

Session 4_Girls

Learning about my body: Reproductive system

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

- Marker pen
- Any sticking substance (Blu Tac / double sided sticking tape / cello tape / board pins)
- Charts

Objective of session 4

To impart and help children internalize the following messages:

Core message 1: Knowing how my body works helps me take better care of my body.

Core message 2: Understanding the reproductive system helps me be healthy and safe.

Core message 1: Knowing how my body works helps me take better care of my body.

Methodology: It is important to know about our likes and dislikes and be more aware of “Who I am”.

To be able to take care of ourselves, we also need to know about the different organs and systems that make up our body.

Draw your body in as much detail as you can.

Call out/ write down/ the names of the male and female reproductive organs.

Discussion: We are taught most parts of the body right from early childhood but there are certain parts which we often don't talk about even as adults. These are the reproductive system and related body parts. Knowing ALL of them is also very important. Let us now name all parts of our body. Draw and name all parts of the female and male reproductive organs.

Name the clitoris, urethra, vagina, vulva, uterus, tubes and ovaries; testis, scrotum, penis, vas deferens, seminal vesicles, prostate, urethra and penis.

Refer to diagrams of the reproductive system in Annexure 4:1, 4:2, 4.3

Material Required

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

Advance preparation:

Make a chart with different physical and emotional changes

Tips for Trainers

- Session 4 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.
- You can use the diagram to talk about reproductive system and puberty in Annexure 4:1, 4:2, 4.3
- 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.
- It is important to teach empathy so that children do not tease others about their body.
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Core Message 2: Understanding the reproductive system helps me be healthy and safe.

Question: What is menstruation? Why does it happen?

Discussion: Normal cells in the body have 46 chromosomes. However, there is a special cell in the female body which has 23 chromosomes. This is called the ovum. The male also has cells with 23 chromosomes which is the sperm. Every month one ovum comes out of the ovary and waits to get fertilized by the sperm which also has 23 chromosomes. At the same time, the inner lining of the uterus gets soft and spongy with lots of blood, oxygen to nourish the potential baby. This is called the endometrium. If fertilization does not happen, then this inner endometrium lining comes out through the vagina, this trickles out as blood for 4-5 days. The same process repeats every month until pregnancy occurs. After pregnancy is over, menstruation resumes.

Question: How is a baby born? How does sexual reproduction take place?

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.

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.

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.

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

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 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!

Questions: Why is there white discharge?

White discharge is acidic in nature, for protection from infection and can precede menstruation by a year and a half. It will be there on all days. Some days it will be more (ovulation time) and other days it will be lesser.

Refer to Annexure 4:2 for diagrams of menstruation

Question: What is masturbation?

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

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

Refer to Annexure 4:2 for diagrams of menstruation

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 future sessions.

As children do not have much spaces to discuss about 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 doubts and questions which they write on blank chits and put in the box that will be passed around.

Facilitator to ensure all questions are answered in due course of the sessions.

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. Pluses: Enjoyable, educative (is it?) Time pass. Minuses: Addictive, not realistic, ends up giving you a skewed idea about women & men, the act of sex, 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: Sexuality is diverse. Explain and discuss about LGBT in short. Gender identity (inner feeling that I am a girl or a boy) and sexual orientation (person towards whom one feels sexually attracted) is inborn, due to genetic and epigenetic factors, and naturally determined. At times, gender identity does not match the anatomical sex of the person. Gender of such people is referred to as transgender. **Transgender, to put it simply, 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. 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.** They may choose to take medication and or undergo surgery to transition – that is, change their anatomical sex to match their inner feeling.

Every human being is equally. LGBTQ (Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer) community members are as intelligent as others. We need to respect every person for their intelligences, skills and behavior.

Tips for Trainers

- 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 future sessions.
- 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:

Activity: Worries in a Hat (Questions about puberty) : The students write any questions they have left about their changing bodies and feelings on note slips. These questions and doubts are answered by the trainers without reference to any particular person.

Summarize and review the key messages:

Ask children to share what they learnt today in the session

Reiterate:

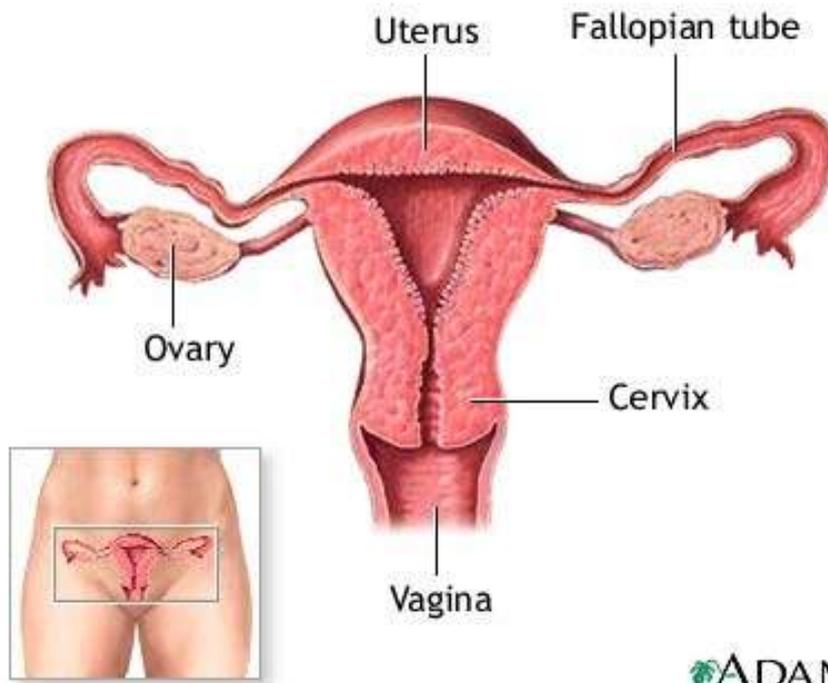
Core message 1: Knowing how my body works helps me take better care of my body.

Core message 2: Understanding the reproductive system helps me be healthy and safe.

I came here to help you learn more about yourself, how you interact with others and how to be safe. I will come again and we will learn some more things.

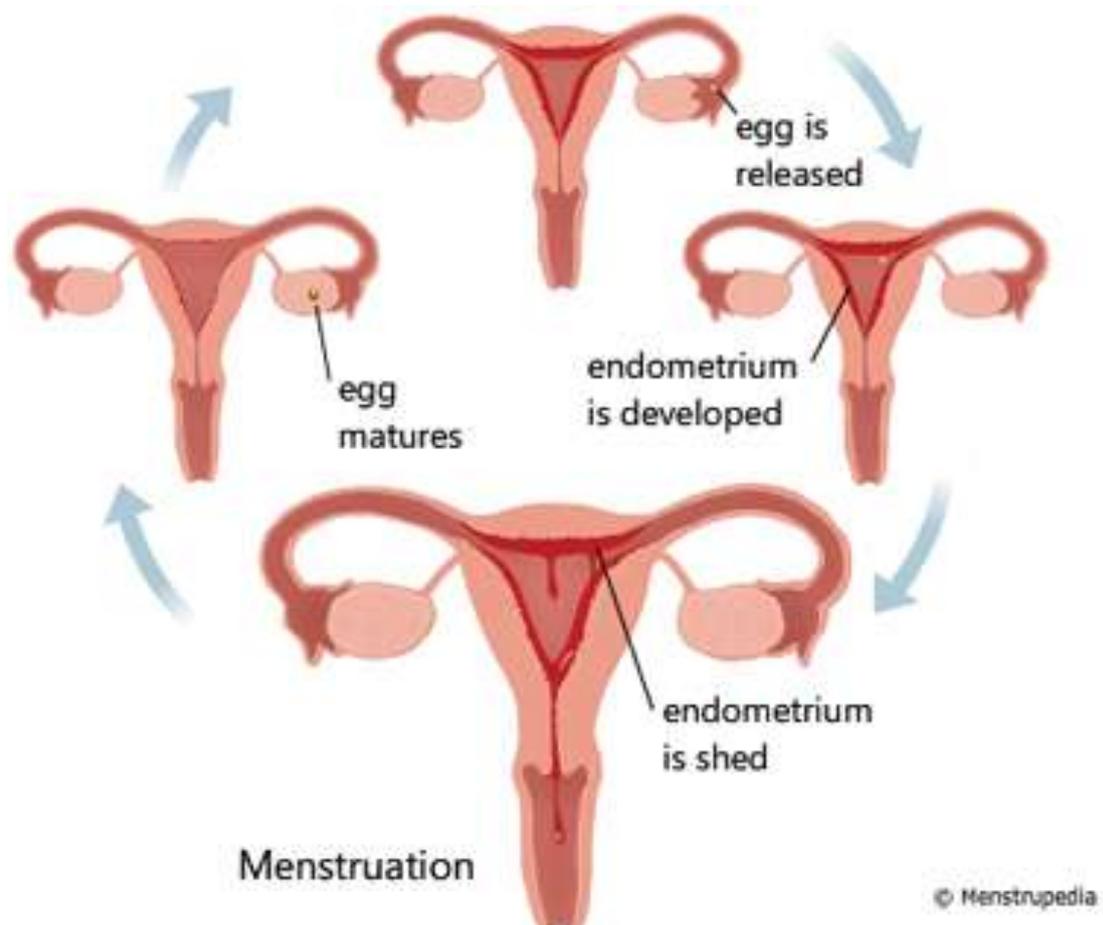
Annexure 4:1

Reproductive System of Girls



Annexure 4:2

Explaining Menstruation



Annexure 4.3

External genitalia of girls

