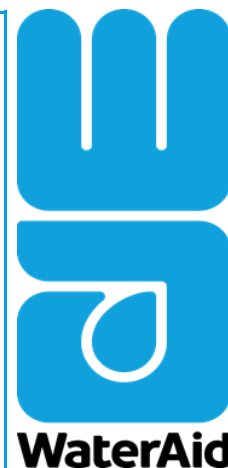


Beginning the conversation: Talking periods

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 is both humiliating and unsafe – and can have far-reaching impacts for people menstruate, acting as a disadvantage to 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:

15 minutes

Learning Objective:

Starting periods can be daunting. Although not everyone is comfortable talking openly about periods, having someone to talk to helps to reduce stress and increase awareness of your body.

You can then make choices about how best to manage it.

Materials:

Conversation topics – these should be printed / copied onto cards or slips of paper.

There should be enough to hand out to half of the group.

Aim:

To create a safe place to talk openly about periods and to get everyone started on talking about periods.

What to do:

Ensure students don't feel pressured to talk about personal experiences.

1. Ask what would need to happen to make them feel comfortable talking about periods. Students can verbally (or in writing) give suggestions. Examples include 'listening without interrupting', 'being respectful of others', 'not being judgemental' etc.
2. Give the conversation topic cards to half the group. Stand them in 2 lines facing each other, students with cards on one side.
3. Give 1 minute to consider how to start the conversation and give one minute to talk to the person opposite about their card.
4. After 1 minute, ask students with cards to move down one place. They should be in front of someone new. This time the student opposite starts the conversation. Give another minute.
5. When they have finished ask the following questions: How did it feel? Is it a good idea to talk about periods openly or not? Why?
6. Explain periods should be discussed openly, as it's natural and nothing to be ashamed or embarrassed about.
How did they feel about starting the conversation?
What kind of things did they say to get started?
7. The more you discuss something, the easier it gets. It can be awkward at first. Ask them to share their conversations.

Conversation Topics



Who would you be happy to discuss periods with?

**How do you think it would feel to start a period?
Excited, embarrassed, proud, relieved, sad?
What would make you feel this way?**

Do we need to become more open talking about periods?

Do you think it is important for everyone, including boys, to understand more about periods?

If you want to find out about periods, where would you look? Who would you ask?