



Menstrual Equity 101

Menstrual Health Education Day

May 30, 2023 | Nigel Henley M.S., Health and Physical Education Specialist

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Today's Agenda

- Introductions
- Housekeeping and Icebreaker
- Menstrual Equity Deep Dive
- Q&A
- Review
- Resources

Objectives

Through participation in this session, learners will:

- Recognize the legislation that supports menstrual equity nationwide and in the District of Columbia.
- Discuss menstrual equity and differentiate between menstrual equity and period poverty.
- Employ strategies and best practices to respond to concerns related to menstrual equity and period stigma.



Let's Break the Ice

Icebreaker: Ideal Vacation (Emojis Only)

- Go to **Slido.com** and type in code **#2859390**
- Click the link below:
<https://app.sli.do/event/58bsBxfNrUgfrWy5SNFV2L>

OR

- Scan the QR code below to share your response via Slido



Icebreaker: How Knowledgeable are you About Menstrual Equity?

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Menstrual Equity Legislation (U.S.)

- Menstrual Equity For All Act of 2021 ([H.R.3614](#))
 - Increases the availability and affordability of menstrual products for individuals with limited access
 - Expands access to free sanitary napkins and tampons (i.e., menstrual products) in certain locations and for particular groups. It also requires Medicaid to cover menstrual products, as well as liners, cups, and similar items used by individuals with respect to menstruation.
 - Establishes a demonstration grant program to support the provision of free menstrual products on campuses of institutions of higher education and permits elementary and secondary schools to use certain grants to provide menstrual products to students.

Menstrual Equity Legislation (DC)

- [D.C. Law 24-92](#). Expanding Student Access to Period Products Act of 2022
 - Requires District of Columbia local education agencies, private schools, universities and colleges, and vocational schools to install and maintain dispensers or similar receptacles of free-for-use period products in women's and gender-neutral bathrooms.
 - Requires the Office of the State Superintendent of Education (OSSE) to develop and implement health education standards on menstrual education designed for all students regardless of gender in District of Columbia Public Schools and District of Columbia public charter schools beginning in grade 4.

What Does Menstrual Equity Mean to you?

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Menstrual Equity

Menstrual Equity

- Definitions vary, but the most recognized definition refers to the affordability, accessibility and safety of menstrual products.
- But menstrual equity is not just defined by products, it's about...
 - Education
 - Reproductive care
 - Ensuring people have the needs, support, and choices to decide how they want to take care of their menstrual health
 - Ending the stigma around periods that has prevented not only decision-makers, but also healthcare providers, educators and individuals from ensuring that menstrual health is a priority
- The definition is growing and changing, as voices from all over the world continue the conversation about period health, product access, affordability, education and safety.

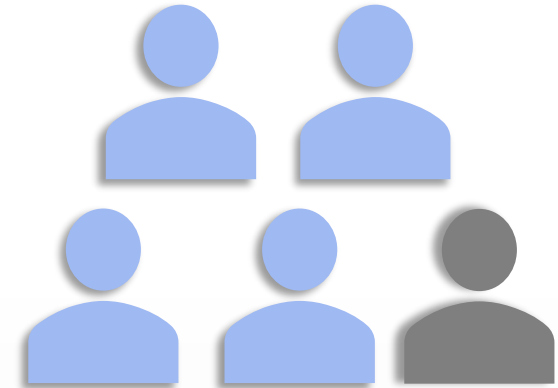
Why is Menstrual Equity Important?



Menstruators likely get their first period between the ages of 8 and 15 years old



Equal access to menstrual hygiene products is an equity issue



4 in 5 U.S. students say they or someone they know have missed time at school because they did not have access to period products.¹

¹ <https://period.org/uploads/State-of-the-Period-2021.pdf>

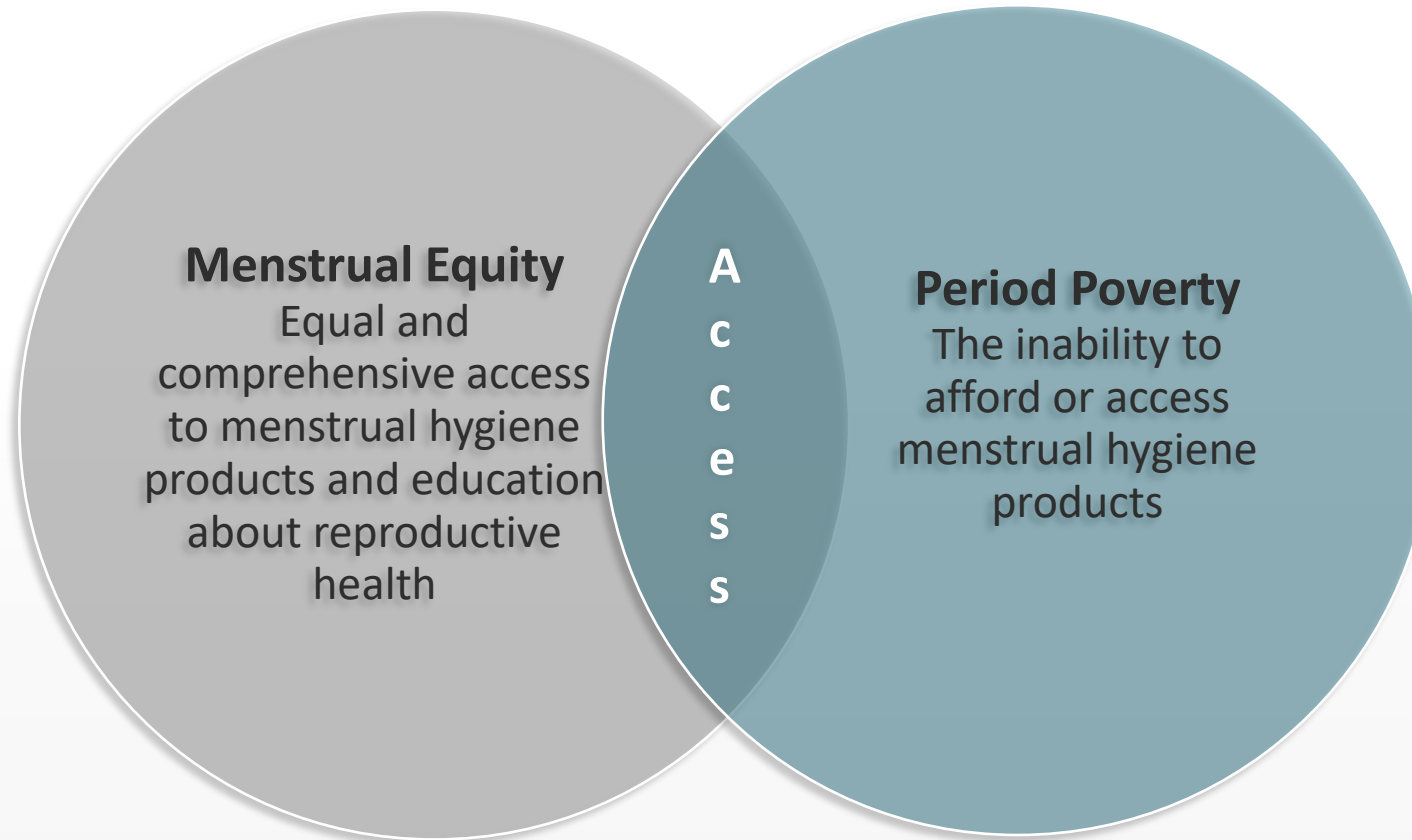
Why Is Menstrual Equity Important?

- Anyone with reproductive anatomy associated with being assigned female at birth (AFAB) — vagina, uterus, fallopian tubes, ovaries — can menstruate.
- Cisgender girls, transgender boys and nonbinary people with AFAB parts can have periods too.
- An estimated one-fourth of the world's population of women and adolescent girls of reproductive age—approximately 500 million—say that they do not have everything they need to manage their menstruation.²

² <https://jamanetwork.com/journals/jama-health-forum/fullarticle/2783499>

Menstrual Equity vs. Period Poverty

- In many instances, these two terms are used synonymously, however they are two different concepts.





Our Role in Menstrual Equity

How can you Support Menstrual Equity?

No matter your role, you can support menstrual equity in your school:

- Learners
- Principal
- Health Educator
- School Nurse
- Educator



Menstrual Equity Scenarios

Scenario 1

Anaya, an 11th grade, Black, cisgender girl puts her head down during class when you begin talking about the effects of contraception use on the menstrual cycle. You notice this and ask Anaya if she is okay. In response, Anaya says “Why are we talking about this? There are boys in this class, they shouldn’t be hearing about the stuff we go through.” Matthew chimes in “Yeah, this has nothing to do with me, why do I have to learn about periods? That’s a girl problem!” You look around the room and notice other students in the class nodding their heads in agreement. You now must respond to both Anaya’s and Matthew’s comments.

- What stands out to you as concerning in this scenario?
- What are the actions you can take in your role to support both Anaya’s and Matthew’s concerns?
- What affirming and positive information might be helpful to lean on? What is your unifying message for all involved?

Scenario 2

You are the principal of an elementary school holding a staff meeting to announce the new Menstrual Health Education Standards and share that implementation will begin in the 2023-24 school year. During the meeting, two staff members express adverse reactions to the implementation of the standards for young students. You are considering how to respond in order to build shared support across your school staff for the standards. The Health Educator, Alan (a cisgender male) expressed frustration with the standards: “I am a male, what do I know about the menstrual cycle? How am I supposed to teach about something I know nothing about and have never experienced? Am I really expected to teach this to 5th graders?” After a few head nods in the room, another staff member – an art teacher, a cisgender female, jumps in: “Personally, I don’t like talking about my own menstrual cycle and I definitely don’t want students coming to me to talk about the menstrual cycle. Is this really the role of the school?” A few more head nods, and the attention turns to you to address these comments.

- What do you notice in this scenario that ?
- What are the actions you can take in your role to support all involved in care?
- What affirming and positive information might be helpful to lean on? What is your unifying message for all involved?

Scenario 3

Michelle, a mother of an 8th grade student sends you an email in response to the school's newsletter announcement about the Menstrual Health Education Standards and the installation of free period product dispensers in the bathrooms. In the email, Michelle shares that it is not the school's right to teach her daughter about period products and their use. She states that, as a family, they hold deep familial, cultural, and religious values against tampons and does not want her daughter to have access to them. She is especially worried that using tampons will affect her daughter's virginity status and tarnish her innocence.

- What do you notice in this scenario?
- What are the actions you can take in your role to support all involved in care?
- What affirming and positive information might be helpful to lean on? What is your unifying message for all involved?

OSSE Supporting Menstrual Equity

OSSE is committed to supporting schools' commitment to menstrual equity and the implementation of the new Menstrual Health Education Standards.

- DC Menstrual Health Education Day
- New Monthly Office Hours
- Training and Technical Assistance
- Resources
 - Menstrual Health Education Standards
 - Period Products Poster
 - Menstrual Health Webpage
 - Virtual SWAG Bag

Additional Resources

Upcoming #DCMHED23 Events:

Menstrual Health Education Standards Walkthrough

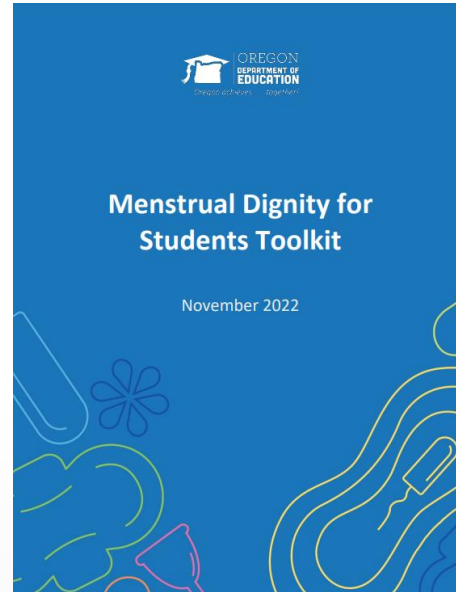
1:15-2 p.m.

Deep Dive: Menstrual Products Poster

2:15-3:15 p.m.

DC Menstrual Health Education Day Student Summit

3:30-4:30 p.m.



Contact Us

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