

Training Module

for
ASHA on Menstrual Hygiene



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Background

Why a programme on Menstrual Hygiene?

Good menstrual hygiene is essential for the health and dignity of girls and women. Discussions on menstrual hygiene are important for adolescent girls to clarify existing myths and misconceptions around menstruation. Improving menstrual hygiene is important from the point of view of personal comfort and increased mobility. It also reduces the likelihood of infections resulting from poor hygienic practices during menstruation. Providing girls with the knowledge and skills on maintaining menstrual hygiene improves school attendance among girls who may not attend school on those days or even drop out of school altogether.

How to promote Menstrual Hygiene?

Promoting menstrual hygiene is achieved through:

- a) Provision of health education to girls and women on menstruation and menstrual hygiene
- b) Increasing community action to improve access to clean toilets with water, both in the home and in schools
- c) Promoting the availability and use of sanitary products
- d) Enabling safe disposal of sanitary products.

Who can promote Menstrual Hygiene?

Menstrual Hygiene can be promoted in the community and in schools. It is best to start with adolescent girls although other women in the reproductive age group also benefit from the information and access to sanitary products. In the community, the ASHA, the Anganwadi Worker (AWW), and the members of women's self help groups (SHGs) can make a substantial difference to menstrual hygiene practices.

The ASHA already has the advantage of being in close contact with the women in the community. It will be good to provide the information on menstrual hygiene and sanitary products contained in this booklet to adolescent girls and women in the community. As a member of the Village Health and Sanitation Committee (VHSC) and in her work with members of the Panchayat, she can promote toilets in homes and ensure separate toilets for girls in the local schools. Members of women's SHGs can support and assist the ASHA in encouraging menstrual hygiene and promoting the use of sanitary napkins in the community. Sanitary napkins can be made locally by SHGs using a simple technology, and such groups can be

encouraged to take up this activity. Further information on this is available in the offices of the District Health Society or the District Collector's office.

Who is this training for?

The training is for the ASHA who will help young adolescent girls understand menstruation and take good care of their bodies during menstruation.

- It is targeted to help the ASHA reach out to: Adolescent girls in the age group 10-19 years in rural areas.

Why is there a need to reach out to this population

- Menarche and menstruation are topics that are not discussed openly – leading to a lack of accurate information and education.
- There is poor understanding of healthy menstrual hygiene practices, and the risk that poor menstrual hygiene poses to women and their reproductive health.
- Traditionally cloth, ash, sand, hay, and other material have been used by women, and there is low awareness of the risks that the use of these materials pose.
- Embarrassment and lack of effective options to ensure menstrual hygiene could lead to school absenteeism or even dropouts.
- Availability of sanitary napkins in rural markets is low, and there is embarrassment associated with purchasing them.

Objectives of the Training

At the end of the training, ASHA will have the following understanding:

1. Key tasks that she is required to undertake
2. The basic elements of menstruation and menstrual hygiene
3. Proper use and safe disposal of sanitary napkins
4. Communicating the benefits of sanitary napkins and motivating girls to use the sanitary napkins
5. Ensuring a regular supply of sanitary napkins in her community
6. Recording and reporting the uptake of sanitary napkins.

Training schedule

Session	Time	Content
1	15 minutes	Introduction to the training
2	30 minutes	Key tasks of the ASHA
3	30 minutes	Understanding Menstruation
4	45 minutes	Menstrual Hygiene and use of sanitary napkins
5	45 minutes	Communicating with the target groups
6	45 minutes	Book keeping for the ASHA
7	30 minutes	Consolidation and feedback

Checklist for the Trainer

The trainer should make the following preparations before the training starts. This is to ensure that all materials that are needed during the training are kept ready.

Session	Material needed
Introduction	Flip chart with objectives of the training and training agenda given as Annexure 1
Key tasks for ASHA	Flip chart made on key tasks of ASHA given as Annexure 2
Understanding Menstruation	Flip book on Menstrual Health, photocopies of the exercise as given in annexure 3
Menstrual Hygiene and use of sanitary napkin	Sample of a beltless and belted sanitary napkin, cloth, flip book to use the chart on MH
Communicating with the target groups	Copies of role play, Flip book on MH
Book keeping	Reading material for ASHA, exercise as given

Session 1: Introduction to the Training

Time: 15 minutes

Objective: At the end of this session, the participants will be able to define the objectives of the training.

Materials: Prepare notes on a Flip chart on the need to reach out to the group and the training objectives. (Points given in Annexure 1)

Process:

1. Welcome the participants to the training
2. Using the flip chart “needs to reach out to the population”, explain the barriers that exist in community that result in poor menstrual hygiene.
3. Also explain how it is important for all girls to keep their bodies clean and maintain body hygiene.
4. Now put up the flip chart showing the objectives of the training. At the end of the training the ASHA should be able to explain to the young girls the importance of using sanitary napkins and maintaining good hygiene. She should also be able to motivate the primary and secondary audiences using proper communication and tools for communication like the Flip book prepared for this purpose.
5. Ask participants if they have any queries. Answer them and then go on to the next session.

Session 2: Key Tasks for the ASHA

Time: 30 minutes

Objective: At the end of this session, the participants will be able to list the key tasks that the ASHA is expected to undertake.

Materials: Chart on the Key tasks of ASHA (as given in Annexure 2)

Process:

1. Ask the participants that since they have understood the objectives of the training, how do they think they can help in giving the messages
2. Put down their answers on a flip chart.
3. Group the answers in terms of communication and delivery of services: Example: a) Counselling the young girl to use Sanitary napkins, b) correct use of sanitary napkins etc will go in Communication while c) supply of sanitary napkins, d) maintaining stock register will go in delivery of services.
4. Then put up the flip chart on "Key tasks" of ASHA to show opportunities and how the tasks have to be fulfilled.
5. Check with the participants if they have any questions.
6. Tell them that as they go along the training, you will be taking up the tasks in details and at any time if they do not understand they can stop and ask.
7. Keep the chart of the key tasks on the wall for further reference.

Session 3: Understanding Menstruation

Time: 45 minutes

Objective: At the end of the session, participants will be able to:

1. Define menarche and menstruation.
2. Explain the problems related to menstruation and the management of these problems.

Materials: Flip book on MH and chart on Menstrual cycle from the flip book, flip chart and markers (Annexure 3).

Process:

1. Ask the participants what they understand by menarche and menstruation. (Q1)
2. Write down their answers on the chart.
3. Ask them to list the changes that take place in the body once a girl starts menstruating (Q2).
4. Again put up the answers on the flip chart.
5. Next put up the chart that you have prepared of the menstrual cycle.
6. Using the chart explain how menstruation occurs, the changes that take place inside the female body and the changes that are seen outside the body.
7. Ask the group to list the possible questions that young girls may have regarding menstruation.
8. Make a list of their questions on a flip chart.
9. Encourage the participants to try and answer the questions.
10. Intervene only when you think they are not able to get to the answer or an incorrect response has been given.
11. Discuss the major problems such as : Painful menstruation, Heavy bleeding and Premenstrual syndrome. Ask the participants what they do when they have these problems.. Be sure that the solutions are not something that should not be done, for example "taking a Baralgan tablet, or using hot water bags directly on the skin, or fasting during periods."
12. End the session by consolidating the learning from the session. You may use the question answer charts that you have put up during the session for checking understanding on what is menstruation.

Possible answers: Q1

- It is start of a girl's period.
- It is a sign that a girl can now become pregnant and bear a child.
- It a time when bleeding takes place from the vagina.

Possible answers: Q2

- The breasts start developing
- The body takes a shape
- There is discharge from the vagina
- The girl may start getting pimples
- Hair growth is seen around the vaginal area and under the armpit.

Session 4: Menstrual Hygiene and Use of Sanitary Napkins

Time: 45 minutes

Objective: At the end of the session, participants will be able to answer questions on:

1. Menstrual hygiene
2. Use of sanitary napkins and the advantages of a sanitary napkin
3. Safe disposal of sanitary napkins

Materials: Flip charts, markers, tape, sample of the sanitary napkin, cloth, chart on menstrual hygiene

Process:

1. Tell the participants that we have seen now what menstruation is. In this session we will talk about an important aspect of menstruation and that is, maintaining body hygiene during menstruation.
2. Ask participants how they think cleanliness should be maintained by young girls (Q3)
3. Put down the answers on the flip chart.

Possible answers: Q3

- Taking a bath regularly
- Keeping the private parts clean
- Using clean cloth if a cloth is used
- Using clean and washed underclothes daily
- Using a sanitary napkin
- Washing of hands with soap every time you change the cloth or napkin.

4. Ask the participants that if these are the points that need to be made to the young girls what are the possible barriers that they may face.(Q4)
5. Put up the chart showing advantages of using a Sanitary napkin and correct use and disposal of the Sanitary napkin. (Annexure 4)
6. Now ask the participants if we can convince the young girls by using this argument.

Possible Barriers: (Q4)

- Cloth is best.
- Sanitary napkins are expensive.
- If they are thrown away and someone crosses them, there will be some bad luck.
- Sanitary napkins may cause infection.

Possible Answers: (Q4)

- If the cloth is not washed and dried properly then there is a greater chance of infection.
- Sanitary napkins are being provided to the girls in the village. This is to help the girls to access a safe method of menstrual hygiene.
- Sanitary napkins can be disposed off properly by incineration or burial in deep pits.
- Sanitary napkins absorb the menstrual fluids and keep the skin surface dry, therefore preventing growth of germs and bacteria. Thus, sanitary napkins when used properly will not cause infection.

Session 5: Communicating with the Target Groups

Time: 60 minutes

Objective: At the end of the session, participants will be able to prepare a communication plan for their areas.

Materials: Role Play, (Annexure 5) Chart on how to use the flipbook, flip charts, markers, tape, flipbook on menstrual hygiene

Process:

1. Tell the participants that they have now understood all the details of menstrual health. It is now important to translate this to an action plan on how to communicate with the target groups – young girls.
2. Ask the participants where they will be able to find the target audiences.
3. We have already seen the barriers to using the sanitary napkin and how to convince the young girls, let us now see how to counsel the girls.
4. Remember the principles of counseling, show the chart on good counselling skills.
5. Have two participants play the role of ASHA and young girl who has to be convinced on using a sanitary napkin.
6. Give the role play script to all the participants (Annexure 5).
7. Ask them to listen carefully to the roleplay and then mark the counselling skills used in the statements by the ASHA.
8. While they are doing this, they should also be using the flipbook. Use the chart prepared on how to use the flipbook.
9. Give feedback on both counselling and use of the job aids as well as their IPC skills.
10. For role play situations, the facilitator may use other issues. A few examples are given here. The facilitator can give the situation and ask the participants to prepare an extempore play. Listen carefully to the dialogues to point out the different counseling steps when this is done.

Situations for role play:

- a) Girl is refusing to go to school as she has her periods and is embarrassed that her clothes may stain
- b) A young girl is taken to the PHC to meet the doctor as she has got a rash and itching in her private areas. The doctor advises on use of the sanitary napkin
- c) Two friends discuss how they are scared of going out during their periods, they are overheard by the ASHA who then counsels them

Steps for Good Counselling

- Ask and listen.
- Ensure that the girls have understood the facts.
- Advice should be based on the local context on how to use the sanitary napkin and advantages of the sanitary napkin.
- The language should be clear and simple.
- Illustrations like the flipbook and other media should be used appropriately.
- While giving advice regarding inappropriate practices, ensure that you do not use words or language that may hurt community/family feelings.

Ask and Listen

- Ask your questions in clear and simple language. Ensure that the young girl understands what you are saying.
- Listen carefully to assess if she has any queries or doubts.
- If you listen, you will know the doubts and fears that the young girl may have in using the sanitary napkin. You will also know which behaviours need to be changed. Ask appropriate questions. Praise behaviours that are good.

Ensure that the young girl has understood the facts

- Ask the young girl what she has understood and ascertain what needs to be explained further.
- Praise the girl for her good understanding.
- Ask questions that require detailed responses. Your questions should start with words like *why, what, where, when, how many, how much* and *how*.
- Give the girl some time to think and formulate her answer.

Assessment of understanding

Good Questions	Questions to be avoided
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• How will you take care of yourself during your menstrual period.?• Why will you wash your hands with soap?• How will you dispose of the sanitary napkin?• What will you do in case you do not have a sanitary napkin?• Can you tell me what precautions you need to take when you are using a cloth napkin?	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Do you remember how to take care of your menstrual health?• Do you wash your hands with soap?• Do you know how to dispose of the sanitary napkin?• Do you know what to do if you do not have a sanitary napkin?• Do you remember the precautions to take when you use a cloth napkin?

How to use a flipbook?

Flipbook should be used in a planned manner.

Part 1: ASHAs' own understanding of the flipbook:

1. ASHA needs to understand the flow and sequencing in the flipbook before she can use the book. She should read the sequencing in the flipbook and study all the pictures beforehand, so that she does not have to read the messages in front of the interaction group.
2. The flipbook contains picture on one side and message related to the picture is given on the other side in detail. A facsimile of the picture is given on the content page for the user's reference. The side having picture should be facing the audience and the written matter should be facing the ASHA.
3. The flipbook contains the matter in a sequence.
4. The ASHA thus, needs to know what the sequencing is, what the text contains, what the pictures display and prepare her own story line accordingly. The text given in the flipbook is to prompt the user in case she forgets some important facts. ASHA should not start reading out from the flip book.

Using the flipbook in an interpersonal communication session

1. Choose an appropriate time and place.
2. Ensure that the interaction group you have represents your primary target audience.
3. Have the group sit near you and ensure that the flipbook is visible to everyone. Have it posted on a stand a little above the eye level.
4. The back of the flipbook facing you should contain the text.
5. If you do not have a stand, hold the book in your hand and show it around to the audience as you are talking. A semi-circular sitting arrangement is preferable.
6. Give your information; ask questions to confirm that people have understood what you have said. Ask questions on what the group thinks the pictures depict.
7. Never try to give solutions. Ask questions that can lead to solutions.

8. When giving information about services, you should be aware of where/at how much distance these services are available from your place.
9. Any such meeting should not last more than an hour. Try to finish information sharing and discussion in 40 to 60 minutes.
10. Always remember to thank your audience.

Opportunities for Counselling

- (i) Fixed day monthly meetings for adolescent girls.
- (ii) Conducting home visits for girls who do not regularly attend monthly meetings.
- (iii) Using the venue of Village Health and Nutrition Day (VHND) and the women's group meetings to discuss menstrual hygiene.

Session 6: Book Keeping

Time: 45 minutes

Objective: At the end of the session, participants will be able to explain how to keep the book of accounts for the sanitary napkins.

Materials: Exercise on Chart on how to maintain the stock and accounts (to be taken from the reading material for ASHA), flip charts, markers, tape.

Process:

1. Show the chart on book keeping that you have prepared.
2. Explain the process using the example given in the chart.
3. Ask if participants have any queries.
4. If they do not, ask them to solve the exercise given here:
 - a. Find out how much incentive has been earned by the ASHA.
 - b. Find out how much is the imprest account that has been used.
5. When you end the session, clarify any doubts that the participants may have.
6. Important points to keep in mind for this session and which need to be reiterated with the participants are as follows:
 - Use the imprest fund of Rs. 300 to purchase sanitary napkins from the ANM.
 - Be responsible for the transportation and storage of napkins to the village.
 - Supply the napkins to adolescent girls at a reasonable price.
 - Retain an incentive of Re. 1 for every packet sold/distributed.
 - Maintain a monthly record of sanitary napkin packs sold to the girls and keep account of the money recovered. The registers and accounts should be co-signed by a designated female member of the VHSC.

Session 7: Consolidation and Feedback

Time: 30 minutes

Objectives: At the end of the session, participants will have clarified their queries and doubts regarding menstrual health basics, use and disposal of sanitary napkins, book keeping:

Materials: All the charts of the previous sessions taped on the wall, flip chart and markers.

Process:

1. Ask participants to silently spend two minutes recalling the training sessions.
2. Once they have done that, they can take a paper and put down their queries.
3. Give them one minute for this.
4. Now ask them to read out their queries.
5. Answer them one by one, if you cannot answer them, say so and let them know that you will find out and communicate the response to them.
6. Now ask them to take another 5 minutes to fill in the feedback form.
7. Thank the participants for their cooperation and wish them all the best for their work.

Annexure 1

Need to reach out to young girls

- Menarche and menstruation are topics that mothers will not discuss with their daughters
- Poor understanding leads to poor menstrual hygiene
- Poor menstrual hygiene can lead to several infections that may cause long term complications in a girl's life
- Low awareness is prevalent in rural areas

Objectives of the training

At the end of the training ASHA will have the following understanding:

1. Key tasks that she is required to undertake
2. The basic elements of menstruation and menstrual hygiene.
3. Proper use and safe disposal of sanitary napkins.
4. Communicating the benefits of sanitary napkins and motivating girls in the use of the sanitary napkins.
5. Ensuring a regular supply of sanitary napkins in her community
6. Recording and reporting the uptake of sanitary napkins

Annexure 2

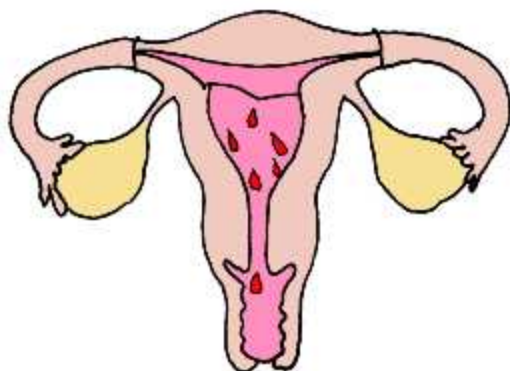
Key activities of ASHA to promote Menstrual Hygiene

- i.) Organising monthly meetings on a fixed day for adolescent girls:
- ii.) Conducting home visits for girls who do not regularly attend monthly meetings.
- iii.) Enabling regular availability of sanitary napkins to girls in the age group 10-19 years.
- iv.) Using the venue of Village Health and Nutrition Day and the Village Health and Sanitation Committee meetings to discuss menstrual hygiene.
- v.) Maintaining an inventory of the stock and keeping accounts.

Annexure 3

Exercise for session 3

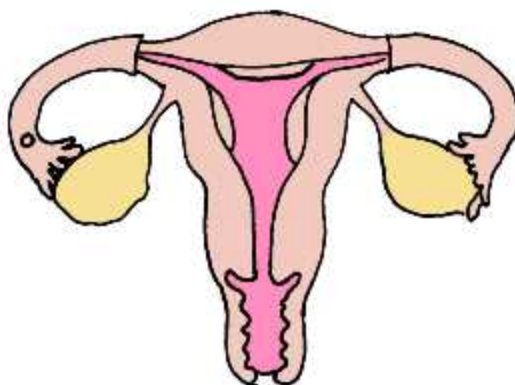
Days 1-7



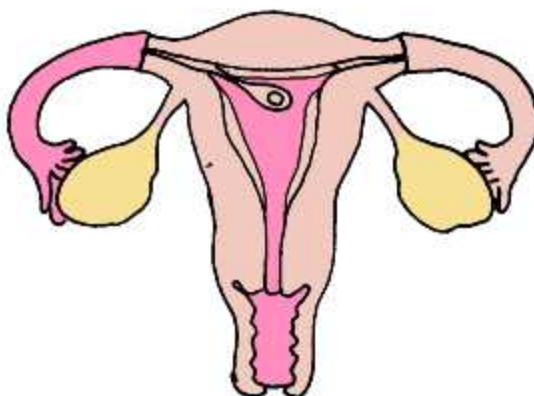
The period is considered the beginning of the menstrual cycle. A period normally lasts for around five days, but can be as short as two days or as long as seven. There is usually around 2-6 tablespoons of blood lost during each period, depending on the heaviness of the flow. A period occurs because the uterus will shed its lining if an egg (ovum) is not fertilised.

One of the ovaries releases an egg and the uterus begins to rebuild its lining. Only one egg is released in each cycle. The egg slowly travels down the fallopian tube from the ovaries towards the uterus. If the egg is fertilised by a sperm before it arrives the uterus, the girl becomes pregnant.

Days 8-14



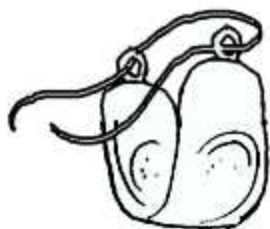
Days 15-28



If the egg is not fertilised, the uterus wall continues to thicken until there is a sudden drop in hormone levels. The lining breaks down, and the next period begins.

Annexure 4

Use of sanitary napkin and disposal of sanitary napkins



Use of a belted sanitary napkin



In case of emergencies when sanitary napkin is not available
proper use of a clean cloth



Disposal of sanitary napkins

Annexure 5

Role Play

Situation: The ASHA is on a home visit to Renuka's house

Characters: ASHA-Sangita, Renuka, Rekha-Renuka's mother and Renuka's grandmother-amma

ASHA (greet)	Hello Renuka! How are you?
Renuka	Namaskar Behenji, please do come in.
ASHA (greet)	Namaskar Rekha didi, Ammaji. It is good to see you all.
Rekha	Come and sit Behenji. What brings you here today?
ASHA (tell)	I was passing by here today and thought I would drop in to meet Renuka. She has not been coming to our meetings regularly at the Anganwadi and I was a bit worried.
Renuka	I know Behenji, I have been telling my grandmother, but she is not letting me go.
ASHA (ask, listen)	Is there some problem Renuka?
Rekha	It is good that you have come Behenji, otherwise I would have come to meet you. You know the napkins that you gave Renuka and me, ammaji thinks that it is not right to be using them.
ASHA (ask, listen, advise)	Is that so Ammaji? A sanitary napkin helps to keep away the infections. Also you know how embarrassing it is for Renuka and Rekha didi when they have to wash the cloth and dry it hidden under the bushes. You know Ammaji, Kiran bhabhi had caught a terrible infection and doctor didi had to give her medicines for 2 months before she became all right. Renuka, will you like to tell what I showed you about why it is important to use the SNs?
Renuka	Yes behenji, Dadi, ASHA behenji told us that if we use the sanitary naptin, we can be protected from infections. Using the sanitary naptin is also so easy and convenient. We do not have to think of washing the cloth and sometime when it is raining, it is such a problem to find a place to dry it in the sun.
ASHA (Praise, advise)	Very good Renuka. You remember what I have told you. And Ammaji, I will show you here (takes out the flipbook) how a sanitary napkin is so easy to use and dispose off.
Ammaji	That is OK Sangita. I have see you running around when you were small and now you have become an ASHA Behenji. But some things we have to care of, like our old customs. Throwing these things around will cause evil to come to our house if a sadhu or holy an crosses it.
ASHA (counsel)	Ammaji (show the flipbook on disposal), see this shows how the sanitary naptin is to be disposed off. We can either burn it or put it in a deep pit and bury it in our backyard. The material is such that it will become manure in a years time. When we have to wash and dry the cloth, it is an embarrassment for the young girl. This is so convenient Ammaji.
Rekha	That is right Ammaji. Renuka also goes to school and sometimes the cloth will not protect her. So she has to miss her school. Renuka is so good in her studies. Maybe she will also become like Nurse behenji if she studies.
ASHA (praise, advise)	That is right Ammaji, and then she can take you to Benares and Haridwar like you want. Renuka, you speak so well, I am thinking that I can use you to talk o other young girl in our village. You can speak to them about the importance of using a Sanitary napkin and how to keep themselves clean when they have their periods. Ammaji, please send Renuka to the meetings. And let her use the Sanitary napkin.
Ammaji	All right Sangita. These are the days and times for the educated and I cannot keep my granddaughter back. She must also become a great woman.
ASHA (praise)	Thank you Ammaji. So Renuka, I will see you in the meeting this week.

Feedback Form

Date:

1. What did you like about the sessions?
2. What session do you think was the most helpful?
3. What is the content that you wanted more information on?
4. Any other suggestion you have to improve the training?

