

Session 3_Girls

Learning about my body

Rationale

Pubertal changes begin around 9 -10 years in girls and around 11 years for boys. Acknowledging the mental, emotional, and physical changes that adolescents go through helps put them at ease with themselves, satisfies their curiosity and allays any fears regarding bodily functions.

Materials required

- Charts for reproductive system,
- Marker pen
- Any sticking substance (Blu Tac / double sided sticking tape / cello tape / board pins)
- Session Worksheet/Posters/charts

Objective of session 3

To impart and help children internalize the following messages:

Core Message 1: I am experiencing new changes in my body

Core Message 2: Survival and reproduction are the main instincts of living beings.

Core message 3: Knowing how my body works helps me take better care of my body.

Core message 4: Understanding the reproductive system helps me be healthy and safe. I respect every part of my body; each part is there for a function.

Core Message 1: I am experiencing new changes in my body and mind

Ask children if they feel the same as when they were 6 year olds.

What is different now?

Make a list of mental and emotional changes that they have noticed.

Discuss what they Feel: – children may feel shy, excited, anxious and happy; self-conscious as we are growing up. Feeling of independence, rebelliousness, courage, confusion, extra awareness and consciousness about our body.

Mood changes: Angry Happy Crabby. Wanting to be a part of a group, teasing, and attraction towards another person.

All of the above feelings are connected with mental, emotional and physical changes in our body. What causes these changes?

Special chemicals called hormones. Estrogen and testosterone are hormones which are released in the body and cause changes in our bodies. .

What are the physical changes that happen in girls? Ask for responses and list them down.

In girls:

Physical changes: weight, height, hips widen, breasts grow, hair growth (pubic hair and axillary hair), voice changes, pimples, white discharge, menstruation.

Height and Weight increase: To eat iron, calcium and protein rich food rather than junk food.

Pimples: Occur because of hormonal changes in the body, best way to take care of them. Eat a balanced diet, drink lots of water, and keep the skin clean

Voice change: child's voice to a slightly deeper voice – towards adult voice

Material Required

Marker pen, Blu Tac / Board pins /
Double sided sticking tape / Cello tape
Marker pen, Chalk, Duster,
Blackboard, charts

Advance preparation:

Make a chart with different physical and emotional changes

Tips for Trainers

- Session 3 will be conducted separately for boys and girls.
- Put up a chart with the different changes
- Encourage children to speak up and participate by saying "Thank you for bringing that out/ pointing that out. Let us have more response"
- Be aware of your facial expression and body language. Children should not feel intimidated or rejected. Welcome each response, expected, unexpected or inappropriate.
- When answers are inappropriate, these should be discussed such that children realize why they are inappropriate.
- Incorporate hand gestures and voice modulation to capture the interest of the students.
- It would be advisable to keep your language simple and also to intersperse some words from the local language during your session as it will help students feel comfortable and understand concepts better.

Core Message 1: I am experiencing new changes in my body and mind continued.....

Hair growth: feeling of embarrassment: people don't usually talk about it. There is no medical or health reason to remove it. Smell comes from bacteria that break down body's secretions that collect on our clothing. Wash with soap and water to keep the area clean.

Breasts: to show that the person has attained puberty. Difference in breast size occurs between the individuals.

Hips: hips widen; some of our old clothes don't fit us anymore: put on weight also. Why does this happen? For easy delivery.

Methodology: How do you feel about these changes?

An example of one child getting worked up and anxious because all her classmates have started growing up but her body is not showing much growth.

Discussion: physical changes that happen in a body during puberty vary from person to person. Each person's body is unique. The whole process takes almost around 10 yrs. The body will grow at its own pace. So there is no need to worry if your friend has started growing but you have not, or if you have grown more than others. This is the time to make sure that your body gets enough exercise, sleep and nutritious food so that the changes happen as required for your body.

Tips for Trainers

One of the tasks of growing up is discovering who you are and what that means about what you like. Every person goes through this process of exploration, but what happens when it leads to feeling different, confused or even alone and there is nobody to talk to about it? Hence, give children ample time to raise questions and clear their doubts.

Core Message 2: Survival and reproduction are the main instincts of living beings.

Discuss: Why are these changes happening?

Explain regarding two main functions of the human body: survival and reproduction.

Once the child is capable of surviving on its own, the body gets ready for reproduction.

The child slowly develops into an adult.

Puberty is the phase when the child changes into an adult, for e.g. tadpole to frog, larva to butterfly. In different animals, this phase takes different times.

For the human, this whole change takes around 12 to 14 years; from 9-10 years to 22-24 years.

This is a long time and changes will happen gradually. The body will mature first and then the brain being more complex, will take longer.

Tips for Trainers

- First ask the question to a single child and then put it forth to the other children. This helps giving every child an opportunity to answer as well as provides opportunities to clear doubts if necessary.
- If any child gives a different answer from the expected response, do not correct the child; rather ask the child to state the reason and use such incidents as points for discussion.

Making Connections

Understanding that these changes are normal and it's a phase which is unique for each one will have a calming effect on children's anxiety about growing up

Core Message 3: Knowing how my body works helps me take better care of my body.

Ask children to call out the various organs in the body – heart, lungs etc. write these down on the board.

Ask them if they know where these organs are located.

Students are unlikely to mention any organ of the reproductive system.

For the girl's session, ask them if they know where the labia minora, labia majora, clitoris, vagina, womb, tubes and ovaries are located.

Draw the reproductive system of girls in the girls' class and the boy's system in the class for boys. **Refer to the diagram in the Annexure 3: 1, 3.3**

Ask students if they know how the systems works.

Tips for Trainers

Refer to the diagram in the Annexure 3: 1.

Core message 4: Understanding the reproductive system helps me be healthy and safe. I respect every part of my body; each part is there for a function.

Need for different sexes

Question: Why do we have different sexes? Why can't we have only one sex and have asexual reproduction like the amoeba?

Discussion: In asexual reproduction, the offspring are mere clones of the parent. In sexual reproduction, each offspring is different, improving the chances of survival of complex organisms ranging from an ant to an elephant.

How is a baby made?

Talk about the chromosomes: About the special cell in our body which has 23 chromosomes. The egg (ovum) and the sperm. Explain that our gender is determined by our genes when we are born: XX genes for girl & XY genes for boy. Mother's egg has the X gene. The father's sperms are of two types, half have X gene and half have the Y gene. No one has control over which sperm will fertilize the egg. Saying that a girl or a boy should have been of the opposite sex is like saying that a mango should be a guava.

Question: How is a baby born?

Discussion: Explain in simple words how sex happens. The penis is used to deposit the sperms close to the womb. The sperms travel up the womb and one fertilizes the ovum to form a zygote which develops into a baby. Baby grows in the womb for 9 months and then is born through the birth canal.

Menstruation: Explain why the periods occur, about the egg being released from the ovaries, about the endometrium and the nutritious blood that is collected to prepare for the fertilized egg. In case of no fertilization the lining is shed after 2 weeks of ovulation.

Question: What are pads? How do we wear a sanitary pad? How often should we change a sanitary pad?

Discussion: Explain how to wear a sanitary pad/ use cloth pieces, how often to change it and the importance of personal hygiene. There is **no** need to remove pubic hair for any health or hygiene reason.

Material Required

Marker pen, Blu Tac / Board pins /
Double sided sticking tape / Cello tape
Marker pen, Chalk, Duster,
Blackboard, Box for collecting
questions, white chits

Tips for Trainers

- Refer to Annexure 3: 1, 3:2 and 3.3 for diagrams of reproductive system
- As children do not get opportunities to discuss issues related to puberty and reproduction, there might be a lot of questions. In order to streamline it you can do an activity called "WORRIES IN A HAT":
After explaining puberty/changes during growing up, children are given time to think about questions or doubts. They write these on chits and put in the box that will be passed around.
- Facilitator to ensure all questions are answered in due course of the sessions.

Core message 4: Understanding the reproductive system helps me be healthy and safe. I respect every part of my body; each part is there for a function continued...

Question: Are the periods regular or irregular during puberty? Is it ok for the periods to be irregular? Do we lose a lot of blood during periods?

Discussion: During puberty, the body is still going through changes. So in the beginning for 2-3 year, the periods maybe irregular. After sometime, it will become regular. For some girls, it maybe regular too and that is also ok. We lose only between 30- 50 ml of blood during periods. It appears like we lose a lot of blood because it continues for 4-5 days.

Question: Why do we get pain or cramps during periods? Is it ok to take pain killers during periods?

Discussion: During periods, the muscles of the uterus contracts to let the blood out. This may cause cramps or pains during or a little before periods. It is ok to take a painkiller during periods. Yoga / regular physical exercise can also reduce the pain.

Question: Is it ok to exercise during periods?

Discussion: It is ok to exercise during periods. Exercising is does not increase menstrual flow.

Question: Are periods dirty? Is the blood that comes out during periods impure? Will plants die if you touch them during periods?

Discussion: The blood that collects as lining in the endometrium is full of nutrition and nourishment for the expected baby. So it is very pure. Hence the blood that comes out during periods is 'good and pure'. Touching plants during periods does not harm plants. A female doctor operates and takes out babies during her periods. She does not take leave and sit at home for 5 days every month! Do you think the patient suffers because of this? Certainly not!

Refer to annexure 3:2 for explaining menstruation

Tips for Trainers

- One of the tasks of growing up is discovering who you are and what that means about what you like. Every person goes through this process of exploration, but what happens when it leads to feeling different, confused or even alone as nobody talk about it? Hence, give children ample time to raise questions and clear their doubts.
- If you don't have answer to any question it is best to be honest with children. However, make an effort to find out the answer and share during the next session.

White discharge: acidic in nature, for protection from infection, can precede menstruation by a year and a half. It will be there on all days. Some days it will be more (ovulation time) other days lesser. If there is no itching, no foul smell then it is normal.

Question: What is masturbation?

Discussion: Girls may touch or rub the clitoris for pleasure. It is normal and natural.

Question: What is the effect of watching pornography?

Discussion: We all are curious about knowing how sex happens. Some people watch pornography to learn about sex.

What are the advantages?

Enjoyable, educative (is it?), Time pass.

What are the disadvantages?

Addictive, not realistic, ends up giving you a skewed idea about women & men, the act of sex and your own bodies. It does not build respect for women. If a person watches pornography, it can lead to addiction and excessive masturbation. The person will neglect studies/ time with friends/ sports/ family time to watch pornography.

How do we manage this?

Playing outdoor sports/ running/ jogging helps to channelize this energy in a way that is not harmful, taking professional help to deal with the addiction.

Question: Apart from girl and boy, is there any other gender?

Discussion: Gender is diverse. It is inborn, natural, equally human.

Transgender for example is a person who was born with the physical anatomy of a boy or a girl but deep inside they feel like a different gender. For example, a person who was born with the physical body of a man but deep inside feels like a woman and wants to live their life as a woman.

Tips for Trainer

- Apart from girl and boy, is there any other gender? While responding to this question the trainer need to convey that there are wider, more flexible range of gender expressions, with a range of interests and behaviors. Gender is not a binary, but a continuum; and that many children and adults express their gender in multiple ways. We express our gender through our clothes, hairstyle, mannerisms, speech patterns, body language, social interactions, or choice of activities.
- Gender Identity is an internal feeling of belonging to a particular gender. It is inborn. Sexual orientation – sexual attraction – is also inborn and natural.

Concluding the session

Ask students to draw their body. What did they draw and what did they leave out?

Summarize and review the key messages:

What did you learn today? Ask students to share.

Reiterate:

Core Message 1: I am experiencing new changes in my body

Core Message 2: Survival and reproduction are the main instincts of living beings.

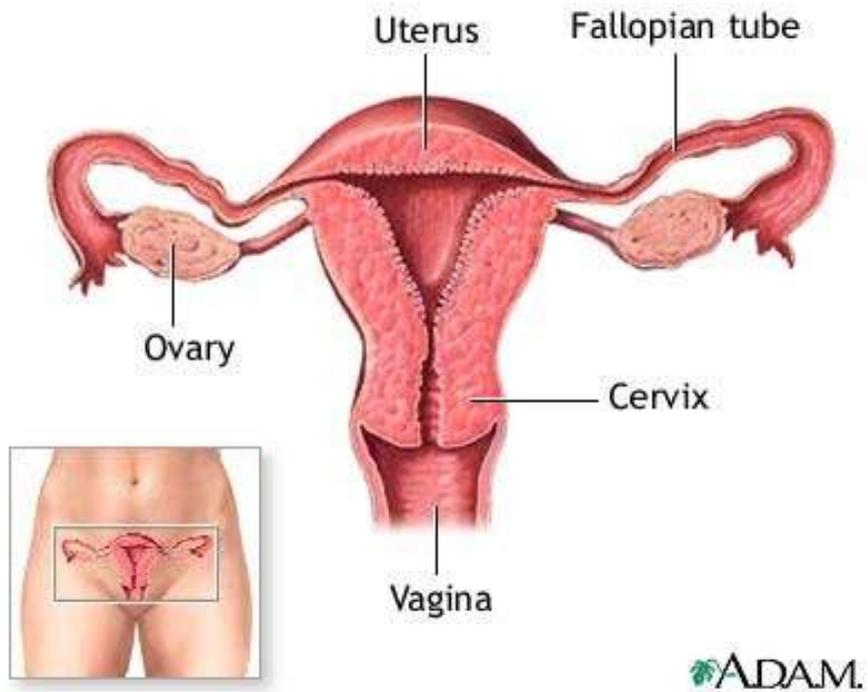
Core message 3: Knowing how my body works helps me take better care of my body.

Core message 4: Understanding the reproductive system helps me be healthy and safe. I respect every part of my body; each part is there for a function.

I came here to help you learn about your -self, your body and safety. I will come again and we will learn some more things

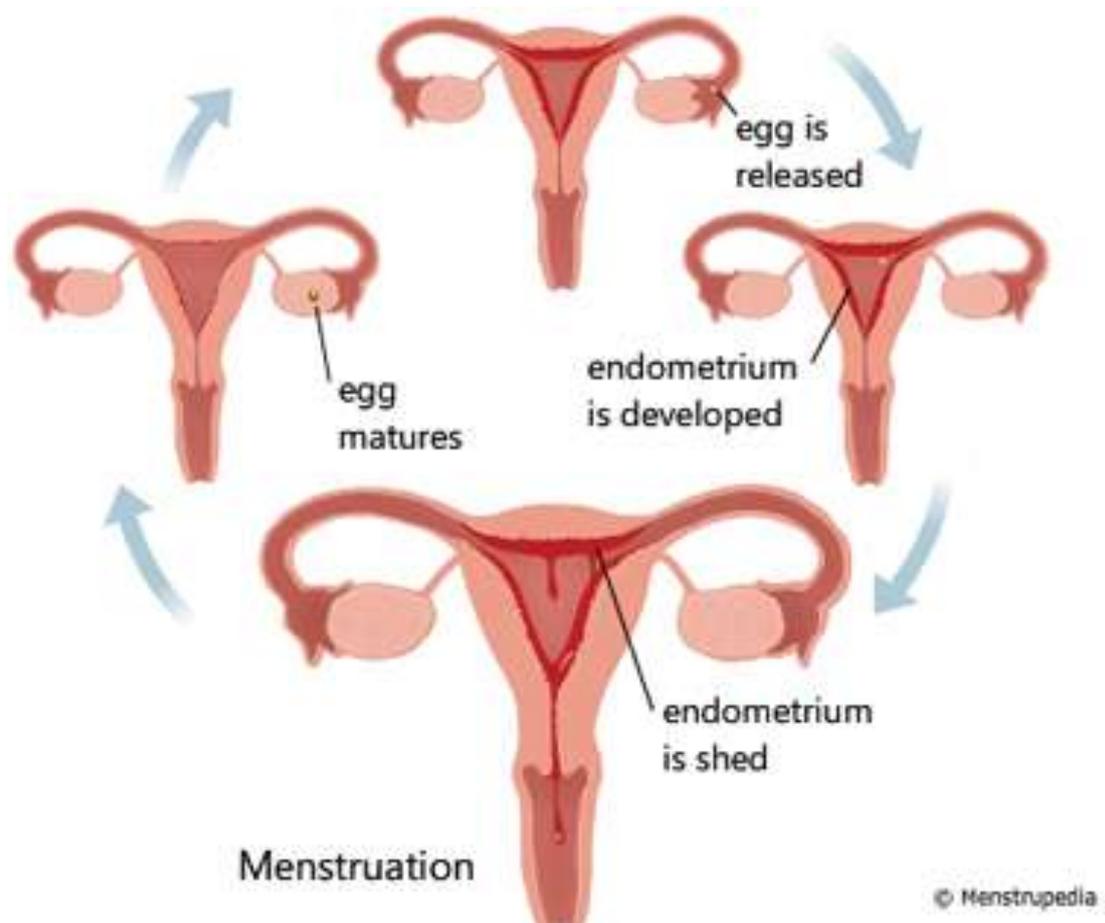
Annexure 3:1

Reproductive System of Girls



Annexure 3:2

Explaining Menstruation



External genitalia of girls

