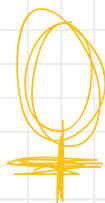


# GENDER SENSITISATION HANDBOOK

BY





## GENDER SENSITIZATION

THIS HANDBOOK WILL TEACH YOU ABOUT GENDER, HEALTH AND WELLBEING. READ THIS TO KNOW HOW YOU SHOULD TAKE CARE OF YOURSELF AS YOUR BODY GOES THROUGH MANY CHANGES.



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# 01

## Gender Sensitisation

**Aim:** To inform participants the difference between sex and gender  
**Objective:** Identify socially constructed norms and biological features

**What do you mean when you ask someone for their "sex"?**  
In very simple terms it means whether they are Male or Female

**But isn't that the same as gender?**  
Not quite. Sex refers to the biological body parts you are born with. Depending on the body parts you are born with, you may have different characteristics. For example, boys when they grow up will have deeper voices than most girls.

**So what is gender?**  
Gender is the behaviour we associate with males and females. Gender is fluid and develops as we grow up. It is influenced by a number of things like our surroundings, personality, friends, teachers or family.

Males and females are told to behave in different ways just because their bodies may be different. For example: Women can give birth to children but taking care of the child is the responsibility of both parents, not just the mother. Sometimes boys are told that they must study science and maths and not subjects like History or English because they must be the breadwinner of the family. Today, both mothers and fathers work and provide for the family

Let's do this activity to understand it better

**Activity 2: Look at the list below and see the difference between biological functions and gender roles**

Gender Roles	Biological Functions
Child-care	Breastfeeding
Cooking	Pregnancy + childbirth
Male must provide for the family	Menstruation
Women need male protection and males should protect all women	Breaking vocal cords
Boys study science and maths and girls study History and geography	Boys and girls have different hair growth
Boys shouldn't display emotion but girls can be as emotional as they want	On average, boys grow to bigger size than girls

Discuss with your friends how many of these you have heard before.  
Have your parents or teachers ever said any of the statements above before?  
Have you ever wanted to do something only to be told "Only boys are allowed to do that." Or "Good girls sit quietly." Tell your stories.

# Gendered behaviour

**Aim:** To identify gendered behaviour and assumptions

**Objective:** Participants will be able to say what behaviours are expected of men and women



Many times, boys are told to “be a man” and girls are told not to shout and scream and be “ladylike”.

How many times have you heard this?

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Do you think this is wrong?

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Would you like to express your emotions more freely?

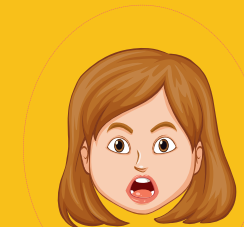
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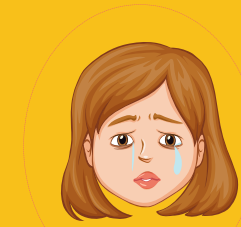
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Let's do this activity to understand it better

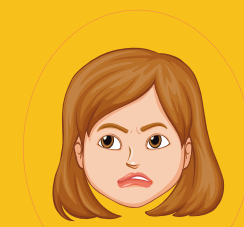
**Activity 2:** Look at the actions below. Have you ever been told not to act that way?



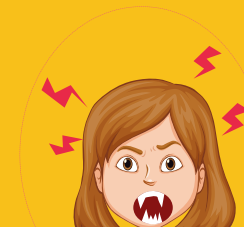
Shouting



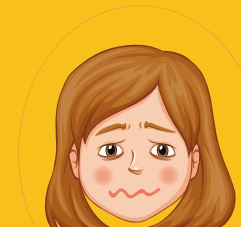
Expressing pain



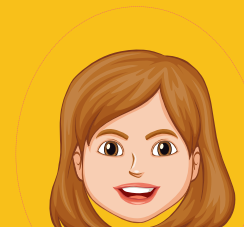
Being aggressive



Talking loudly



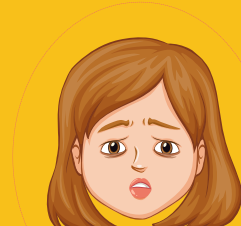
Self- sacrificing



Confidence



Displaying anger



Having self- doubt



Being shy

## Discuss:

- What kind of behaviour or displays of emotion have they been told to void  
Have you ever been told not to act that way?
- From the above examples, say how your mother or father acts. What about our male or female teachers?
- Where do we learn gendered behaviours?
- How does this affect behaviour in the future?

Gendered behaviour affects us for a long time in the future. Many times boys and girls will not pursue the subjects they want to study or could excel in. Instead studying things they may not be interested in and therefore won't perform well in.

It makes people vulnerable to sexual violence. Boys who are taught that aggressiveness is a natural trait could turn violent and attack girls. Girls, who have been taught to be submissive and meek might learn to accept violence.

Gendered behaviours make people act in certain ways because of pressure from society. These behaviours may not be how we actually feel or think but we are forced to act like that.

## Femininity vs. Masculinity

How do gendered assumptions affect people later on?

- In school, those who do not behave according to the set norms may be bullied by classmates. Teachers may treat them unfairly too. Parents may try to scold the behaviour away causing emotional pain to the children.
- In college and high class, it might affect the choice of subjects they choose to study. Some girls may be discouraged from applying to engineering or medical stream because of the pressure and hard work involved. Some boys may be told not study art because they will not be able to make money.
- At the workplace, men and women may face discrimination just because of their gender. Women face this greatly. They may have all the skills but a man with less skills may be given the job instead. Women are on average paid less than men for the same amount of work done.

# 02

## Health and Hygiene

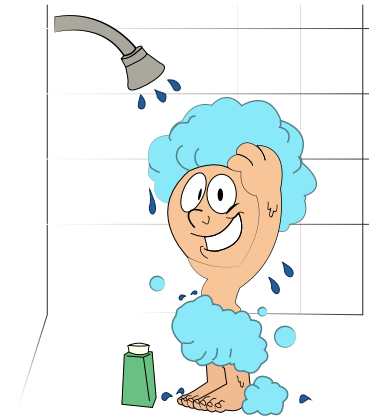


### Washing Hands

- Before and after every meal
- After going to bathroom

### Washing Face and Feet

- Before school (basic grooming)
- After school
- After playtime
- Increased number during summer
- Before bedtime

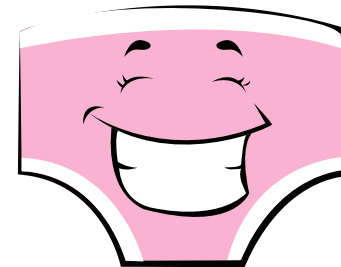


### Bathing

- At least once a day. Use soap + water and a clean towel to wipe yourself.
- Shampoo hair every 2 days.

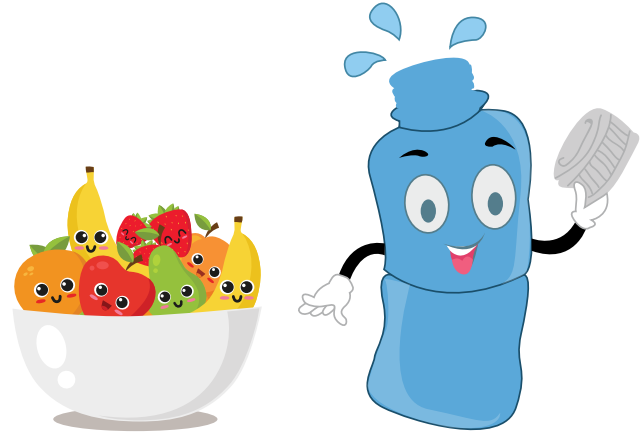
### Grooming

- Comb hair before school
- Use clean comb to prevent lice
- Girls + Boys should comb their hair to maintain neatness
- Carry handkerchiefs/ hand towels to wipe sweat
- Cough into tissue paper/ handkerchief
- Nails should be trimmed and dirt under nails to be cleaned every check every 2-3 weeks



### Underclothes

- Change underclothes - Bra, underpants, socks, vests everyday



### Bowel and urinary movements

- Maintain good movements to keep a healthy body. Drink atleast one bottle of water a day and eat lots of fruits and roughage.

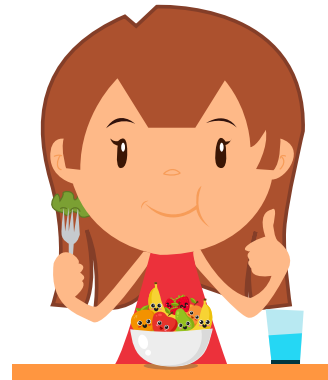
### Clean Clothes

- Change clothes every day especially in summer when you sweat a lot



### Diet

- Maintain a healthy, balanced diet with good portions of fruits and vegetables and sufficient roughage





# 03

## Menstrual Health

### What is a menstrual health?

Menstrual health is making sure that you know how to handle your menstrual cycle. The menstrual cycle affects girls and women in many ways. Keeping good menstrual health is very important to have babies and be healthy.

### What is a menstrual cycle?

Menstrual cycles usually begin between age 10-15. This can differ from person to person and will usually be the same age as when the girl's close female relatives (mother, sister, aunt) got their first period.

### What is the process of a menstrual cycle?

It is when the inner lining of the uterus is discharged over a monthly cycle lasting 26-30 days.

### How does this happen?

**Step 1** - Ovary releases eggs into the uterus. This egg is ready to be fertilised by sperm. If an egg is fertilised by the sperm it leads to pregnancy.

**Step 2** - Uterus lining thickens to prepare for pregnancy.

**Step 3** - If the egg is not fertilised, uterus lining, made up of tissue and blood, starts to shed

**Step 4** - This exits the body through the vagina. When this happens, it is called the period.

### Why does this happen?

A menstrual cycle is the body's way of preparing for pregnancy. It is a completely natural process that happens to healthy, physically mature girls. Menstrual cycles or periods are not dirty or unclean. It is just another function of the human body.

How does one know or feel when a menstrual cycle is going to take place?

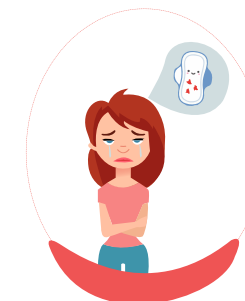
Menstrual cycles can be accompanied by Pre-menstrual syndrome (PMS). You may feel some of the following:



Increased appetite



Cramps



Spotting



Diarrhea



Constipation



Nausea



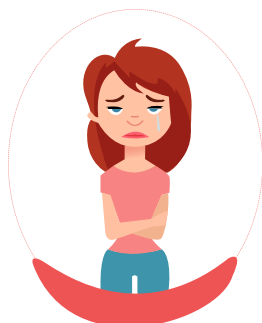
Dizziness



Acne



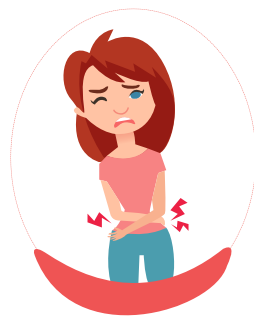
Lower back pain



Mood changing



Tender breasts



Abdominal pain



Cold



Bloating



Headache



Flatulence

Experiencing these symptoms a few days before or after your period is normal. Cramps (throbbing abdominal pain) is the worst in the first few days of the period.

#### How can you treat the pain and discomfort?

- Over the counter pain medication
- Heating pad/ hot water bottle
- Exercise
- Oral contraceptive pills
- Avoid caffeine and oily foods
- Eat leafy vegetables, fruits etc
- Good rest

#### How do you know when your period starts?

Your first period starts when blood is discharged from the vagina. This is a normal process and should not alarm you.

#### How do you handle it?

Sanitary napkins should be used. Re-usable, washable sanitary napkins are available in the market.

#### How can you maintain hygiene during menstrual cycles?

- Sanitary napkins should be changed every 4 hours.
- Stained underwear should be washed and clean ones worn
- Private areas should be washed well. Make sure to shower atleast once a day during your period
- Wash hands before and after changing
- To dispose of sanitary napkins, wrap in newspaper, roll and throw in a bin. Not the toilet.
- If using cloth, make sure to wash the cloth regularly. Bacteria can collect and cause Urinary Tract Infections, yeast infections or other problems.

#### Why is my period not regular?

This can happen when there is sudden weight gain or weight loss. When body fat goes down drastically, periods can stop altogether. Athletes or anemic girls usually experience this.

Hormonal imbalance can also cause irregular period - Poly-cystic ovarian syndrome is one. Symptoms include

- Acne
- Weight gain and difficulty losing weight
- Hair growth
- Fatigue

It can be treated with oral contraceptive pills or anti-inflammatory diet

Another one is endometriosis - When the endometrial tissues grow outside of the uterus it causes endometriosis. This can cause painful periods.

It can be treated with oral contraceptive pills, pain medication or diet

#### Why have I missed a period?

- Pregnancy - take a pregnancy test
- Consult your doctor - it could be anaemia, hormonal imbalance, illness

#### After my period, I sometimes find small spots of blood. Why is this?

Spotting before or after your period is normal. However if this continues, consult a doctor.

Now that you've learned about the menstrual cycle, you now know that it is a normal bodily function that healthy girls and women must go through.

There are many myths that surround menstrual cycles but these need to be dispelled.

**If you ever hear any of the following statements, you should tell yourself and the person saying it that it is only a myth and not true at all:**

- Girls who are on their period are 'dirty and unclean' and cannot enter temples
- Girls who are on their period are 'dirty' so they should not enter the kitchen
- Girls who are on their period should not play or run or do strenuous activities
- Girls who are on their period should keep it a secret and not talk about it

# 04

## Child Development and Protection

After about the age of 11 or 12, you will notice some changes in the body around puberty (12-15)

- Cracking voice
- Increased hair growth - facial and body hair for men, body hair for women
- Menstrual cycle starts
- Weight gain in girls
- Growth spurt

1. **At around this age, gender identity becomes more pronounced and adolescent sexuality start to develop**
2. **You may feel attracted to the opposite sex or same sex. Gender identity and sexual orientation tend to be fluid and develop over time, starting from this age**



## Child Abuse

### What is child abuse?

Child abuse can include the following:

**Parental abuse** - verbal and physical

**Peer abuse** – bullying from classmates or friends

**Sexual abuse** – when an older person wields power and forces a child to make sexual contact

**Abuse by adults** - teachers, neighbours, religious leaders etc. This can involve being hit, physical violence or emotional abuse

**Societal abuse** - social and cultural practices that erode children's rights eg: female genital mutilation, child labour

*Below are examples of different situations. Can you guess which ones are examples of child abuse and what is not?*

**Case 1:** A child's uncle makes him/her watch him undress or change clothes

**Case 2:** A child is ostracised from play time by his peers because he does not bring tiffin to school

**Case 3:** After returning from school, a 13 year old girl's mother makes her help sell products in the market

**Case 4:** A teacher canes a student in front of the whole class

**Case 5:** Parent of a female child make her eat leftover food, even though her brother is given more food than he can eat

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How do you recognise someone who is committing child abuse?

Do you think the following statements are true or false?

1. Perpetrators are usually strangers with a criminal background and creepy.  
Perpetrators are usually people known to the child. It could be a relative, parents' friend, neighbour, tutor etc. Very rarely are they completely unknown to the child.
2. Child abusers are usually "dirty old men"  
Most child abusers commit their first offence in their teens and continue till they are caught
3. Child abusers are usually men  
Women also abuse children even though the number of women offenders is smaller
4. The perpetrator was caught, apologised and promised to never do it again. He will change his ways  
Most offenders are repeat offenders since their actions have already crossed legal, social and ethical boundaries. Most re-offend even after therapy although therapy for adolescent offenders has shown some favourable results
5. The child did not protest or tell anyone so it is not abuse  
Child abusers coerce their victims to conceal the truth and threaten them with consequences. Child abusers make the children feel like nobody will believe them anyway. The children often feel ashamed and in the wrong and keep it to themselves



How can I seek help?

- Raise your voice: Tell someone you can trust. This could be a parent, a teacher, a friend. Anyone who can raise an alarm and take the necessary steps to make this stop.
- It is important for teachers and parents to recognise the signs above and take quick action to protect the child. Chastising the child will only make the situation worse
- Childline helpline – Call 1098 and tell the operator what is happening to you. They will help you and tell you the next steps to take

NOTES

Lined area for notes on page 26.

NOTES

Lined area for notes on page 27.

THIS GENDER SENSITISATION HANDBOOK IS MEANT FOR TEACHERS, TRAINERS, PARENTS AND CHILDCARE PROFESSIONALS. THE TOPICS COVERED RANGE FROM GENDERED BEHAVIOURS, BASIC GROOMING, AND MENSTRUAL HEALTH TO CHILD ABUSE. WE HOPE THIS WILL BE USEFUL FOR BEGINNERS WHO WANT TO CONDUCT TRAININGS IN THIS AREA.