

Publisher details

Going with the flow:

Menstruation and rainbow-inclusive practices in the outdoors

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Acknowledgements

This resource has been a long time in the making. Born from a Master's research project that explored the experiences of young women in the outdoors, it has grown into something far greater than expected. Many outdoor participants and practitioners have been calling for outdoor practices to reflect the increasing diversity of Aotearoa New Zealand. This resource responds to this call and offers a challenge to all those who read it: join us in creating change.

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E tio te tūī, e ketekete te kākā, e korihi te kōkako

It takes many instruments to make a symphony

This whakataukī speaks to the value and strength in diversity.

There is no single way of 'being' in the outdoors. The experiences, strengths, and knowledge that each of us have add interest, richness, and depth to who we are and what we can achieve together.





The project artwork

The artworks in this resource were created by Sara Wolman. Sara is an Alaska-based artist, environmental educator, and media specialist whose work focuses on the natural environment and people's relationships with it. She uses her artwork to advocate for the protection of our natural places.

Sara has been involved in the project from the beginning, generously volunteering to create the first project image. As the resource evolved, so have the project images. What you see now reflects the beauty of both nature and menstruation intertwined. The colours represent the natural environment, as well as the natural and beautiful process of menstruation. Sara focuses on thematic elements and colours that are inclusive of all people who menstruate. This design brings native Aotearoa New Zealand plants, outdoor recreation, and the menstrual experience together in one beautiful educational resource.



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Introduction

Mensies, ikura, your monthly, code red, ma'i masina, time of the month, Mother Nature, periods.... This resource is here to talk about menstruation—or whatever you and your whānau call it.

Everyone should be able to enjoy the great outdoors. However, there are aspects of the outdoors, and stereotypes of gender, that can make outdoor experiences difficult for some people. Historically, Western culture has often portrayed the outdoors as being the domain of men. This has meant that many girls, women, gender diverse and intersex people have been made to feel like they don't belong in the outdoors. The lack of information about how people can manage their periods in the outdoors is a big part of the problem.

Educators and outdoor practitioners must play a key role in changing outdoor culture and practices. To make outdoor practices inclusive, we need to understand the different ways people view, experience, and manage menstruation. By accepting, providing for, and celebrating diversity, the outdoors can become a much more supportive place.

'Menstruation isn't something to be sorry or ashamed about.'
(Young Samoan woman)

'I wish someone had told me that having your period in the outdoors is ok and normal. And that you'll be able to manage it... I literally thought a tap of blood was going to explode and go everywhere... I wish that my school had taught us how to actually use tampons, and knowing about the other options... I had no idea about the period undies or togs. If we had learnt about that earlier on, it would have made it a lot easier.'

(Young Pākehā woman)

'We need to talk openly about menstruation. In the military it is seldom discussed and rarely considered in advance. This means that when there are issues there are few pre-planned solutions. As an Officer, I always made sure that activity briefs included comments on menstruation so that men became used to hearing about it and could consider it for when they were in charge. I noticed a distinct change in attitude the more the men were exposed to conversations about menstruation. It is important for men to role model mature behaviour about menstruation.' (Adult Pākehā woman)





This resource is for EVERYONE, regardless of whether you menstruate or not. Why? Because the more we understand the different ways people experience periods, and the difficulties people face when having them in the outdoors, the sooner we can build a more positive and supportive environment for everyone. So, if you are someone who doesn't menstruate, be an ally for your menstruating friends, colleagues and students. Together we can create an outdoors that is safe and inclusive for everyone.



'I got my first period on camp and we were on an island... there was a lot of swimming, and there were no toilets and I was just in the bush. I didn't know what to do, or have any supplies, and I didn't feel comfortable talking to anyone about it... All the boys were like "why aren't you swimming?", and I was like "oh, I've got my period", and they were like "what's that?" – it was just very awkward.' (Young Pākehā woman)

'Growing up I used to play basketball and we would always have male coaches. I would be on the first day of my period and dying, and I wouldn't say anything. I would just play the game and not tell the coach. Never... it was never a topic of conversation. That was completely different when we had our first female coach – it completely changed, I could be open. They would ask "why are you playing like you've never held the ball before in your life?", and I would explain that it was the first day of my period. And they would understand, knowing it made complete sense.' (Adult Egyptian woman)

'Especially at Intermediate, I feel that boys used "the periods" as an insult, or they would use it against boys as well by saying to other boys "oh, are you on your period?" when they weren't acting masculine enough.'

(Young Samoan woman)

This resource is designed to inform, challenge and motivate. We hope that after reading it you will have a better understanding about the needs of those who menstruate and the things we can all do to create a more inclusive outdoors.



Menstruation is not just for girls and women

n this resource, we use the phrase 'people who menstruate'. While many people who menstruate identify as a girl, woman or female, not everyone does. Some people who menstruate are trans men, non-binary or intersex. We also use non-gendered terms throughout the resource, such as folk or people.





How to use this resource

Part A: 'Knowledge is power'

There is a lot of misinformation, and missing information, about periods, and about people who menstruate. This section aims to challenge this by providing in-depth information on four key topics:

- Menstruation myths, perceptions and stories
- Beliefs and practices of menstruation
- Supporting gender diversity and variations of sex characteristics
- ▶ Period management: tools and strategies.

This section has been written so that it is accessible for everyone, including young people, parents, and sports coaches. It shares the experiences of a range of people, including those from different ages and ethnicities and folk who are gender diverse, intersex and transgender. However, this resource isn't designed to be your 'one-stop-shop' for advice on inclusion in the outdoors. The information shared in this section comes from first-hand experiences and experts, and is supported by research and current best practice. It isn't representative of ALL people's experiences or views. Instead, it offers a supportive and well-informed springboard for you continue your learning journey.

If you're an educator or outdoor practitioner, the information shared in this section will prepare you to deliver the lessons provided in Part B: 'A toolkit for change'.

Inclusive terminology in this resource

diverse range of people contributed to this resource. However, the main writers and editors are Pākehā and cisgender women (a cisgender person is someone whose gender matches the sex they were assigned at birth). Great care has been taken to ensure that this resource empowers and includes everyone. It is important to us that this resource doesn't reinforce cisnormativity (the privileging of cisgender people, by considering them the 'norm', while marginalising people who aren't cisgender). We also don't want to spread harmful views of sex, gender and menstruation. But what we know about gender, sex and sexuality is constantly evolving. This resource uses language that is best practice at the time of publishing. As the terminology evolves alongside the Rainbow community, some of the language used in this resource may no longer be accurate. If you spot something that isn't right, please get in touch and we'll revise it.



Part B: 'A toolkit for change'

The toolkit includes five lessons plans appropriate for ten- to fifteen-year-olds (students in Years 6-10). The lesson plans can also be adapted to suit different age groups and used by anyone working with young people in the outdoors, such as Scout and GirlGuiding leaders, outdoor instructors and sport coaches.



Each lesson includes:

- Interactive activities
- discussion starters
- links to engaging video content and additional resources.

These lessons will support you and your young people to:

- establish more inclusive practices
- ▶ show greater empathy for one another
- reduce barriers to outdoor participation.

The views and experiences of the youth you work with are vital to this learning journey. There is no single 'right way' to being inclusive.

The toolkit also provides specific advice and guidance about inclusive outdoor practices. Topics addressed include:

- holistic health and safety
- language and cultural considerations.

Video series

There is also a four-part video series to support Part A and Part B of this resource. The videos address some of the key topics covered in the resource, including information on period products, being a trans, intersex or gender-diverse person in the outdoors, ethnic perspectives of menstruation and ways to create change together. It is delivered in a youth-friendly and engaging way, so it's perfect to couple with the 'toolkit' lesson plans or to share with others to generate conversation.

Consider your own experiences and biases as you read and use this resource. Reflecting on your own history and influences is essential to recognising the ways you support or create barriers to inclusivity. This resource isn't just about getting vital information to young people, it's designed to shift outdoor practice. Young people need to participate in the rewriting of outdoor culture and practice, but the responsibility lies with adults to lead this change.





Menstruation myths, Uperceptions and stories

Menstruation in Aotearoa New Zealand



'I remember hearing stories when I was growing up about people who got their periods – it made me scared to get my own. There were lots of stories about leaking through pads and pool party disasters... getting your period was seen as a bad thing.' (Young Māori woman)

'Growing up, I never heard periods talked about in a positive way.' (Young Samoan/Pākehā woman)

In some cultures, menstruation is celebrated. For pre-colonial Māori, bleeding was an important monthly event, and its connections with whakapapa, history, creation stories and spirituality were openly discussed. Wāhine who were menstruating were considered precious and powerful because the menstrual blood represented the continuation of whānau whakapapa (genealogy). Menstruation was seen as a sacred process of purification and renewal and a time to rest and retreat from the demands of communal living.

A word cloud illustrating the different responses people have to menstruation.





These views were quite different to those held by colonial Pākehā. Young women living in Aotearoa New Zealand during the 1930s and 40s learned that having your period meant you were unwell or limited in some way. During the early twentieth century mothers were the main source of information about menstruation and were expected to pass their 'female knowledge' to their daughters. However, as many women didn't know much beyond their own experiences, young women often received messages that were vague or inaccurate. When period products became mass-produced rather than made at home, there was a shift in perception. Having your period was not as limiting, because disposable period products offered greater freedom. Even so, the messaging from companies often sent limiting and harmful ideas. In fact, in an advertisement, a company described their menstrual products as being the remedy for 'nature's handicap'¹! Imagine what message that sent to people who menstruate.



'Nature's handicap': This 1920s Kotex advertisement shows a nurse tending to a wounded soldier sitting in a wheelchair. The advertisement reads, '...although a woman's article, it started as Cellucotton – a wonderful sanitary absorbent which science perfected for use of our men and allied soldiers wounded in France'.'2

2 Eschner, K. (2017). The Surprising Origins of Kotex Pads. Smithsonian Magazine, August, 11. https://www.smithsonianmag. com/innovation/surprising-origins-kotexpads-180964466/









What's wrong with the term 'sanitary products'? Periods aren't dirty!

You won't find the phrase 'sanitary products' in this resource. The word sanitary relates to hygiene, and so needing 'sanitary products' to manage you period implies that periods are unclean in some way. We use the phrases 'menstrual products' or 'period products' instead.

For people who menstruate, finding safe and appropriate ways to manage your period is one part of the equation – dealing with other people's ideas and reactions to it is another. Often, people who menstruate feel like they have to hide their monthly bleed from others. This can mean they don't feel safe doing outdoor activities, which makes it harder for them to participate and enjoy the outdoors.

Periods in the outdoors

Being in nature can be a powerful and enjoyable experience, but it often means staying in remote places and away from the usual comforts of home, like toilets, running water and soap. This can make being on your period while in the outdoors tricky to manage, especially if you're new to having a period or recreating outdoors.

Some people experience other symptoms with their period, such as having low mood or energy, painful cramps or heavy bleeding. Recent research has shown that people's bodies respond differently to exercise according to what phase of their menstrual cycle they are in (and the

amount and type of hormones involved). One person might feel fantastic doing energetic movement while they're bleeding, while for others, being active might be really challenging. These differences can make it difficult to know how best to support others in the outdoors.

Common practical barriers include:

- ▶ having no or limited access to private toilets, which makes changing period products and maintaining personal hygiene challenging
- not knowing how to safely use or dispose of period products in the outdoors
- fears about pain or heavy periods and how to manage them
- having low energy/mood and not knowing how to deal with this during physical activities.

Being inclusive doesn't just mean considering practical things like toilets, the physicality of an activity or pain management. It is also about creating a safe and supportive group culture.



Common cultural barriers include:

- feeling alone and not having the support or understanding of their group
- misconceptions of periods, including views that it's dirty or limiting
- having their ethnic or religious practices about physical activity or menstruation not understood or accommodated for by their group.

Let's start by exploring what menstruation means to people of different ethnicities.





Menstruation beliefs and practices



Use of cultural language

In this section you may notice that we tend to refer to people who menstruate as 'girls' and 'women'. Using 'people who menstruate' is not always appropriate when describing ideas and experiences in different cultural and historical contexts. This goes against our earlier advice about using inclusive language. We encourage people of all cultures to work towards using inclusive language such as 'people who menstruate'.

Aotearoa New Zealand is home to people from all over the world, and we can see this in the increasing diversity of our schools, workplaces and outdoor recreation facilities.

Language can get in the way of communicating the values, stories and culture of different groups. Many words don't translate easily (or accurately) between languages, so people sometimes misinterpret, or disengage when new ideas are hard to understand.

As we learn about the menstruation norms that exist here in Aotearoa New Zealand, and where these come from, it's important to look at our indigenous history and knowledge, as well as consider how other cultures view menstruation. These perspectives can help to expand our thinking and can show us ways to be more inclusive.

Re: has produced a video series called First Blood, which explores how three women of different cultures feel about, celebrate, and manage their period. The series offers valuable insight into different views and practices of menstruation and is suitable for younger people.

This section offers insight into how different ethnic groups see and respond to menstruation. It is designed to get you thinking about a range of menstruation practices and to encourage safe and respectful conversations with folk who might have backgrounds and experiences different to your own.

Māori

Origins of menstruation

As indigenous people of Aotearoa New Zealand, Māori have a deep and intricate relationship with the earth (Papatūānuku). You can see this in Māori language and cultural practices. In many ways, pre-colonial Māori society was much more equal than what we experience today. Community was at the heart of life: whānau (family) and hapū (tribe/subtribe) took care of one another, and men, women and children were acknowledged and valued alongside each other as having equal mana and tapu.



Māori use several words to describe menstruation, with the most common being:

- **I** ikura
- awa atua
- waiwhero
- rerenga atua.

The word 'ikura' comes from 'mai-i-Kurawaka', which means from the 'red earth' at Kurawaka, the pubic area of Papatūānuku – Mother Earth³. 'Te awa atua' is another term used, which can be translated as 'the divine river'. Rerenga atua and te awa atua are traditional names that describe menstrual blood as a sacred medium that regenerates life and connects wāhine Māori to the gods and goddesses and their creation stories. All of these terms are positive and empowering and are being reclaimed by Māori whānau today.

This story, as told by the late Dr Rangimarie Pere (Ngāti Kahungunu, Ngāti Ruapani, Ngāti Tūhoe) to Dr Ngahuia Murphy in her book Te Awa Atua: Menstruation in the pre-colonial Māori world, is a Ngā Potiki Ngā Uri a Maui tribal version that shows how menstrual blood connects wāhine back to traditional deities:

Māui went to Hine-nui-te-po-te-ao and climbed up her thighs. The Tiwaiwaka (fantail) flitted right up to Māui and asked him what he was up to. Māui told the Tiwaiwaka that he wanted to go back into the womb where he was sure he could receive immortality. The Tiwaiwaka warned Māui about cutting across the natural laws, but Māui continued on his journey. The Tiwaiwaka woke the sleeping Hine-nui-te-po-te-ao up. Hine-nui-te-po-te-ao asked Māui what he was doing heading up to her groin and Māui told her about wanting to be like the Moon. Hine-nui-te-po-te-ao said she could grant Māui his wish but he was not to return to the womb; she then crushed him and made him the first menstruation to come into the world. As long as woman menstruates, Māui will live on.4

There are other versions of the origins of menstrual blood for Māori. All of them illustrate the strong connection that ikura has with whenua (land) and whakapapa (ancestry).

Watch: Super Special and Hinekura are two outstanding short films that celebrate Māori knowledge and experience of ikura.

³ Murphy, N. (2013). *Te Awa Atua: Menstruation in the Pre-Colonial Māori World.* He Puna Manawa Ltd.

⁴ Murphy. Te Awa Atua. p. 58



The sacred state of menstruation

Bleeding wāhine in Māori society are considered tapu. That means they are in a sacred state that requires thoughtfulness and care. For Māori, the blood represents life, death and the power of regeneration and renewal. Māori traditionally viewed ikura as a time to honour the ceremony of the regenerating womb by supporting wāhine to rest. Wāhine avoided certain activities or places while they were menstruating to ensure their (and others') tapu was maintained⁵.

... During mate mārama was that on the first day the woman would apply a tohi whakatapu (the principle of restriction) to herself, meaning she would abstain from working in the food gardens or gathering seafood at the beach. She would instead use the time to have a rest from what was a physically demanding lifestyle and go off to quiet spaces or only do light duties around the home. The key point was the restrictions were self-imposed in order to claim space for themselves and provide a welcome reprieve from the daily demands of community living.⁶

During ikura many whānau encouraged their wāhine to rest and collected special foods and plants that helped to increase vitality and reduce pain⁷, ⁸. Instead of the period products we are more familiar with today, natural material, like moss, was used. Ngahuia Murphy recommends that wāhine today consider how they can recreate ikura practices that empower them and reduce the impact on Papatūānuku, for example by using reusable period products such as cups or cloth pads.

Tohi whakatapu: Rituals and restrictions

People tend to have mixed reactions to getting their period for the first time. For some it's a special time, marking a significant life transition, while others dread its arrival. In traditional Māori society the first ikura was celebrated with gift-giving, karakia (prayer), ceremonial hair cutting, ear piercing, hākari (community feasts) and the taking of kauae moko (chin tattoos)⁹. Whānau members would pass their wisdom on to the young wahine to prepare her for her life journey ahead and support her to step into her power. Michele Wilson (Tainui, Ngāti Pāoa) says,

She [the young wahine] would be introduced to new arts, learn karakia and waiata. There would be a hākari, the community would get together



⁵ Hayden, L. (2019, April 17). Decolonise your body! The fascinating history of Māori and periods. In The Spinoff. https://thespinoff.co.nz/atea/17-04-2019/decolonising-your-body-maori-attitudes-to-periods/

⁶ Harker-Smith, M. (2016, February 29). Potent not pollutant: Exploring menstruation in the Māori world. *Native Daughter*. https://n8vdaughter.wordpress.com/2016/02/29/potent-not-pollutant-exploring-menstruation-in-the-maori-world/

⁷ Hayden, L. [2019, April 17]. Decolonise your body! The fascinating history of Māori and periods. In *The Spinoff*. https://thespinoff.co.nz/atea/17-04-2019/decolonising-your-body-maori-attitudes-to-periods/

⁸ Murphy, N. (2013). *Te Awa Atua: Menstruation in the Pre-Colonial Māori World*. He Puna Manawa Ltd.

⁹ Murphy. Te Awa Atua.

to share kai. And there would be a ceremonial bleeding onto the whenua as a gift to Papatūānuku.... Our tūpuna believed our waiwhero, our menstrual blood, carried our ancestors. Bleeding straight onto the land is our gift to the mother, to Papatūānuku. I know some wāhine that still do that today.¹⁰

A moss pad used to catch menstrual blood was buried and so given back to the earth. This was similar to the burying of the placenta (called the whenua, also meaning land). The ritual was done to reaffirm the connection between people and the land. In te ao Māori (the Māori world), women and the land are one, and together are the most important source of sustenance, as captured in the saying 'he wahine, he whenua'. Burying upheld the tapu of the blood and was a safe and respectful way to dispose of the pad. All of these ikura rituals celebrate new life and life yet to come.

Ngahuia Murphy¹¹ offers some ideas of how the arrival of ikura might be celebrated today:

- Put on a whānau hākari (feast).
- Gift pounamu or special jewellery or taonga.
- Prepare a special bath with essential oils and a red candle.
- ▶ Bury the first blood back to Papatūanuku and plant a tree on top sing a waiata, perform an appropriate karakia, or compose your own karakia.

Tikanga can vary between iwi and hapū. While the values that underpin tikanga stay the same, tikanga itself is fluid – it can change over time in different situations and contexts. We've given you some basic insight into Māori knowledge of menstruation, but you shouldn't assume these stories and practices will be relevant without having a conversation with the Māori you interact with. It is also important to remember that ideas about menstruation have been hugely impacted by colonisation and Christianity. This means that some Māori whānau may be unfamiliar with traditional menstruation customs.

While traditionally, ikura was talked about openly as a celebratory symbol of life, many Māori today feel whakamā (shame and embarrassment) about their periods. This is often because from the time Aotearoa New Zealand was colonised, Māori femininity and menstruation practices have been seen as inferior to Pākehā norms. There are people trying to revive Māori menstruation beliefs and rituals as a way to reclaim Māori culture, but it can't be assumed that all Māori will be familiar with customary tikanga. Use sensitivity and care when talking with Māori about ikura, not only because of the sensitivity of the subject but because blood is tapu.

¹⁰ Hayden, (2019). Decolonise your body! In *The Spinoff*.

¹¹ Murphy, N. (2014). Waiwhero: The Red Waters. A Celebration of Womanhood. He Puna Manawa Ltd.





So how do you say 'menstruation' or 'period' in...?

Samoan – ma'i masina

Tokelauan – ma'i masina (pronounced 'mahina')

Tongan – puke fakamāhina

Fijian – mate ni vula

Cook Islands Māori (Rarotongan) – maro toto vaine

Tuvaluan – masaki fakafafine

Niuean – gagao manavafifine

Pacific peoples

In this resource we use the term 'Pacific peoples', 'people' and 'cultures' instead of other commonly used phrases such as Pasifika or Pacific Islanders. While 'Pasifika' has been used extensively in the past, it has often led to Pacific peoples being grouped as one and the same, when there are many differences between them. Here we use Pacific peoples to refer to communities from Polynesia, Melanesia, and Micronesia.

Over 65% of Pacific people that live in Aotearoa were born here. The most common countries-of-origin of Pacific people living in Aotearoa New Zealand are¹²:

- Samoa
- the Cook Islands
- Tonga
- Niue

- Fiji
- Tokelau
- Tuvalu
- Kiribati

While Pacific peoples come from the same global region, their cultures are diverse. It's important to remember this when working with Pacific people. Don't assume that someone from Fiji will have the same views, practices and experiences of menstruation as a person from Niue! Take the time to get to know the practices and values of the individuals you are working with.

Family and religion are significant for many Pacific peoples and, like the Māori concept of whakapapa, Pacific cultures have strong connections with ancestry. This means that a person's behaviours not only reflect their own identity and values, but their family's as well. This has a big impact on how sexuality is taught and practiced in each community. Sexuality and gender in most Pacific Island countries are private and sacred topics. Conversations about sexuality must happen with a high level of respect.

Because there are cultural restrictions on what is acceptable and polite, and because of other aligned Pacific values such as respecting vā (relational space), some may think that sexual health and sexuality are forbidden subjects.... discussing such issues in an open and frank manner may be very difficult... [and] can place considerable strain on young people, who may have issues that they want to talk about but are unsure of how to approach this subject or are uncomfortable talking about it.¹⁴

These views can mean that Pacific youth may not have easy access to information



¹³ Ministry of Education. (2020). Relationship and sexuality education: A guide for teachers, leaders, and boards of trustees, Years 9–13. Lift Education, p. 42.

¹⁴ Ministry of Education. Relationship and sexuality education, Years 9–13.

about menstruation or how to manage having a period in the outdoors. It is important to keep offering them opportunities to discuss any concerns they have about getting their period while in the outdoors. Support them to learn about a range of management strategies so they can find out which strategies feel best for them.

'I think it would be really beneficial for more Pasifika families to open up the conversation about menstruation with their children, so they're not going through it alone. Having someone talk to Pasifika parents, or coming together as a bigger family to talk about it might help to reduce the stigma and privacy of menstruation.' (Young Samoan/Pākehā woman)



Many Pacific people believe that when a girl first gets her period, she becomes a woman, and with that comes more family responsibilities. ¹⁵ Some Pacific Island nations celebrate the arrival of the first period. In pre-contact Tonga, a feast would be held to recognise this important life transition. ¹⁶ This was common practice until the mid-1990s. Some Fijian communities still have specific ceremonies to mark a girl's first bleed. ¹⁷

Although menstruation is generally considered to be a normal bodily function, it tends to be hidden within the community. Menstrual blood is often viewed as dirty or unclean, particularly within Fijian culture. This can make it difficult for people who menstruate to get the support and products they need. Many menstruating girls comment that it's really important to them to maintain high levels of hygiene. ¹⁸ Keep this in mind when working with Pacific youth in the outdoors, particularly in remote locations where keeping clean is more challenging. Of course, it's not just Pacific people who share these concerns.

Practices for menstruating people vary between each Pacific nation. It is not uncommon to rest more during menstruation. Some communities also limit those menstruating from entering sacred spaces (such as temples or Churches for Indo-Fijians).¹⁹

Eastern and Asian peoples

In the past decade, there has been significantly more people from Asia and Eastern countries settling in Aotearoa New Zealand, including people from China, India, The Philippines and Iraq. There are many cultural differences between these countries. Take the time to understand the specific needs and perspectives of the people you are



¹⁵ Huggett, et al. (2017). The Last Taboo: Formative Research to Inform Menstrual Hygiene Management Interventions in the Pacific. In Water and Health Conference.

¹⁶ Visitor Facts for visiting in Vava'u Islands, Tonga. (n.d.) Vavau.to.. http://www.vavau.to/culture.html

¹⁷ Ministry of Education. (2020). Relationship and sexuality education: A guide for teachers, leaders, and boards of trustees, Years 9-13. Lift Education, p. 42.

¹⁸ Huggett, et al. (2017). The Last Taboo: Formative Research to Inform Menstrual Hygiene Management Interventions in the Pacific. In Water and Health Conference.

¹⁹ Hugget, et al. The Last Taboo.



working with.

'In Mali and the Democratic Republic of the Congo, most of my female employees (at the United Nations Mine Action Service) were severely affected during their period. Often, they would take sick days and refuse to travel when they were expecting their period. Most of them used homemade pads made of cotton. While the unmarried women were under cultural restrictions regarding tampons and menstrual cups the older women were not. Knowing they could not afford tampons I purchased menstrual cups and had a female only session where we discussed their use, benefits and downsides. The majority of the married women tried them, and the feedback was overwhelmingly positive. Some struggled with leakage, so they were given different brands and eventually found ones that worked for them. There was a major change in the women. Sick leave reduced and they were willing to go into the field when required.' (Adult Pākehā woman)

In communities that practise Hinduism, the first period is a positive event in a girl's life. In Southern India many young women receive gifts and celebrate the occasion with a feast or gathering of friends and family. From this point forward, there are restrictions placed on girls and women while they have their period. Menstruation is considered a time of purification, and this must be protected by avoiding certain activities, such as cooking, entering a temple and praying.²⁰

Like Hinduism, Islam restricts menstruating girls and women from praying with others, going to mosques and fasting. This means that if it is Ramadan, many will continue to eat (in private, so few people will know they are on their period). There are mixed views about this, and some people will continue to fast while on their period.²¹

In some Muslim-majority countries, people believe that during menstruation a person should stay at home and rest. Swimming, particularly in a pool, and washing while menstruating are generally no-gos in Muslim culture. Where this practice comes from is not clear but it appears to be based on perceptions passed down through generations rather than religious rules or teaching. However, this practice is more common for those who grew up in Eastern countries, and some people still choose to shower on their period.²²

In many Eastern cultures, girls and woman will discuss menstruation with each other although conversations tend to focus on practical things, like how to manage pain and



²⁰ Dunnavant, N. & Roberts, T.A. (2012). Restriction and Renewal, Pollution and Power, Constraint and Community: The Paradoxes of Religious Women's Experiences of Menstruation. Sex Roles, 68(1). 121–131. https://doi.org/10.1007/s11199-012-0132-8

²¹ Selby, D. [2018, May 30]. Muslim Women Are Over Period Shaming During Ramadan. Global Citizen. https://www.globalcitizen.org/en/content/period-shame-ramadan-twitter-menstruation/

²² Anonymous. (2021, January 21). Personal communication

maintain good iron levels, or how frequently pads might need to be changed.²³ Menstruation is still generally hidden from public life and conversation.

Although information about periods and period products is available on the internet, the depth and quality of education on this topic is is varied. Homemade cloth pads or single-use pads are the most used period product, particularly by unmarried girls and women. This is partially because many people are concerned that using a tampon will break their hymen, signifying a loss of virginity.

Tampons are uncommon and, in some countries, very difficult to purchase. This means many girls and woman may not want to participate in certain physical activities, especially those involving water, during their period. Consider this when planning water-based activities.

While younger generations are more accepting, most Muslims, particularly those who have grown up in Eastern countries, tend to have conservative views regarding intersex, trans and gender-diverse identities and people. It is less common for Asian and Middle Eastern families to discuss gender and sexuality differences, as it is a very sensitive topic.²⁴ When talking about sensitive topics, get to know the beliefs and attitudes of the young people you're working with so you can offer more informed support

Can a tampon 'take' your virginity?

While it's possible for your hymen to stretch and tear due to a tampon, it can't cause you to lose your virginity. However, people from some cultures still use 'virginity tests' that examine the hymen to see if its intact.



²⁴ Dunnavant, N. & Roberts, T-A. (2012). Restriction and Renewal, Pollution and Power, Constraint and Community: The Paradoxes of Religious Women's Experiences of Menstruation. Sex Roles, 68, 121–131. https://doi.org/10.1007/s11199-012-0132-8



²³ Ren, Y. (2016, August 27). Why Chinese women don't use tampons. The Guardian. https://www.theguardian.com/lifeandstyle/womens-blog/2016/aug/27/why-chinese-women-dont-use-tampons



Supporting gender diversity and variation of sex characteristics

All people, no matter their sex characteristics or how they express gender, should be welcomed and supported in the outdoors. In this section, we address what these terms mean, discuss the common barriers facing gender diverse, trans and intersex people, and look at things we can do to create considerate and effective inclusive outdoor spaces and practices.

Although we've come a long way in gender equity, it's important to continue to challenge harmful assumptions about who can enjoy the outdoors and how. Celebrating gender diversity means including people who don't identify as being a man or woman, who may be non-binary or have culturally specific genders, or who don't identify with their biological sex or assigned gender.

So why are we talking about trans, gender diverse and intersex people in a resource about menstruation? Well, if you're thinking that girls and women are the only ones who menstruate, you'd be wrong! Just because a person may look like a woman, does not mean they menstruate. Likewise, people who present as male may also get their period. You cannot tell if a person menstruates by the way they look.

Although we've come a long way in gender equity, it's important to continue to challenge harmful assumptions about who can enjoy the outdoors and how. Celebrating gender diversity means including people who don't identify as being a man or woman, who may be non-binary or have culturally specific genders, or who don't identify with their biological sex or assigned gender.

'I eventually lied and told my friends at high school that I got my period because I was the only one left that hadn't and I felt very confused and left out. Sex education at my school was extremely binary and limited so when it became clear in my second to last year in high school that there was something different about my body, it was easier for the doctors to convince me that it needed changing. The invasive surgeries I experienced in an attempt to make my body seem normal left me incontinent while still at high school. I had to quit all my sports teams after accidentally urinating in front of a large group of my school members during a fun tug of war game in physical education class.... The last year of school meant I couldn't

engage in many things I used to, and I became withdrawn.'

(Pākehā intersex adult)





Respectful conversations

We use the terms **transgender**, **intersex** and **gender diverse** in this resource. That's because these three terms are most commonly recognised and used by people who identify with them. However, folk may use different words to describe their own identity. It's best to ask people if you're unsure. For example, you can start the conversation by respectfully sharing your own pronouns and asking the group you are with to do the same.

<u>MyPronouns.org</u> is an online resource that provides information about the use of personal pronouns in the English language.

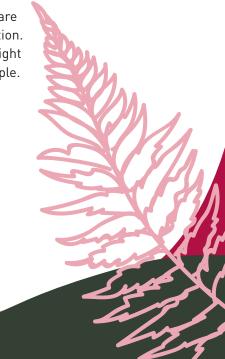
Two other terms that are commonly used to describe this community are Rainbow and LGBTQIA+. 'Rainbow' is an umbrella term that describes the wider spectrums of genders, sexualities and sex characteristics. The acronym 'LGBTQIA+' which stands for lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer, intersex, asexual and other genders and sexualities, is also a common umbrella term.

LGBT, takatāpui, fa'a fafine, gender-fluid and non-binary are some more of the words that describe people who have sexual orientations, gender identities or sex characteristics that are non-typical in **heteronormative culture**. (Heteronormative means the dominant view is that heterosexuality is the 'default' or preferred sexual orientation – people often think heteronormatively without even being aware of it.) Our knowledge of sex, sexuality and gender is ever-evolving, and while it might take time to get your head around, it's important to understand what's shared and what's unique for each of these groups of people.

As with our previous section, which looked at different ethnic practices and perceptions of menstruation, the same recommendations apply here:

- Don't assume anything.
- ▶ The best people to learn from are those who can speak from personal experience.

That last point comes with an important BUT... People in the Rainbow community are all different and will have experienced varying levels of support and/or discrimination. Some people might be happy to talk to you about their experiences, while some might not. Be respectful in your interactions with trans, gender diverse and intersex people. While learning about their experience is valuable, doing so is a privilege, not an expectation.





Transgender, gender diverse and intersex

The terms transgender (trans for short), gender diverse and intersex are often confused. Let's start by breaking down what they mean.

What do 'sex' and 'gender' mean?

- **Sex** is an overarching concept that may refer to the sex recorded at a person's birth, as well as other aspects such as a person's sex characteristics.
- **Sex at birth** is the sex recorded at a person's birth (i.e., what was written on their birth certificate). This might also be called sex assigned at birth.
- **Sex characteristics** describes a person's physical features relating to sex, including genitalia and other sexual and reproductive anatomy, chromosomes, hormones and secondary physical features emerging from puberty.
- ▶ Variations in sex characteristics (VSC) refers to people with innate genetic, hormonal, or physical sex characteristics that don't always fit medical norms or social stereotypes of female or male bodies. It can include a wide spectrum of variations in genitals, hormones, chromosomes, and/or reproductive organs. People with VSC can also be described as intersex, having an intersex variation or having Differences of Sex Development (DSD). Intersexuality is explored in more depth below.
- Gender refers to a person's identity as male, female or otherwise. This may include the gender that a person internally feels ('gender identity') and/or the gender a person publicly expresses ('gender expression') in their daily life. A person's current gender may be different from the sex recorded at their birth and from what is written on their current legal documents. Gender can change over time. Some people may not identify with any gender. Many indigenous concepts of gender are not as limited as Western cultural norms.

Intersex/ngā rerekētanga āhuatanga a-ira

Intersex/ngā rerekētanga āhuatanga a-ira is an umbrella term used to describe people who are born with variations of sex characteristics (see above). Currently, there are over forty variations! Around 1.7% of people in Aotearoa New Zealand are intersex – that's roughly the same number of people who have red hair. ²⁵ Intersex people are and can be female, male, trans or non-binary (see below for an explanation of the term 'non-binary').

These sex characteristic variations can challenge assumptions of who and how people menstruate. For example:



²⁵ Sidoti, C. & Byrne, A. (2016). Promoting and protecting human rights in relation to sexual orientation, gender identity and sex characteristics: A manual for national human rights institutions. *Asia Pacific Forum.* p.65.

- Some intersex variations may mean that person menstruates internally, or not at all.
- ▶ Some variations are revealed during puberty when people don't appear to 'develop' as expected and their bodies may go through changes at this time that are different to their peers.
- Only people with a functioning uterus can menstruate. Some intersex variations mean that you can be born without a uterus. People may have ovaries but not get their period.
- Some intersex young people may have/will receive medical interventions (surgery or hormone replacement therapy).

Endosex is the term for someone who is not intersex.

Basically, this means you can't guess who does and doesn't menstruate based on the way they look. The experience of having a period can vary a lot from person to person. Remember there is no 'normal', only what is normal for your own body.

Transgender/irawhiti

Some people feel the sex they were assigned at birth is correct. This is called being 'cisgender'. However, other people feel their assigned sex is incorrect. This is called being 'transgender'.

Irawhiti/transgender is an umbrella term for people whose gender identity and/or gender expression differs from the sex they were assigned at birth. People under the transgender umbrella may describe themselves as 'transgender', or they may prefer other terms. Some people who fit this definition may not consider themselves to be transgender. Make sure you use the descriptive term that each person prefers.

Some transgender people choose to have medical procedures or take prescribed hormones to align their physical sex characteristics with their gender identity. However, others choose to represent their gender identity in other ways, such as through their clothing and behaviour. There are multiple ways to be transgender – celebrating diversity is fundamental to the trans community. The term transgender doesn't indicate a person's sexual orientation, hormonal makeup, physical anatomy or how they are perceived by others.

Gender-diverse/irahuhua and non-binary

Gender diversity (**irahuhua**) is about acknowledging a range of genders in addition to male and female. A term often used to describe people who are neither male nor female is **non-binary** (**ira weherua-kore**).

It can be helpful to think of an alphabet when describing different genders. Male and female represent only two letters in the alphabet. Defining non-binary genders is like defining all the other letters of the alphabet, in every language. Genders are so many and varied across different cultures and throughout history.

Some people have a consistent gender throughout their life, and for other people their gender changes. Some of the words that people might use to define or describe their gender, include aikāne, akava'ine, fa'afafine, faa'atama, fakafifine, fakaleiti, genderqueer, intersex, māhū, non-binary, palopa, takatāpui, tangata ira tāne, trans, transgender, transsexual, and whakawahine.²⁶

People who are gender diverse often express their identity differently to what society has taught us to be 'typical' behaviour for men and women. In fact, some people don't identify with any gender (**agender**) – the way they see it, they're just a person who can behave and express themselves in a range of ways. Being different from what is socially acceptable can be tough and people who challenge these norms, like folk from the Rainbow (LGBTQIA+) community, can often face discrimination.

Takatāpui

Traditional Māori concepts of gender and sexuality are much more inclusive and fluid. Although colonisation was incredibly damaging to this inclusive sexual culture, many Māori continue to respect and celebrate those who are Takatāpui.

Takatāpui is a traditional Māori word that literally translated means 'intimate friend of the same sex'. It has since been embraced to encompass all Maori who identify with diverse genders, sexes and sexualities. Takatāpui denotes a spiritual and cultural connection to the past. This term is best understood within its cultural context and may mean something different to each individual.²⁷

Third gender

Samoan, Tongan and Cook Island cultures recognise that gender may be expressed in alternate or fluid ways. For example,

Fa'afafine (Samoa), fakaleitī (Tonga), and 'akava'ine (Cook Islands) are

²⁶ Understanding gender diversity. (2019, November 6). Health Navigator New Zealand. https://www.healthnavigator.org.nz/health-a-z/g/gender-diversity/

²⁷ Terminology handout: Sex, gender, sexuality & other key terms. (n.d). InsideOUT

all terms used to describe the traditional gender identities of males who identify themselves as having the spirit of a woman or as behaving like a female. It is important to recognise that these terms describe gender roles unique to the Pacific and do not fit neatly into western categories.²⁸

Rainbow Youth and the Tīwhanawhana Trust have produced *Takatāpui Resource Hub*, which offers information and support for Takatāpui and their whānau.

For more information about the terms we've introduced in this section (and many others, including in te reo Māori), we recommend checking out *Glossary: Trans 101* by Gender Minorities Aotearoa. Another excellent resource on this topic is *Making Schools Safer: A practical resource for schools on supporting transgender, gender diverse, and intersex students in Aotearoa*, produced by InsideOUT.

CORE Education has published a research report called *Ko tātou tēnei | This is us*, which highlights the experiences of rangatahi takatāpui (transgender Māori youth). The report includes the stories of five rangatahi, as well as reflective questions for teachers, whānau and rainbow allies.

Key Terms

- Transgender (trans): An umbrella term for people whose gender identity and/or gender expression differs from what is typically associated with the gender/sex they were assigned at birth. E.g., a person born with male genitalia may identify as a woman.²⁹
- Intersex: An umbrella term that describes people who have or are born with variations in sex characteristics such as chromosomes, gonads, reproductive organs and hormones, resulting in bodies that don't always fit within normative medical/social understandings of male or female.³⁰
- Gender diverse: A term for a diverse range of gender identities, including culturally specific ones. This term especially relates to those whose gender identities are outside of the binary of men and women, but who may or may not use the term 'transgender' or 'trans' to describe themselves.³¹
- Non-binary: Describes all genders other than woman/girl or man/boy, or the rejection of gender entirely.³²

²⁹ New Zealand's population reflects growing diversity. Stats NZ.

³⁰ New Zealand's population reflects growing diversity. Stats NZ.

³¹ New Zealand's population reflects growing diversity. Stats NZ.

³² New Zealand's population reflects growing diversity. Stats NZ.



We know that teachers and outdoor leaders are passionate about making education and the outdoors accessible and safe for everyone. However, for some young people the topics discussed in this resource carry risk and trauma. Addressing inequities must be done in ways that are sensitive to the wellbeing of these young people and avoid singling them out.

Celebrating bodily diversity

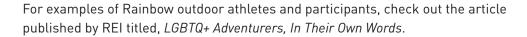
People's relationships with their bodies are complex and changeable. Some folk in the Rainbow community may experience positive or normative relationships with their bodies, and some might feel disconnected from their bodies. This disconnection or discomfort is often called body dysmorphia, which is when a person experiences conflict between their assigned gender or their body, and their sense of self. This can make talking about their bodies or doing physical activities difficult. Often people experience body dysmorphia because they feel at odds with how society expects their body to be. But for some people, body dysmorphia comes from their own sense of self. Remember that it is OK to feel this way.

Just as people have different relationships with their bodies, we also have different responses to menstruation. This is particularly true for trans and intersex people. For some, it can cause dysphoria or distress, as it's a reminder of having a body they may feel uneasy in. Language is important when talking about menstruation as it can often be gendered, so try to talk about it as neutrally as possible. Statements that assume only cisgender women (women who were assigned 'female' at birth and more or less identify that way) menstruate can exclude trans people.

Using the words 'menstruation' or 'period' can make trans people feel uncomfortable or disconnected with their own body, so some trans and intersex folk prefer to make up names like 'shark week' to make it easier to talk about. Be open to the different ways people describe menstruation.

Safe outdoor learning environments start with educators and outdoor practitioners. Think about what messages you send to people about their bodies when giving activity briefings or instructions. Do these messages encourage participants to develop positive and realistic relationships with their bodies? Not all bodies are the same, and that is a positive thing. Normalising variations in gender and sex characteristics before their bodies start to change sets the stage for young people to feel empowered and included when those changes do happen.





The more we all know and understand about bodily diversity the better.

How to support and celebrate bodily diversity:

- ▶ Encourage less body policing and more body celebration. **Body policing** is enforcing limiting norms about the ways people look or how they use their body. For example, it might look like 'fat shaming' or expressing narrow views about the types of people who participate in certain activities (such as rock climbing or dancing) based on the way they look.
- Support participants and colleagues to adopt a culture of self-awareness and acceptance. Recognise and celebrate when people show self-compassion and respect.
- ▶ Think about how you discuss difference and the idea of 'norms'.
- ▶ Recognise that physical activity can create real barriers for intersex and trans people. This is especially true for people who feel excluded by the activity being talked about in a gendered way.
- Listen to what your participants' needs are and adapt your practice accordingly.
- Consider the language you use when referring to participants and activities. Does that language reflect all participants? See the image below for some fantastic alternatives to use when addressing groups of people.





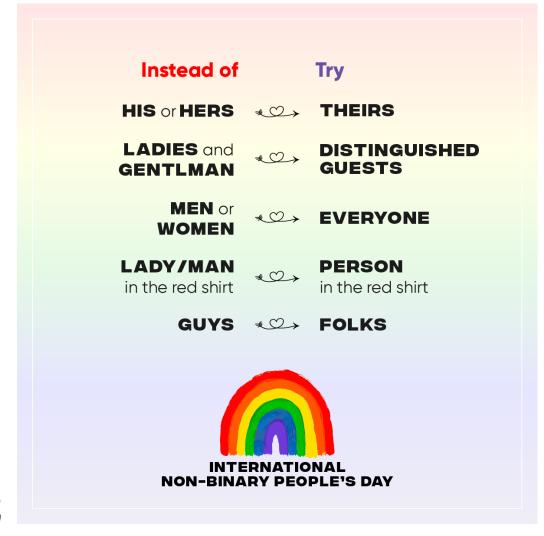


Image: Edith Cowan University (2020)

If you are working with an **identified** transgender or intersex student, here are some suggested good practices from the National Outdoor Leadership School (NOLS):

- Ask their pronouns. In some situations, after first talking with the trans or intersex individual, you might want to start with a group introduction circle. Have the leader/teacher go first, so they can set the tone and demonstrate ways to do this appropriately (i.e., 'My name is Kory, I am from Rotorua. Today I'll use the pronouns she and her. I got this scar on my arm when a seagull stole a sandwich from my hand while I was eating it'). Ideally, offer participants the option to include their pronouns, rather than make it mandatory.
- Use their pronouns correctly. Like saying a person's name correctly, using pronouns properly is a sign of respect. If you make a mistake (it's likely to happen at some point), offer a short but genuine apology and work hard to get it right next time. It's far better to do this than ignore your mistake or over-apologise.

- Confirm the student's level of privacy (i.e., who knows, and who are they comfortable knowing). Support the participant and don't misgender or 'out' them if they want to keep it private.
- If you haven't met the participant before the experience, ask if they want to connect with you/their educator/leader beforehand. This can help to make them feel more comfortable and prevent any awkward introductions.
- If students are comfortable talking with you about their needs, ask them if there are any activities that may be uncomfortable for them or require a sensitive approach. Decide on how to manage these together. For example, wetsuits may be able to be worn a size larger than normal. When working with groups in general, whether there are trans, gender diverse or intersex people present, it can be helpful to let the group know if there are going to be activities that may make it harder for them to maintain their privacy, like activities with specialist equipment (rock climbing harnesses, or wetsuits). Work with the group to find ways to manage these situations so everyone can feel safe and supported.
- Menstruation is a personal matter. Be respectful and don't ask people if they menstruate. Instead focus on creating a safe group culture, where everyone feels comfortable to disclose this publicly or privately if they want to.

Inclusive language

We know that girls and women can be resilient and strong and show leadership. We also know that boys and men can be nurturing, compassionate and flexible. But even more importantly, we know that anyone can be these things if they want to be – these traits and behaviours are not reliant on your biological sex or gender identity. It's time we threw away these limiting stereotypes and embraced inclusive language.

Start by becoming aware of the language you use. Who does it refer to, include or exclude, and in what ways? What messages does this language send? Use visual images and stories that include gender and sex-characteristic diverse people. For example, pictures of people not fitting gender norms, or signs showing 'All Genders Welcome' in classrooms. InsideOUT have a range of great range of inclusive posters on their website (see Appendix A). Using inclusive language can help to change what and who is 'normal', seen and valued.

Practical considerations

Understandably, intersex youth often have fears of being 'outed' during sports and physical activity and may want to avoid changing rooms. Because of this, it's really important to provide safe, inclusive and private spaces for ALL young people to use. This might mean:

- ▶ Providing gender neutral toilets and changing areas.
- ▶ Supplying menstrual products in male toilets. Trans masculine people (folk who were assigned female at birth but whose gender identity and/or expression is masculine)



might feel most comfortable using male spaces but still need somewhere to dispose of period products.

- ▶ Explaining to ALL students (in a simple and casual way, if possible) why these facilities are important.
- Making it clear that students are responsible for maintaining respectful attitudes within these spaces.

When in the outdoors, it's even more important that people have the ability to maintain their privacy when toileting or changing. Before an experience, talk about what toileting facilities are available and where to find them. If facilities are limited (for example, if you're on a remote tramp), explain how people can find privacy during a trip, and share a range of toileting and menstrual management techniques that can help participants have more control over their experience. It's important to support people's desire for personal space during toileting/changing situations. For example, you could arrange for them to discreetly shower at a different time to the rest of the group. If it is unsafe for someone to leave a group to go to the toilet, explain this and identify when the next opportunity will be for them to have some privacy.

Discuss toileting, hygiene and menstruation care and management with the entire group as you may have people who are menstruating that you are unaware of. Talking about it openly helps to develop an inclusive group culture, where privacy, care and respect for difference becomes the norm. For example, leaders at a USA outdoor programme for intersex youth³³ use language that includes all genders, for example 'squat when you pee, or if you happen to bleed during a trip'. They suggest focusing on the bodily function itself, rather than the person experiencing it, so use the phrase 'if you experience [this bodily function], here's what to do'.

However, it is also important to provide space for menstruating people to talk together about their period, away from the rest of the group. This may feel safer and more comfortable for some people. Also remember that in some cultures, talking about menstruation with men is uncommon and can be inappropriate. Where possible, have a mixed-gender staffing team so people can speak to whomever they feel most comfortable with. To understand how best to support your students, you may also want to ask them to complete an anonymous survey before speaking to the group about menstruation or delivering the unit provided in Part B: 'A toolkit for change'

Here is a great example from National Outdoor Leadership School (NOLS) of a gender-inclusive hygiene talk for outdoor participants: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Ec7 nabLq1VI&feature=youtu.be



³³ Walker, R. (2018, November 24). How outdoor programs are empowering transgender youth. *Outside*. https://www.outsideonline.com/2366971/how-outdoor-programs-are-empowering-transgender-youth

It's very common for camp facilities and outdoor centres to have shared bunkrooms. Many schools and youth groups struggle to decide how best to respond to bunkroom set-ups when they have a known intersex, trans or gender diverse student in the group. Often, concerns about how the other students (and their parents) will respond is at front of mind for schools, rather than focusing on the wellbeing and safety of the student in question.

When including gender-diverse or intersex students in bunk-room set-ups:

- ▶ Your decision should be led by the transgender/intersex person's comfort levels with the proposed sleeping arrangements.
- If participants are separated based on gender, the transgender/intersex student should be able to choose to share a room/tent with people who match their gender identity. Make sure they are paired with a friend or person they feel comfortable with.
- In some cases, a transgender or intersex student may want a room with fewer people or to have alterative arrangements suggested by their family. Make adjustments wherever possible but be aware of how these may be perceived by others, and be proactive in addressing concerns.
- In some cases, parents of cis-gender participants may have concerns about a transgender/intersex student sharing a room with their child. It is important to remember that the transgender/intersex person is much more likely to experience harassment and exclusion than any risk they pose to their peers. The school and/or outdoor organisation has an obligation to maintain the student's privacy and cannot disclose their transgender/intersex status to other students or parents or require them to disclose it if the student has not already done so.

Check out the fantastic resource, *Non-Binary Inclusion in Sport*, published by LEAP Sport (Scotland). It includes case studies of non-binary people's experiences in sport and offers tips on how to be a non-binary ally.

https://leapsports.org/files/4225-Non-Binary%20Inclusion%20in%20sport%20Booklet.pdf



Period management: Tools and strategies

In this section of the resource, we'll tell you about a range of menstrual care strategies and products that can be used in the outdoors.

If you work with young people, please share this information with them and their whānau, regardless of the student's gender. Doing so will help to create greater awareness of menstruation and grow a 'wrap around' support network for people who menstruate. Remember that some people will feel more comfortable using some strategies and products than others for cultural, bodily or environmental reasons. When sharing menstrual health information, make sure to take a non-judgemental approach. While people might prefer to use products that are more environmentally friendly, they might also be limited in what they can use for anatomical, religious or cultural reasons. Share what options are available and trust that each person will make the decision that's best for them.

'I remember when we went on camp, and I got my period as soon as we arrived. We had to go kayaking for the whole day and I just had one tampon and I had to leak everywhere because there were no bathrooms around. It wasn't really manageable for me. There wasn't anywhere I could access to change... We had male instructors and it was quite hard to communicate what was going on.' (Young Samoan/Pākehā woman)

'I've found that managing my period well is about finding solutions that work for me – sometimes by discussing strategies with others, but mostly trying different approaches depending on what I was doing. Taking my time also helps, especially when I did the Appalachian Trail (a long-distance hike in America). I wouldn't hurry to the next location, or I would get up earlier to give myself more time, or have a rest day.' (Adult Pākehā woman)

If you're an educator or outdoor practitioner, check out the 'Information for Educators' section on page 81, as well as Part B (the toolkit) of this resource for ideas and suggestions on how to speak with your participants about these strategies.

Hygiene, environmental impact and pain management

Knowing you're prepared to manage your period, even if you're not expecting it, can help to reduce common 'outdoor period fears'.

Some people have not had many opportunities to learn about menstruation and are anxious about getting their period in the outdoors. That's why it's critical for educators and outdoor practitioners to speak with their participants about period management. Don't assume people already have this information; some will, but most won't, and it may be one of the only opportunities they have to receive well-informed advice.

'We were rock climbing and I was on my period. I was thinking "I'm going to be wearing leggings, I don't want to wear a pad", so I decided to use a tampon for the first time. I had no idea of how tampons work, and whether it would be ok when rock climbing, because there is a lot of tensing your abs and stuff. I was thinking will it just be pushed out?! Literally the night before I was on my laptop frantically Googling in the early hours trying to find out what I was going to do.... I was so nervous and uncomfortable the whole day. I just wish someone would tell us about that before outdoor activities – just recommendations from people who have experience – because that was so intense, and it didn't need to be.' (Young Fijian woman)

'In 2014 I did the Te Araroa Trail, 3,000km tramp from Cape Reinga to Bluff. I was researching lightweight gear and started to hear discussions about menstrual cups. I had never heard of them before. I purchased one a few months before the walk and tried it out and was amazed at how good it was. I now didn't need to worry about carrying and disposing of tampons and was able to go longer between needing to empty it than between changing tampons. I wish I had been told about this as a young woman when I first got my period. The money I would have saved would have been a fantastic bonus to the ease and convenience of using the menstrual cup. I did get a little leakage occasionally, maybe once per period but when I changed brands this stopped.' (Adult Pākeha woman)

During long expeditions, or in new environments, a person's menstrual cycle may change. For example, they may get their period when they're not expecting it, or the length or volume/flow of their bleed may change. If you are working with people on longer trips in the outdoors, it's best to talk about these possible changes with everyone early on, so if it happens, they know it's reasonably common. Encourage open communication so if a person does notice a change that is concerning them, they can safely to talk to someone about it.

Ways to maintain hygiene

'During my officer training in the Army I was approached by a male instructor and asked to have a word with one of the females in the other platoon, as there had been several complaints that she was smelling. I felt





really bad that people had been discussing her and no one was mature enough to speak with her. I talked with her and was brutally honest with her about what I was told. She was incredibly embarrassed. She had gotten her period unexpectedly and had no menstrual products. She had been trying to make pads with toilet paper, but this was in short supply and she had run out. She was now using her spare pair of socks. She had already changed and was wearing her one spare pair of undies and had not had any opportunity to wash herself, her undies or her temporary pad. I gave her a tampon for immediate control and went back to the instructor and said she needed to be taken out of the field so she had a chance to shower, wash her clothes and get some menstrual products. Once the exercise was over, I spoke to the one female instructor and made some suggestions. This resulted in a session with all the females where the female instructor gave a talk about how to manage your period and what to do if you were having issues. This became a standard session in the following courses.' (Adult Pākehā woman)

During their period, people are often much more aware of their personal hygiene. Some people prefer to shower several times a day. Obviously, this is much more challenging when you're in the outdoors as access to showering facilities are often limited. However, don't assume that someone who has their period will want to wash in a river or lake.

In certain cultures, including for many Māori people, swimming while menstruating is not commonly practiced. Sometimes it is not culturally appropriate for Māori who are menstruating to get in the water, while other times it is appropriate. This decision depends on factors like the person's whakapapa, as well as the swimming location, context and whether it is sea water or fresh water. It is important that Māori trust their own intuition regarding what they do and don't do when menstruating, to ensure they maintain their own tapu. Uphold and respect their decision.

The most common technique used in the outdoors by people wanting to 'freshen up', including folk who are menstruating, is to have a 'splash wash' (splashing water on your body to clean it) or to use personal hygiene wipes, especially when water is scarce. Be aware that not all wipes are suitable to use on genitals and some can cause irritation or increase the chances of developing an infection, especially if used for long periods of time. Wipes, even if they say they are biodegradable, cannot be flushed down the toilet or put in long drop or pit toilets. They can block septic tank systems and interfere with the bacteria that breaks down human waste. Make sure that people who use wipes bring a separate plastic bag to carry used wipes in before disposing of them at home in the general rubbish.



Another option is to use a bandana or antibacterial cloth. Some people use a similar cloth as a 'pee rag' to wipe after urinating in the wilderness. Wet it with water (or snow) before and after use and allow it to dry between uses. Some people feel comfortable drying their period or pee cloth on the outside of their pack, but not everyone will feel this way. Darker coloured, lightweight cotton cloths are best as they dry quickly.

Changing period products more regularly in hot, wet weather or during high intensity activity can also help to maintain hygiene. Remember to dispose of non-reusable period products properly. Most of the time this means carrying them out with you.

For many people, going to the toilet or changing period products in the outdoors can be nerve-wracking, particularly when there are no facilities. When natural cover is limited, or people want more privacy, a sarong can be useful (especially compared to a towel as they are light and pack down small). Hanging it between trees, wrapping it around yourself or getting a friend to hold one up are all techniques that can help to make people feel more comfortable in managing their hygiene or menstruation outdoors. This is particularly important for some ethnic groups where modesty is paramount.

Leave no trace

We are all responsible for protecting and caring for our environment. There are many ways we can reduce or manage our impact on the environment while we are out enjoying it. Managing menstruation is no different. Period products or waste that is disposed of incorrectly can negatively affect the flora and fauna, and can block toilets and make huts, campsites and reserves unpleasant for future visitors. Encourage people to think about how they can reduce their carbon footprint and waste. The best way to do this is by giving them all the options and discussing their pros and cons.

These days there are a range of period products and management strategies that make it easier to reduce our environmental impact. However, it's important to respect a person's choices. If someone is using a high impact product (such as single use tampons or pads), it doesn't necessarily mean they don't care about the environment. Cost, bodily differences and cultural or religious practices can influence the decisions people make.

Ways to reduce menstrual waste impact:

- Use reusable/cloth pads, period undies or menstrual cups.
- If using tampons, choose organic options or ones that have biodegradable wrapping.



If using applicator tampons, find a brand that has a cardboard rather than a plastic applicator (outer).

- ▶ Carry out all menstrual waste products. After use, put them in a separate plastic bag and dispose of them properly at home (in the general waste). Don't bury or put menstrual products down the toilet or long-drop.
- Dispose of menstrual blood in the toilet, or in soil at least 50 metres (about 70 steps) away from a water source. Don't wash menstrual products or dispose of blood in waterways, especially if people are using them for other activities (such as swimming or collecting water).

Pain management

Some people experience significant pain during their period and need medication to manage it (either over-the-counter or prescribed). For some people, this pain can be debilitating, can cause headaches, vomiting and emotional sensitivity, and may mean they are unable to fully participate in activities. While there is a common belief that physical activity during your period can help ease period pain, this strategy is not effective for everyone. Telling participants who have cramps to move through the pain is not helpful or supportive. Instead, encourage those who menstruate to speak with their teacher or outdoor leader prior to a trip if they often experience cramps so this can be taken into consideration during activities. Pain medication, hot water bottles (or instant/reusable hand warmers) and gentle stretching, yoga or movement are some common ways people manage or reduce their period pain. Most menstruating people will know how to best manage their pain, so respect their experience and intuition. Make sure people bring the pain medication they might need with them.

'My period can affect my participation in sport... usually when I'm on my period I quite often feel hot, faint and sick.' (Young Samoan/Pākehā woman)

'Sometimes having my period is an unintended blessing. When I hike with my period, I generally take it easier on myself - I slow down a bit more and spend more time "still". Doing this can help me to enjoy my surroundings even more.' (Adult Pākehā woman)



'I think it's important to keep a balanced diet when you're menstruating. I've found that can have a big effect on how you can deal with it. When you're bleeding it can be draining, so it's important to keep eating healthy foods. Sometimes I feel like eating nothing all day, but I've realised that I really need food to keep me going.' (Young Samoan/Pākehā woman)

Life doesn't, or shouldn't, stop when you have your period, but that doesn't mean it's always easy to manage and doesn't affect your mood or physical ability. Some people



have less energy during and/or in the three to four days leading up to their period. This is important to keep in mind, especially if you notice someone is having a rough time or appears less physically able than usual. This is where developing a positive and supportive group culture is important. The rest of the group can respond respectfully by slowing the pace or showing empathy when people are emotionally sensitive.

Outdoor period kits

It's a good idea to create a 'period kit' that includes everything people might need to manage their periods. You can name this kit whatever you like. Some people choose fun or unrelated names (like 'happy castles'), as this can be more discreet. Some transgender folk prefer to use alternative words to 'period' so it is less gendered. Others like to call it what it is, as they feel that using correct terminology will help to normalise menstruation.

Groups who use shared period kits, like those at Outward Bound, encourage all participants to take turns in carrying the kit. This can reduce the stigma of menstruation and challenge people's perceptions of who menstruates. Treat a period kit as a group item, similar to a first aid kit. This can help diverse groups of people to be more aware of and empathetic towards menstruation. Before using the kit, it's important to talk to the group about it. This talk could be included as part of a general outdoor hygiene or toileting talk (see an earlier reference to a gender-inclusive hygiene talk by NOLS on page 34). Explain the purpose of the group kit, go through the kit and discuss what each item is used for, address any questions or concerns people may have and outline group culture expectations. These kits can also be created for individual use. In some instances, this might be more appropriate than having a shared period kit, particularly for trans or intersex folk who want to maintain privacy.

Here are some items commonly included in 'period kits':

- ▶ The kit itself people use a variety of bags or reusable containers. Coloured or opaque bags or containers can help to keep things discreet. Dry bags or coloured drink bottles are also good containers, although soft bags are easier to fit into a pack. Any old plastic bag will also do the trick. Some people also wrap duct tape on the outside of their bag/container, which helps to hide the items inside, but also provides an emergency supply of duct tape! Win-win!
- Period products (enough products of your choice for your typical period length, and some spares).
- ▶ A couple of plastic/biodegradable bags to put used period products in. A bread bag or zip-lock bag also works well for this.
- ▶ To help manage odour, put a black tea bag, crushed aspirin tablet or some baking soda in the plastic bag with the used period products.





- Folded up newspaper or tin foil (to wrap used tampons or pads in).
- ▶ Toilet paper.
- Hand sanitiser.
- Pain medication.
- Wipes.
- Mild biodegradable soap (if you have a menstrual cup or period undies you want to wash). If you can find a multi-purpose soap that you can also use for your body, that's even better.
- ▶ For people who use menstrual cups, a small squirt bottle can be useful when rinsing out the cup after use. However, some people are happy to use their water bottle or collect water from a river/lake etc. Having a designated cup or pot to boil menstrual cups in is also recommended for longer trips.
- ▶ Some people also carry a small trowel or shovel that they use to dig small toileting holes with. This is important if you are going somewhere where there are no toileting facilities.





How to change period products when in the outdoors

When you're in the outdoors or in places where facilities are limited, or there is limited natural cover, finding a private place to change period products can be difficult. Here are some strategies that some people find useful.

- ▶ Find a natural feature (patch of vegetation/fallen log/rock) that provides some cover. Send some group members or friends further away from your spot to keep a lookout for other people coming into the area. They can stop people from coming towards your spot.
- Set up a fly sheet or tent that people can use to get changed behind/in. During experiences where carrying weight isn't an issue and there is no toilet, a shower tent is an excellent replacement. This is a great option when you are going to be based in one location for a few days.
- When there is limited natural cover (vegetation), a small, lightweight towel or sarong is an excellent alternative. This can be wrapped around someone's waist while they change, or some friends/group members can hold the towel up (while they face in the opposite direction).
- Brainstorm with your group before heading out for other strategies that could be used. This will also help to develop a more inclusive and empathetic group environment.

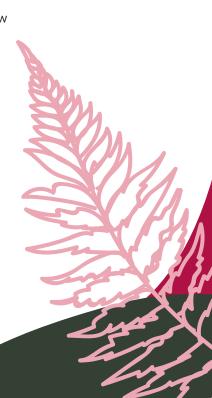


Menstrual products 101

Period underwear

Period underwear has become more common in the past few years and there are now a range of brands that offer undies and swimwear that are specifically for people to use when they have their period.

Period undies look like regular underwear except they have two or three layers of fabric that catch the period blood (or other discharge) much like a pad does. The type of fabric means that period undies won't leak, unless your flow is more than the recommended amount for the undies. Some period undies use special fabric technology, while others use natural fibres such as merino wool. Almost all have antimicrobial properties, which means that they don't hold smell as much as other period products and there's less chance of an infection if you wear them for longer periods of time. Period undies are an excellent option for people who are keen to reduce the waste associated with typical period products, as they are reusable. They are also less likely to cause chafing than disposable pads and are often less bulky.



Most brands recommend rinsing the undies straight after use and then hand washing them later on. This means they can easily be taken on outdoor trips. Some people who use period underwear during outdoor adventures recommend not rinsing them (unless you are going to properly wash them straight away), as this can sometimes increase their smell as they dry. They instead say to put them in a separate 'undie bag' and wash them back at home. However, on longer trips they can be washed 'in the field' using natural or biodegradable soap and then dried on the outside of a pack (or elsewhere) during the day. Always remember to follow 'Leave No Trace' principles when washing your clothes in the outdoors by washing them at least 50 meters (about 70 steps) from a water source.

Pads (reusable and single use)

Period pads come in many shapes and absorbency types. Some people who don't want to or can't use 'insertable' period products (like tampons or menstrual cups) prefer to use pads. When in the outdoors pads can sometimes be uncomfortable if they get wet, and because they can be bulky they can cause chafing, especially when walking or cycling on longer adventures. 'Winged' pads (ones with 'wings' that stick onto the side of underwear) are less likely to move around or leak. However, 'non-winged' pads are less likely to cause chafing but are more likely to shift during movement. Non-reusable pads often have a lot of packaging, so make sure to carry all the waste out with you. Period pads cannot be placed in any toilet (including pit toilets or long drops). Make sure to change your pads regularly as they can start to smell.

If you're likely to be in the outdoors for more than a day, place the used pads in a designated sealable bag. Putting a crushed aspirin tablet or a sprinkle of baking soda in the 'used' bag can help to reduce any smell. Another strategy people use is to wrap used period products in tin foil. This helps to contain smell, and the products can be squashed down to a very small size.

Reusable pads are like period underwear in that they are a multi-layered cloth liner or pad that sits inside the underwear. Care and washing instructions are similar to those of period undies. It's best to test which type of pad (reusable or disposable, winged or non-winged) is going to be the most comfortable, before your trip, by trying them out while doing a similar activity.

Menstrual cups

While they were invented in the 1930s, menstrual cups have only become more common in the past five years. They are reusable funnel-shaped 'cups' that are inserted into the vagina and collect menstrual fluid. These cups are made of high-grade silicon or rubber. Menstrual cups are an excellent environmentally conscious option, as they don't create any waste. If looked after properly, a single menstrual cup can last up to ten years!



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Depending on a person's flow, the cup only needs to be emptied every four to twelve hours, and because it is non-absorbent, there is less chance of developing TSS (Toxic Shock Syndrome). This means that wearing one for a full day trip or leaving it in overnight isn't an issue. The menstrual waste collected in the cup can be tipped into the toilet or down a sink or drain, or buried (so long as proper burying guidelines are followed). Once you have tipped out the fluid, rinse out the cup with clean water or wipe it with toilet paper. It's also a good idea to give your cup a thorough clean at the start and end of your period to fully sanitise it. You can do this by washing it with warm water and using a gentle soap or boiling it for three to five minutes (just be aware that boiling some menstrual cups can soften them over time).

When using a menstrual cup in public toilets or where facilities are limited you can:

- ▶ Rinse your cup with water using tap water, a drink bottle or small squirt bottle. Dispose of the washing water and menstrual fluid in the toilet or in soil 50 metres away from a water source, track or hut.
- ▶ Use toilet paper to wipe out your cup. You can also use a hygiene wipe, although wipes create more waste for you to carry. If you do use wipes, make sure to find ones that are suitable for use on genitals, so they don't cause irritation when you reinsert the cup. Also make sure to take the wipes out with you they cannot be placed in the toilet or long drop.
- If you're in an alpine environment (or where there is snow), you can also use snow to clean your cup. Just be aware of where you throw the used snow be discreet and respectful.
- ▶ DON'T use hand sanitiser to clean your menstrual cup, as these chemicals will cause skin irritation.
- If you decide to boil your cup while in the outdoors, it's best to use a separate pot or bowl. While the boiling process will make the menstrual cup and the bowl/pot clean and safe to use, for cultural or other reasons, people may want to use separate pots, especially when cooking equipment is shared.

'When I go free-diving and spearfishing I usually use a menstrual cup because they don't leak as much and I can wear it for longer than a tampon. I got one because my older sister uses one and she said it was good. I don't find it too hard to use – it's obviously different to using a tampon but because I had been using tampons for a while, I felt pretty comfortable switching to a menstrual cup. Using a menstrual cup definitely helps me to function better during days where I don't have as much access to a bathroom.' (Young Samoan/Pākehā woman)



Some people find that it takes a while to get used to a menstrual cup. There are different sized cups (for people who have had children or have larger/smaller vaginas), and they also come in different shapes and rigidity. Finding one that feels comfortable can take some time, so it's worth persevering.



How to bury your menstrual cup waste when in the outdoors

Dig a 15-20cm deep hole that is 50m (70 adult paces) away from any water source, campsite or track. Tip in the contents and then cover with dirt. These guidelines are the same when burying any digestive/body waste.



Tips for using a menstrual cup:

- Most cups come with instructions on how to best fold or use them (folding techniques can vary between cups). If inserted correctly a seal is created between the cup and the vaginal wall. This means it is rare for the cup to leak, even when you're participating in physical activity.
- Removing the cup can also take a bit of practice, to ensure none of the menstrual fluid is spilt. It is best to practice inserting and removing a menstrual cup when you don't have your period. Using lubricant or practising in the shower can help. Gently pinching the sides of the cup to release the seal, rather than pulling straight down on the stem can make the removal process a lot more comfortable.
- It's important to stay relaxed when removing a cup, as the walls of your vagina can tense up if you become stressed. If you're really struggling, take a break, relax and try again later. Don't be afraid to ask other people for advice. Most menstrual cup users have shared similar 'getting used to' experiences to support new users.

Tampons (applicator and standard)

Tampons come in many different absorbances and types. Regular tampons are inserted using a finger, whereas application tampons have an inner tube that is used to push the tampon into the vagina.

Like a menstrual cup, you need to ensure you can properly clean your hands prior to inserting a tampon to avoid infection or developing (the very rare) TSS or Toxic Shock Syndrome. TSS is caused by inserting a tampon with unclean hands, using a tampon that is no longer sterile (i.e., has touched other surfaces) or leaving it in for over eight hours.

If you use tampons regularly, then using them in the outdoors is no different. However, you do need to think about how you will carry used tampons with you, until you can dispose of them appropriately. Putting tampons in any toileting system (including long drops) can cause blockages and damage septic tank systems. Only organic tampons can be disposed of in composting or biodegradable toileting systems (not flushing toilets). This is because organic tampons are free of chemicals that can damage the environment or stop the good 'decomposing' bacteria from doing their work.



Carrying tampons out with you (the same advice applies for pads):

- ▶ Have a designated plastic sealable bag or container.
- Wrap your items in toilet/newspaper or tin foil before placing them in your bag/ container. Tin foil is helpful when you're trying to manage pack space, as items can be squashed more easily than when wrapped in newspaper. Tin foil also helps to contain smell.
- ▶ To manage smell, you can crush an aspirin tablet or sprinkle some baking soda into the bag.

Even if you're not expecting to get your period during an outdoor experience, it's a good idea to bring spare items (or a period kit) just in case. Remember, being outdoors and doing activities that require you to be active in new or different ways, or for long periods of time, can alter the timing and flow of your period. Plus, if you don't end up needing them, you might be able to help someone out who does!



An example of a personal period kit



Recap: period product pros and cons

The following table provides a description of all the period products described in this resource, and their pros and cons for use in the outdoors.

	Description	Positives for outdoor use	Negatives for outdoor use
Pads (all types)	A single-use or reusable strip of material that is placed on the inside of underwear to catch period blood or other fluids. Pads are available in a range of absorbencies and designs. Some have 'wings', which are used to fasten the pad to underwear.	 Easy to use. Often easier to find in different countries compared to tampons. Winged pads stay in place more easily. Non-winged pads are less likely to cause chaffing. Great for first-aid situations as well! 	 Creates a lot of waste and requires proper disposal. Can create more mess. Less suitable for water-based activities as they will absorb water. May be less discreet as they are bulky. Winged pads are likely to cause chaffing. Non-winged pads may move around during movement. If not changed regularly, they create odour.
Tampons (non- applicator)	A tampon is a small singleuse plug of fabric (cotton) that is inserted internally into the vagina using a finger. The tampon will expand as it collects menstrual blood or vaginal fluid. The tampon is removed from the vagina by pulling on a string that is connected to the end of the tampon.	 Reasonably easy to use and discreet. Small and light. Effective and rarely leak. Clean and cause less odour compared to pads. Able to be worn during water activities. 	 Requires clean hands to insert. Not everyone can use tampons. Creates a lot of waste and requires proper disposal. Used tampons can cause odour, although there are strategies to manage this. Harder to find in some countries.
Tampons (applicator)	An applicator tampon is similar to a non-applicator tampon, except instead of inserting the tampon into the vagina using a finger, the tampon has an extender piece (applicator) which pushes the tampon into the vagina. The applicator is then removed and thrown away and the tampon remains in place, until removed by pulling on the string.	 Very easy to use. Can be used in situations where having clean hands is challenging. Able to be worn during water activities. Effective and rarely leak. Clean and causes less odour compared to pads. 	 Creates a lot of waste and requires appropriate disposal. Not everyone can use tampons. Used tampons can cause odour, although there are strategies to manage this. Harder to find in some countries.



A menstrual cup is a small funnel-shaped reusable menstrual product made of soft, flexible silicon or rubber. The cup is folded to insert into the vagina. Once inserted it unfolds to create a 'cup' that collects the menstrual blood. To remove, the bottom of the cup is squeezed and pulled on to slide the cup out of the vagina. The collected blood is then disposed of, and the cup can be washed and reinserted.

Period underwear are like regular underwear, except they are made of multi-layered leak and odour-proof fabric. That means any menstrual blood or vaginal fluid that is caught by the undies does not leak. Period undies can be worn and washed similar to regular underwear. People use them with or without other period products.

- **★** Reusable, so very cost- and waste-efficient.
- + Able to be worn during water-based activities.
- ★ Little waste/gear to carry when in the outdoors.
- + Discreet.
- **★** No odour.

- → Not everyone can use menstrual cups.
- Some people find they take a while to get used to inserting and removing.
- → Requires clean hands.

- ★ Reusable, so very cost- and waste-efficient.
- ★ Very easy to use.
- **+** Can be worn with other period products.
- **→** Discreet.
- + Little waste/gear to carry when in the outdoors.
- **+** Limited/no odour while being worn.

- Can create more mess.
- → Not suitable for water-based activities (although period togs are available).
- Cleaning period undies while in the outdoors can require more
- → Harder to find in some countries.









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How to use these lesson plans

- ▶ These lessons are suitable to deliver to students in Years 6–10 (9 to 15-year-olds). However, the content and learning activities can easily be adapted for older students.
- Some of the resources and videos we have referenced are more suited to older students. In this instance, we have clearly stated the recommended age range. Please make sure you check the suitability of each resource or video before using it with students.
- ▶ The lessons are designed to be taught sequentially. This will support the development of a safe, supportive learning culture
- ▶ Each lesson runs for 60 minutes. However, the lessons can easily be broken up into shorter sessions or extended to allow for further discussion and activity time.
- ▶ You don't need to be a qualified teacher to deliver these lessons. In fact, we recommend that outdoor and youth leaders such as those involved with Girl-Guiding, Scouts and the Duke of Edinburgh Award also deliver these lessons to their groups.
- ▶ Before facilitating these lessons it's important you're familiar with the content. This will not only reassure you that you're providing current and accurate information but also help you to confidently run group discussions.
- ▶ Even if you don't feel it, appearing relaxed during these sessions will help your students to feel comfortable. It will also demonstrate that conversations about menstruation, bodies, gender and sexuality are normal and healthy.
- ▶ We know that these topics can be challenging to talk about and have designed the unit with this in mind. However, if there are some lessons or activities that you don't feel comfortable to deliver, make sure you ask for support. Connect with colleagues or friends and explore the lessons together. This is a great way to learn the content, talk over any anxieties you have about delivering the lessons, and brainstorm strategies for how to manage any tricky moments that might arise.

A note on curriculum

The topics and learning covered in these lessons connects to aspects of the Health and Physical Education learning area (HPE) in the New Zealand Curriculum. However, we have not made explicit connections to the curriculum for several reasons. First, the lessons may be facilitated outside of formal or compulsory education. Second, the multi-level nature of the activities makes it difficult to connect specifically to curriculum levels. Third, the HPE underlying concepts and learning outcomes addressed in the resource need to be further developed and unpacked.



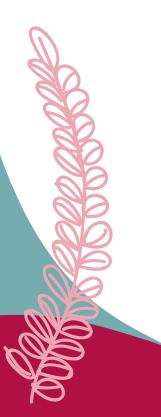
Creating safe and inclusive environments

Everyone has a role to play

Non-menstruators (people who don't get ikura/periods) play a critical role in shifting 'period culture'. It can be difficult to understand a topic or someone's experience when you have not been through it yourself. Accept that there will be moments where you feel uncomfortable. Move through these situations by making listening and learning your main focus. Acknowledge when you don't understand something or you make a mistake, and practise being an ally. This advice also applies to tamariki (children) and rangatahi (youth) who don't menstruate. Learning about and respecting different people's experiences is an important life skill. Non-menstruating students don't have to be passive when learning about or engaging in conversations about periods; they can assume the essential roles of ally and advocate.

People who menstruate can act as guides during this process of culture change. If you menstruate, be willing (when it is safe) to share your own experiences with other people. This will help to normalise conversations about ikura, bodies, sexuality and gender. Show compassion to others when they make a mistake, but don't be afraid to call out harmful or limiting behaviour by giving constructive feedback.

Adults need to lead the way to change. It is important that our rangatahi see adults talking about and responding to periods in supportive and inclusive ways. As educators, outdoor practitioners, sport coaches, youth leaders and parents, we need to role-model what this 'new normal' looks, feels and sounds like. We need to commit to guiding our young people through this transition. Prioritise creating safe spaces for rangatahi to share their experiences and learn from each other. This toolkit offers some suggestions on how to do this.







Leading the way: Facilitation guidelines and strategies

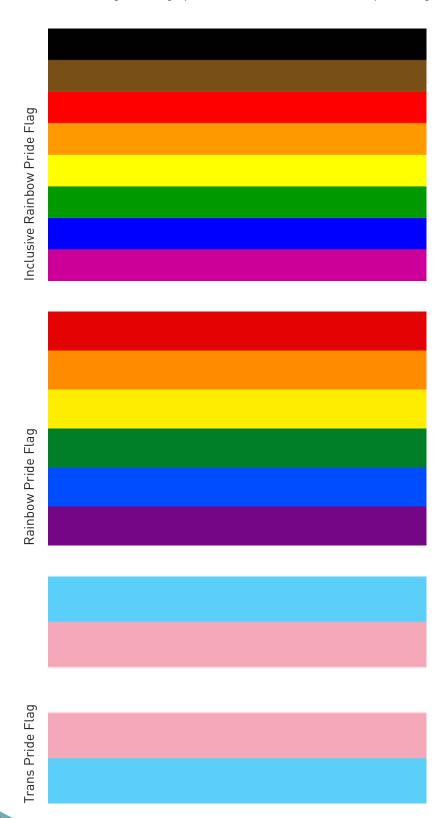
- It is typical, and to be expected, that some young people will feel more comfortable than others discussing menstruation, bodies, sexuality and gender. Establishing clear, safe group learning guidelines and culture is a very important step (see Lesson One). Don't rush this process. If a group isn't demonstrating safe learning behaviours, wait until they are!
- Create an environment where tamariki and rangatahi can ask questions and discuss their thoughts without shame or judgement. This will require you, as a facilitator, to role-model empathy and active listening. It's ok if some students are hesitant to contribute to group discussions. Structure activities so that they include everyone.
- ▶ Be aware of your own perceptions and biases regarding menstruation, sexuality and gender. Don't be afraid to share your experiences (when appropriate), but make sure you explain that your experiences offer just another perspective.
- As a facilitator you aren't expected to have all the answers. Role-model respectful curiosity through your questioning with students.
- ▶ Make sure you use correct terminology. For example, when describing someone who menstruates or naming period products. Refer to Section A for more information.







Display pride flags and other inclusive visual material to help create a safe and welcoming learning space. Below are three common pride flags.







Conversation strategies

Positive learning experiences require careful planning and considered facilitation. This section offers practical strategies to lead safe and inclusive group conversations.

Lay strong group 'foundations'

You can do this by:

- Establishing positive and respectful culture and discussion guidelines.
- ▶ Providing pre-discussion tasks that help people to consider their own views and influences.
- Warming the group up by discussing easy/light topics first. Don't jump straight into the 'hard stuff'.
- Providing a discussion framework (see 'Curious conversation guidelines: Discussion stems' on page 96) and starting point.
- Before each lesson, think about likely sticking points or possible negative responses and prepare for how you will manage them.

Use 'curious' questions to support student learning

Examples of 'curious' questions include:

- ▶ I wonder...?
- ▶ That's an interesting perspective, tell me more about that...
- What is your thinking behind that?
- ▶ What helped you come to that conclusion?
- Can you give me an example?
- I wonder if other people have had similar or different experiences?
- ▶ What is similar or different about...?
- ▶ How does that match up with...?
- I've never thought about it like that before, I'd like to learn more...
- ▶ What's the concern behind your view?
- ▶ What information might help you change your view?
- ▶ What impact did...?
- What might be the root cause of this issue or problem?
- Who benefits from this point of view? Who is disadvantaged?



Discussion activity ideas

Create safety by:

- Using smaller discussion groups, or pairs. Whole-class discussions can make less confident students feel uncomfortable and nervous.
- ▶ Letting students pick their own discussion groups (particularly for more sensitive topics).
- ▶ Having a 'post-box' that students can use to ask questions anonymously. You can respond to these questions later in class, or if time is limited, using group email. See 'Post-box instructions' on page 94).
- Always giving students the right to 'pass' (not answer) a question and the ability to step out of the learning space if they need time out.

The following discussion activities offer a range of student configurations. You can swap these with the ones described in the lesson plans.

- Walk and talk: In pairs or threes, students discuss a given question or prompt while walking around a defined space. Set a time limit. Upon return, you may want each group to give feedback on the main points of their discussion.
- Think, pair, share: Students begin by reflecting individually on a given question or prompt, before joining a peer to discuss their responses. Pairs then join up with another pair, or invite students to share their responses with the class. Allocate a specific time for each discussion 'phase'.
- ▶ 1-minute paper: In one minute (you can make the time longer if desired), students write down their response to an open-ended question or prompt. This is a good activity to use when first introducing a topic to students, when you have less confident students or when you want all students to consider their own perspective on a topic before participating in a group chat.
- Rally brainstorm: In pairs, students are given one to two minutes to brainstorm answers to a prompt, passing the paper between them so that one student in the pair writes an answer, then the other student writes an answer, and so forth until the stated time period is over. This is another way of ensuring everyone contributes to the conversation.
- Donut conversations: The students stand in two concentric circles, facing each other. Working with the partner they face, students discuss the given question or prompt or ask each other questions. At a signal from the facilitator, the outside circle moves a given number of places clockwise. Using either the same or a different prompt, students chat with their new partner. Repeat as many times as desired. The donut activity enables students to have structured conversations with several people in a short space of time.
- Gallery walks: Place pictures, short texts, quotes or other items to spark discussion







around the room. Students walk around the room individually or in small groups and comment on those items using sticky notes or write their responses on big sheets of paper.

- ▶ Use a backchannel platform (i.e., Yoteach!): Backchannel discussion platforms support digital conversation that runs concurrently with a face-to-face activity. A backchannel gives all students a way to engage in conversation. This is particularly helpful for students who are less confident or who need more time to process their thinking.
- **3-minute pause**: This activity gives students a chance to stop, reflect on the concepts and ideas that have just been introduced, make connections to prior knowledge or experience and seek clarification. Students answer individually, or with others (you can change these questions to suit):
 - + I changed my attitude about...
 - + I am more aware of...
 - + I was surprised about...
 - + I felt...
 - + I related to...
 - + I empathised with...

Managing harmful or discriminatory comments

The conversations you have during this unit will generally be thought-provoking, engaging and constructive. However, if someone makes a negative or harmful comment, make sure you respond to it. Whether it is deliberate or accidental, addressing the comment shows that this language or behaviour is unacceptable. The way you manage the situation will also show young people respectful and productive ways to challenge discrimination. The trick here is to address the discrimination without 'calling out' (shaming) the student involved. Encourage and invite that person, and the rest of the group, into a conversation, rather than shut it down. This will support students to develop important communication skills and encourage them to consider different people's perspectives.

Managing situations like this can be challenging. Below are some effective strategies and responses you can use. Practice responding to 'low stakes' conflict situations to become more confident using them.





- When we need to let someone know that their words or actions are unacceptable and will not be tolerated.
- When we need to hit the 'pause' button and break the momentum in a harmful, or potentially harmful, conversation.
- When there is an opportunity to explore a challenging topic more deeply, make meaning together, and find a mutual sense of understanding across differences.
- When we want to understand or learn more about a comment, experience or situation.
- When we want to help people imagine different perspectives or outcomes.

Responding to inappropriate comments

When responding to inappropriate comments, here are some important things to consider:

- ▶ 'Shutting down' a person by humiliating or making an example of them will only make them defensive and resistant to other views. Instead, help students to engage in constructive conversation by asking curious and respectful questions, and by encouraging them to consider another person's perspective (see 'Using "curious" questions to support student learning' on page 57).
- **Deliver** Be aware of your own response to the situation. Pause before you act.
- Reflect back what you heard. Focus on facts, not emotions.
- Ask questions (where appropriate) to clarify and understand the background and intent of the person's comment.
- ▶ If a person becomes defensive, stop the conversation. They are unlikely to be open to listening to another point of view. It is better to address it another time when they will be more open and responsive.
- Descriptions of the group and make sure the conversation is safe for everyone. It is likely that these kinds of conversations will feel uncomfortable, however no one should ever feel unsafe. If you sense that the conversation is causing harm, stop straight away.
- ▶ After the lesson, find an appropriate colleague to debrief the situation with. This will give you the opportunity to express your own response and reflect on how to manage situations like this going forward.

Possible responses

If a student says, 'I think she's really stupid', challenge with 'how else can you say that without being hurtful?' If the student seems unaware, teach an alternative like, 'I disagree with that', or suggest they use the 'Curious conversation guidelines: discussion stems' on page 96.







Other possible facilitator responses include:

- ▶ How would you have handled things differently?
- Do you think there is only one right response, or could there be more?
- I don't find that funny. Please, tell me why that's funny to you.
- I need to push back against that. I disagree. I don't see it that way.
- I wonder if you've considered the impact of your words?
- ▶ That's not our culture here. Those aren't our values.
- It sounded like you just said _____. Is that really what you meant?
- ▶ How might someone else see this differently? Is it possible that someone might misinterpret your words/actions?
- ▶ Why do you think that is the case?



Lesson plans

Unit overview

These lessons are designed to be delivered sequentially (i.e.: in the order shown below). Each lesson is 60 minutes long.

Lesson	Focus	Main activities
Setting the scene	This lesson sets the scene for the rest of the unit. The group will develop guidelines that encourage a safe learning environment. The group will also learn the purpose of the unit and the topics that will be covered.	 Identify why gender inclusion in the outdoors is important. Develop group guidelines and understand the personal responsibility needed to maintain them. Learn about and practise using a curious conversations framework that includes how to give and receive feedback.
2 Identity and perceptions	In this lesson, the group will consider identity, particularly in relation to gender, sex and sexuality. They will also explore how these concepts are perceived by others and what impact this can have on a person's wellbeing.	 Define important gender/sex/sexuality concepts and terms. Explore influences on identity. Consider the value of diversity. Practise self-management and communication skills.
3 Menstruation 101	In this lesson, the group will learn about the menstrual cycle, including why it happens, who menstruates and its effects. They will also identify what things influence how a person manages their period.	 Explore beliefs and myths about menstruation. Identify the 'what, why, how, who, when and effects' of menstruation. Identify influences on period management.
Diverse experiences of menstruation	This lesson focuses on celebrating and supporting diverse experiences of menstruation. Students will explore ethnic and Rainbow perceptions and practices of menstruation and identify ways to be inclusive in the outdoors.	 Identify different people's views and experiences of menstruation. Learn about the concept of being an 'ally' and identify how to support others in the outdoors. Identify a range of period management strategies.
Menstruation management in the outdoors	In this final lesson, the group will delve into the products and strategies that can be used to manage menstruation when in the outdoors.	 Learn about different period products and their pros and cons for use in the outdoors. Identify what an outdoor period kit is and learn how to make one. Learn how to create a safe and inclusive group culture when in the outdoors.





Lesson one: Setting the scene

Overview

This lesson sets the scene for the rest of the unit. Students will come away knowing the purpose of the unit and the topics that will be covered. The group will also develop and follow guidelines or tikanga to create a safe learning environment and learn about and practise using a 'curious conversations' framework.

Lesson purpose

In this lesson, students will:

- Identify why gender inclusion in the outdoors is important.
- Develop group guidelines and understand the personal responsibility needed to maintain them.
- ▶ Learn about and practise using a curious conversations framework that includes how to give and receive feedback.

Content knowledge required

- ▶ Recommended reading: 'Introduction to this resource' (pages 7–10), 'How to use these lesson plans' (page 53), and 'Creating safe and inclusive environments' (see pages 54–56).
- 'Curious conversation guidelines' (see Activity sheet 3).
- ▶ TED has created a playlist called 'The Art of Finding Common Ground'. This playlist offers some excellent talks about how to have productive, respectful and challenging conversations. Some of these talks may be useful to share with older students as well. https://www.ted.com/playlists/753/the_art_of_finding_common_ground?utm_source=recommends-quality-conversations&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=explore

Resources required

- Computer, projector and speakers
- Whiteboard and whiteboard pens
- ▶ Big paper (A3 or A2) and markers
- 'Unit topics list' (see Activity sheet 1)
- Container or box for the 'Post-box' (see post-box instructions in Activity sheet 2)
- 'Curious conversation guidelines' (see Activity sheet 3). Print one copy for each student (A4 double sized).





The learning space should be set up to allow for students to work together in small groups, and for a full group circle. Desks or tables are not needed for this lesson.

Learning activities

1. What is this unit about? (15–20 minutes)

Explain to students that they will be participating in a unit that explores how to make the outdoors a safe and inclusive place for everyone. Share with the group why you think this is an important topic.

Organise the students into groups of three to five people. It's best if students select their own groups for this activity. Each group needs to find a space within the learning area and sit down in a circle, facing one another. When the students are settled, ask them to share their responses to the following questions in their groups. Allow time for the students to discuss each question before moving to the next.

- Describe to your groupmates how you're feeling today.
- What is your catchphrase, or a word you say a lot?
- What's the best piece of advice you've ever been given?
- If you had three wishes, what would you wish for?

Write the 'Unit topics list' (see Activity sheet 1) up on the whiteboard. Ask the class the following questions. Allow approximately two minutes for the students to discuss each question in their groups.

- ▶ How do you feel about this unit, now that you know what topics we will be learning about?
- What are you excited about, or looking forward to learning during this unit?
- Is there anything that worries or concerns you about this unit? If so, what?
- What are some ways these worries could be managed?

Ask students to feedback some of their concerns, and ideas on how these concerns could be managed. Respond with your own ideas. Write down the student concerns, so you can think about how to manage them.

Show students the 'post box' (see Activity sheet 2) and explain how it works. Make it clear that their questions are anonymous and will be answered during the next lesson (or by group email if appropriate).







2. Establishing group guidelines/tikanga (15–20 minutes)

A safe learning environment is essential to the wellbeing of students and their 'success' during this unit. Many of the topics in this unit require a sensitive and supportive approach. Spend time co-designing some group guidelines or tikanga. These guidelines describe how people need to behave during the unit (including the teacher or facilitator). Students should be fully involved in this activity to create buy-in from the group and reduce the feeling that the 'rules' have been imposed upon them. Some suggested points include:

- One person speaks at a time.
- Respect one another. You don't need to agree with another person's views to respect them.
- ▶ Be curious, not judgemental. Listen to learn.
- Personal information that is shared in this room, stays in the room (general information is ok to share).
- Everyone has the right to 'pass' there is no pressure to respond to a question.

Create between five to six action points (too many points will make it hard for people to remember and follow the guidelines). If you already have group tikanga established, use it for this unit (adapt where needed). For each guideline, ask the students how it would look, sound and feel if someone was to follow it. You might want each student to sign their name (or draw an image) to show they agree with and will follow the group tikanga. Display the guidelines each lesson and refer to them to reinforce positive, and challenge harmful, behaviour.

3. 'Curious not judgemental' conversations (20 minutes)

First, use the Walt Whitman quote 'be curious, not judgemental' to frame how students should engage with each other during class discussions.

- Write the Walt Whitman quote on the board: 'Be curious, not judgemental'.
- Ask the class, 'What does being judgemental look, sound and feel like?'. Write up ideas on the board. Now do the same for curiosity: 'What does being curious look, sound and feel like?'.
- ▶ Run through the following scenario as a whole class to identify how someone would respond if they were curious and how someone would respond if they were being judgemental. Identify at least three possible responses.
 - One afternoon your mates come over to your house to hangout. You're watching TV when an advert comes on showing a man wearing make-up. One of your friends comments by saying 'ewww, that's so gay!'.
- ▶ Run through the 'Curious conversation guidelines' (see Activity sheet 3), which will support students to have curious, constructive and respectful learning conversations. Give each student a printed copy of the guidelines, so they can use it during class.



Students will now practise using the 'Curious conversation guidelines: Discussion stems' (Activity sheet 3). Run through when and how to use each of the discussion stem 'categories'. With the help of a volunteer student, role-model how the discussion stems work.

Now the students will have a go. Organise the class into groups of three to four students. Using the discussion stems, they need to respond to each others ideas or comments on the conversation topic.

Example topics include:

- Do you think the 2020 Tokyo Olympics should have gone ahead?
- ▶ Should phones be banned in schools?
- Are cats better than dogs?
- ▶ Should all public transport be free?

As students engage in their conversations, move around the class offering feedback and support. After a set time, bring the class back together and ask several students to give feedback on how their group conversation went.

4. Wrap-up (3 minutes) To close, ask students to share with the person next to them two things they learned this lesson. Then use a 'thumb-o-metre' to gauge how the class is feeling about the the unit so far. Ask the students to close their eyes and indicate how they're feeling using their thumbs:

- Feeling great thumbs up.
- Feeling ok halfway/horizontal thumb.
- Unsure/worried thumbs down.

Privately follow up with students who had a 'thumbs down' response to identify what additional support they need.

Educator/facilitator reflection

- How did you feel as you facilitated the lesson? What activities did you feel comfortable leading? Are there any topics or activities that you need support with?
- ▶ How did the students respond to the lesson? What concerns do students have and how can these be addressed? Are there any students who need additional support or
- What aspects of the 'Curious conversation guidelines' did students grasp easily, and what did they struggle with? What activities, structures or examples could you use to help them?







Lesson two: Identity and perceptions

Overview

During this lesson, students will explore the concept of identity, particularly in relation to gender, sex and sexuality. They will also consider how identity and identity-expression are perceived and responded to by others and what impact this can have on people's wellbeing.

Lesson purpose

In this lesson, students will:

- Develop an understanding of sex/sexuality/gender concepts and language.
- Identify the influences on identity.
- Decide the value of diversity.
- ▶ Practise self-management and communication skills.

Content knowledge required

Refer to Part A of the resource: 'Supporting gender diversity and variations of sex characteristics'. Specifically, the section called 'Transgender, gender diverse and intersex' (pages 26–29).

Note: Misinformation and discrimination have meant talking about rainbow experiences and issues often place rainbow youth in a compromised or unsafe position. As a result, aspects of this unit may be challenging for students to engage with. Be sensitive to this and work hard to create an environment where all students feel safe and supported to express their identity experience. Recognise your limits as a facilitator and reach out, or refer students, to support organisations when needed. You will find a list of organisations and additional resources in Appendix A.

Resources required

- Computer, projector and speakers
- ▶ Whiteboard and whiteboard pens (or large A2 paper and pens)
- ▶ A4 paper and colouring pens for Activity 1, or devices if students are making their posters digitally.
- 'Curious conversations guidelines' (Activity sheet 3) one per student
- I am...' example poster (Activity sheet 4)
- 'Mix and Match terminology cards' (Activity sheet 5). Create enough mix and match sets for one set per three to four students.





- The learning space should be set up to allow for students to work together in small groups. Students will need desks or tables for this lesson.
- ▶ Put up the group guidelines or tikanga that was created last lesson. Refer to it at the start of the lesson and give an example from last lesson of student behaviour that honoured the tikanga. For example, 'I saw a fantastic example of someone being "curious not judgemental" last lesson when Dani...'.
- ▶ Place the post-box somewhere visible and central in the classroom. Remind students they can post their anonymous questions in the box at any stage throughout the lesson.

Learning activities

1. I am...? (20 minutes)

Note: This activity has been adapted from the GLSEN "I Am" Me: Talking About Identity' lesson).

In this activity, students will reflect on their identity and the different ways they describe themselves.

Begin the lesson by telling students, 'Today we'll be talking about "identity", which has to do with who we are, and all the things that make us unique and special. There are lots of different pieces that fit together to make up our identity.'"

Brainstorm describing words and identity terms with the students. These might include words to describe their personality, family role and interests. For example: I am strong, active, loving, fun, a sister, silly, an animal-lover, an artist.

Give each student a blank A4 sheet of paper (or they can complete this task digitally). Students will create a poster that reflects their identities and the things that make them unique (see 'Activity sheet 4' for an example). Make sure students leave space on their poster, as they might add to it later in the lesson.

Once students have had time to complete their poster, ask them to stand up and hold their poster in front of them. Get the students to slowly walk around the room, looking at their classmates' posters. Ask students:

- Which parts of your identity are you the most proud of? How would you feel if someone teased you for those parts of your identity, for being you?
- ▶ Who should get to fill out your identity poster, you or someone else? Could I go around and write whatever words or names on your poster that I want?
- Do you think our class would be better if all of our posters or all of our identities were the same? Why or why not?







2. Exploring societal views of gender (15 minutes)

In this activity, students will begin by identifying what they currently understand and believe about gender, including what has influenced these views, before learning about current gender identity and expression terminology. Refer to Activity sheet 5 for a definition of gender.

Complete a 'Think, pair, share' reflection (see page 58) on the following three questions. Write the questions on the board so students can easily refer to them.

- What behaviours, activities or objects do you relate to girls/being a girl?
- What behaviours, activities or objects do you relate to boys/being a boy?
- Are there any other ways to describe people and their interests or behaviours that don't relate to a person's sex characteristics (i.e., having a penis or vagina)?

When the groups have completed the task have a full-class discussion on the following questions. Students should share their thoughts using the 'Curious conversation guidelines: Discussion stems' from Lesson One (Activity sheet 3).

- ▶ What things influence how people view gender?
- ▶ How does gender differ across cultures, both in Aotearoa New Zealand and around the world?
- Have there been any changes over time to what we view as 'male' and 'female' or 'masculine' and 'feminine'?
- In what ways does society 'tell' us what is 'ok' or 'normal' behaviour for men and women? What impact might this have on people's identity if they demonstrate different behaviours?
- What challenges do these gender 'rules' present? What do you think needs to change to make society more accepting and inclusive of different behaviours and identities?
- ▶ How could we overcome these challenges?

3. Gender identity and expression: It's more than... (20 minutes)

Students will now explore the terms used to describe different identities and gender expressions. Organise students into groups of three to four. Give each group a set of the 'Mix and match terminology cards' (see Activity sheet 5). Students need to match each identity term with the correct definition or description.

After five to ten minutes, pause the activity to watch: 'Minus18: *Trans 101 – The Basics'* [7:48] https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-3ZzpTxjgRw&t=234s,

Get students to review their 'mix and match' terms and definitions. Go through the correct definitions as a whole class. If students have questions, either answer them in class or invite students to post their questions in the post-box.

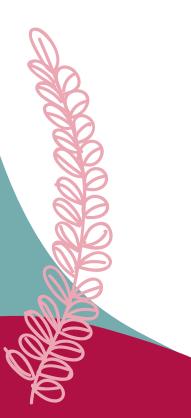




4. Wrap-up (5 minutes)
Ask students to return to their 'I am' posters that they created at the start of the lesson. Invite them to add anything else to their poster, including identity terms relating to their gender or sexuality (they don't have to add anything if they don't want to).

Educator/facilitator reflection

- Were there any gender or sexuality terms that students struggled to understand?
- ▶ How well did students use the discussion stems? In what areas do they need more practise or support?
- ▶ How could you support, encourage and celebrate different gendered behaviours and identities in class, at work, at home or in the outdoors?







Lesson three: Menstruation 101

Overview

In this lesson, the group will learn the basics of the menstrual cycle, including why it happens, who menstruates, and its effects. They will also identify what things influence how a person manages their period.

Lesson purpose

In this lesson, students will:

- ▶ Reflect on beliefs and myths about menstruation.
- Identify different people's views and experiences of menstruation.
- Identify the 'what, why, how, who, when and effects' of periods.
- Identify what influences how people manage their period.

Content knowledge required

- ▶ Part A of the resource: 'Inclusive practices' (pages 30–35)
- ▶ A basic understanding of the menstrual cycle. Use the 'Understanding the menstrual cycle' handout (see Activity sheet 6) to help you. Also check out 'Appendix A: Resources and professional support' section on pages 89–92.

Resources required

- Description Computer, projector, and speakers
- ▶ Whiteboard and whiteboard pens (or large A2 paper and pens)
- 'Understanding the menstrual cycle' handout (see Activity sheet 6).

Set-up

- ▶ The learning space should be set up to allow for students to work together in small groups, and for a full group discussion/circle. Desks and tables are not needed for this lesson.
- Put up the group guidelines/tikanga.
- ▶ Place the post-box somewhere visible and central in the classroom. Remind students they can post their anonymous questions in the box at any stage throughout the lesson.
- On large sheets of paper, write up the three scenarios for Activity 3 (so students can easily read them).



Learning activities

1. Heads or tails: Menstruation myths (10–15 minutes)

This activity offers a fun way for students to learn some basic facts about Menstruation. It also provides an opportunity for you to assess students' prior knowledge, and to clear up any misinformed beliefs.

This is a game of 'true or false'. Ask students to stand while you read the following statements. After each statement is read, students will indicate whether they think it's true (placing their hands on their head) or false (hands on their bottom – or hips). After stating the correct answer, allow some time for reactions or questions.

- Only women get periods (FALSE anyone with a uterus and ovaries can get a period).
- ▶ When a person is menstruating, they will get angry easily (FALSE while some people are more emotional during their period, it varies between people and each period).
- Periods are always painful (FALSE Some people don't experience any period pain, while others do. Again, this can change each period. While pain is common it shouldn't be so painful that you can't go about your normal life. If this is the case, see your doctor as it can suggest other issues).
- ▶ The average amount of blood that a person loses during their period is between six to eight teaspoons. (TRUE while the amount of blood a person loses depends on the length and flow of their period, most people think they lose more blood than they actually do).
- ▶ You cannot get pregnant during your period (FALSE If you have unprotected sex, you can get pregnant during any phase of your menstrual cycle. This is because sperm can live inside the uterus for up to five days!).
- ▶ You can't go swimming during your period (FALSE There is no medical or physical reason to stop you from swimming while you have your period. However, some people choose not to swim because of their religious or cultural beliefs).

Now discuss the following questions as a whole class:

- What was the most common way people in this group learnt about periods? What are the positive and what are the negative things about learning about periods this way?
- ▶ What were common reactions or views people had of periods (positive, negative or mixed)? What impact might these views have on people who have periods?
- ▶ What things would help everyone to learn more about periods, and to approach them more positively?







2. What is menstruation? (20 minutes)

Watch: MiO Video One: Menstruation Myths and Perceptions

Invite the group to share what they think menstruation is. As a facilitator, use the information provided in the handout 'Understanding the menstrual cycle' (see Activity sheet 6). You can also give this handout to students. Watch the following video clips:

- https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vXrQ_FhZmos&t=8s Nemours KidsHealth: The menstrual cycle (2:06). This video provides a basic overview of the menstrual cycle. Note: This video is USA based and refers only to girls/women as people who get periods. Forewarn students of this.
- https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=W0i2Bwvp6hw Glamour: This is your period in 2 minutes (2:16). This clip gives an emotional depiction of the different phases of the menstrual cycle, including what hormones are involved.
 Note: References made to sexual pleasure (orgasm).
- <u>https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7h0AxQCm1z8</u> Rain Dove x Hello Cup: People with Periods | Change the Conversation (1:19).
- <u>https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=d6gAZg7zwko</u> Rain Dove x Hello Cup: People with Periods | Response to Periods (1:19).

Note: Although the primary function of menstruation is to enable human reproduction/ new life, not everyone who has a period will want to have children. Focussing on this function can be isolating or dysphoric for some people, including trans and intersex folk.

After watching these videos, invite the class to summarise the main points of the menstrual cycle. You can use the handout to support this discussion. Explain to students that everyone's bodies are different, and people's periods are too. The most important thing is to get to know your own body and learn what your 'normal' looks like. This means tracking the number of days between your period, how long your bleeding lasts, how often you have to change your period products, pain levels, discharge type and amount, and emotional changes. Some people find 'period apps' helpful to record or track this information.

Invite students to ask questions. If time is limited, ask them to use the post-box.

Note: While it is important that people understand what the menstrual cycle is, this lesson is designed to provide a basic overview only. There are many resources available to support students to develop a deeper understanding. Speak with their health teacher to arrange another lesson, or refer students to helpful websites or resources (see 'Appendix A: Resources and professional support').





This is a whole group activity and is designed to get students thinking about the things that support or limit period management.

Write the following situation up on the board. If necessary, explain the situation.

A female student gets her period for the first time while at school camp. She has a younger sister and an older brother and is the first of her friends to get a period. She has heard of pads and tampons but doesn't have any with her or know how to use them. She feels worried and upset and wants to go home.

As a whole class, brainstorm the things that influence how this student responds to or manages the situation. For example, the student:

- Doesn't have any period products with her (resources).
- Doesn't seem confident or know how to use pads or tampons (education).
- Is the first in her friendship group to get a period. Her friends don't know how to help her (support systems and safe environments).

As students come up with possible influences, write them on the board. Keep in mind that people will have different experiences, needs and responses. There is no 'wrong' response, although some responses are more health-promoting than others.

Now, create two columns on the board: Barriers and Enablers (keep the previous discussion and ideas on the board, as the class will need to refer to them). If you are working with younger students, you may need to explain these two terms. Select three to five of the influences the group just identified. Consider what the barriers and enablers are for each of the influences selected. For example:

Influence	Barriers	Enablers	
No period products (limited/no access to resources)	 Period products are expensive. Her family haven't purchased any for her, ready for when she does get her period. The school hasn't explained that they have supplies with them at camp. It can be difficult/whakamā (shameful) to ask other people/teachers if they have any period products she can use. 	 Free/easy access to period products. Her family knows how to support her and have prepared by giving her products 'just in case'. The school has given a menstruation talk to everyone before going on camp. They have explained there will be period products freely available at camp should anyone need them. People are open and supportive of periods. There is no shame or judgement associated with having a period. It is easy to talk about periods and ask for help. 	







For the non-menstruators in the group, this is an excellent opportunity to learn about the challenges that menstruators face and identify ways they can support their menstruating peers/friends/family (be an ally).

Wrap-up (3 minutes)

This activity is called 'Today I learned from...'. Ask students to think about a classmate who taught them something in today's lesson or who made them think differently. Invite a few students to share their learning (who and what) with the class.

Educator/facilitator reflection

- ▶ How did students respond to learning about the menstrual cycle? What was the class atmosphere like?
- ▶ In Activity 3, students identified a range of barriers and enablers for people who menstruate while at camp. What enablers could you or the school implement, immediately and longer-term?







Overview

This lesson focuses on celebrating and supporting diverse experiences of menstruation and gender in the outdoors. Students will explore ethnic and Rainbow perceptions and practices of menstruation and identify how to be inclusive of all people in the outdoors.

Lesson purpose

In this lesson, students will:

- Identify different people's views and experiences of menstruation.
- ▶ Learn about the concept of being an 'ally' and identify how to support others in the outdoors.
- ▶ Identify a range of effective period management strategies to use when in the outdoors.
- Consider how people can reduce their impact on the environment when managing menstruation outdoors.

Content knowledge required

Refer to Part A of the resource:

- 'Menstruation beliefs and practices' (pages 16–23)
- ▶ 'Inclusive practices' (pages 30–35)
- ▶ 'Hygiene, environmental impact, and pain management' (page 36–41).

Resources required

- Computer, projector and speakers
- ▶ Whiteboard and whiteboard pens (or large A2 paper and pens)
- Colouring pens/markers
- ▶ 'Bus stop activity sheets' (See Activity sheet 7).

Set-up

- The learning space should be set up to allow for students to work together in small groups, and for a full group discussion/circle. Desks or tables are optional.
- ▶ Put up the group guidelines or tikanga.
- ▶ Place the post-box somewhere visible and central in the classroom.
- Write the six 'bus stop' questions on large sheets of paper, ready to place around the room.







Learning activities

1. Diverse experiences of menstruation (10 minutes)
Watch:

- Going with the flow' Video Two: Rainbow experiences of menstruation
- ▶ Pink News: Jamie Raines Having periods as transgender man (3:11) https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ycpfcl55dlQ (optional viewing, if you have time)

Walk and talk reflection: Have the students organise themselves into groups of three or four. While they are walking, they must discuss the following prompt:

How well do you think the school caters for people who menstruate? What is done well, and what could be improved?

Encourage the students to think about all people who menstruate (trans and intersex people, people of different ethnicities or religions). After five minutes, the students must return to the learning space and be ready to share what their group discussed.

2. How to be an ally (10 minutes)

This activity focuses on how people can be an ally to (support) people who menstruate (and while in the outdoors). Firstly, define what an ally is: *An ally is someone who takes action to support a group that they are not part of.*

Watch: https://vimeo.com/235268182 - RainbowYOUTH: How to be a good ally (1:00). The video gives some ideas of actions people can take to support the Rainbow community (described as LGBTIQ in the video). Note: there is no audio in the video.

Either as a whole group or in small groups, get the students to brainstorm the actions they could take to be a menstruation ally in the outdoors. Note: Anyone can be an ally. However, people who do menstruate can think of actions they could take to empower themselves, or they could focus on another group of outdoor participants (i.e., rainbow participants).

3. Bus stop: Managing periods in the outdoors (40 minutes)

This activity builds on the activity 'Influences on period management' completed during Lesson 3: Activity 3. Begin by reflecting on the things students identified as being influences on how people manage their periods.

Watch: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hc-mEXEumy0 – Allure: 100 years of periods (8:20). This video refers to US culture but still offers a good overview of Western history of periods and period products.

Place the seven 'bus stop' question sheets around the classroom (see Activity sheet 7).



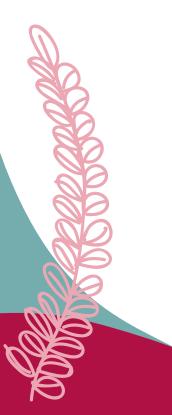


Ask students to organise themselves into seven groups and move themselves so each group is in front of a 'bus stop' sheet. At each 'bus stop' students need to write down as many ideas as they can in response to the question. After three minutes students move to the next bus stop, until each group has completed all of the stops. Then ask each group to summarise what people have written on their sheet. Collect these in, so you can type them up and integrate them (when appropriate) into your practice.

4. Wrap-up (3 minutes) Complete the reflection activity called 'So What?'. Have students answer this prompt: What takeaways from the lesson will be important to know three years from now? Why?'

Educator/facilitator reflection

- How did you feel during today's lesson? Did anything surprise you, about either your own, or a student's, reaction?
- ▶ How did students react to learning about diverse experiences of menstruation? What messages or experiences may you need to highlight or share again?
- ▶ How well did students grasp the concept of being an ally? What could you do to regularly remind students about how to be an ally?







Lesson five: Menstruation management in the outdoors

Overview

In the final lesson of this unit, students will delve into the products and strategies that can be used to manage menstruation outdoors.

Lesson purpose

In this lesson, students will...

- Identify the different menstrual products available, including their pros and cons for use in the outdoors.
- Explore a range of strategies about how to change and carry menstrual products in outdoor and remote wilderness environments.
- Identify what an outdoor period kit is and how to make one.
- Discuss how to create a safe and inclusive group culture when outdoors.

Content knowledge required

Refer to Part A of the resource – 'Management tools and strategies'. Specifically:

- Outdoor Period Kits' (pages 41–42)
- ▶ 'Menstrual Products 101' (pages 43–49)

Refer to Part B of the resource – 'Information for educators and practitioners'. Specifically:

- ▶ 'Activity specific challenges' (see pages 68–70)
- 'Common scenarios' (see pages 70–72).

Resources required

- December, projector and speakers
- Whiteboard and whiteboard pens (or large A2 paper and pens)
- ▶ A2 or A3 sheets of paper and colouring pens
- A period kit (fully stocked)
- 'Period products for the outdoors' (see Activity sheet 8). Depending on the group size, print one or two copies of each topic information sheet.
- 'Responding to challenges' (see Activity sheet 9).





- The learning space should be set up to allow for students to work together in small groups. Students will need desks or tables for this lesson.
- Put up the group guidelines/tikanga.
- ▶ Place the post-box somewhere visible and central in the classroom.

Learning activities

1. What's in the bag? (10 minutes)

Have a pre-made period kit placed up the front of the room (or wherever students can see it). Make sure that the period kit bag isn't see-through. Before the lesson, count how many different types of products are in the period kit (x). This is the number of items that students need to guess. See 'Outdoor period kits' on pages 41–42 for more information.

Begin by saying, 'Today we're going to learn about different period products, their pros and cons for outdoor use, and how to make a period kit. In front of me, is a period kit. A period kit is like a first aid kit, except it contains everything that a person might need if they get their period outdoors. There are [x] different types of items in this kit. Either by yourself, or in a small group, you will have four minutes to guess what the items are.'

When time is up, ask students to name the different items that they came up with. Find the corresponding item in the kit (if it's a correct item). If there are some items students didn't guess, then reveal these at the end. When bringing items out of the kit, make sure you use its correct name (i.e., applicator tampon, not just tampon).

2. Period products for the outdoors (30 minutes)

Watch: 'Going with the flow' video three: 'Menstruation management in the outdoors'

Lay the period kit items at the front of the room. Divide students into five groups and allocate each group one of the topics below:

- Reusable period products
- Non-reusable period products
- Changing period products
- ▶ The history of period products and managing waste
- Period kits and pain management.

Each group needs to collect the relevant information sheet (see Activity sheet 8) and period products. They will have 15 minutes to learn about their topic. At the end of the







15 minutes, have each group present (up to five minutes per group) what they learned. Allow time for guestions and clarification.

3. Responding to challenges (20 minutes)

Explain to the group that team culture has a significant influence on the success and enjoyment of an outdoor experience. In this activity, students will identify strategies for how they can manage common 'outdoor menstruation challenges'. Depending on the groups' comfort levels, you could either get them to write down and discuss their strategies, or role play them.

Give each group the list of scenarios (see 'Responding to challenges' - Activity sheet 9). They must select one scenario to focus on. If they finish early they can consider the other scenarios too. Allow ten minutes for students to brainstorm their management strategies, before they present their chosen scenario and strategies to the whole group.

Identify common strategies, offer feedback and extend students' thinking where possible.

Unit wrap-up

Ask one or two students to recap what you have covered throughout the unit. Share with students how they can get more information on the topics covered in this unit. Also invite them to post any final questions in the post-box (you will either need to email them the responses or answer them in another class/session).

Finally, ask the students to turn to the person next to them and respond to the following question: 'What is something from this unit that surprised you, you changed your mind about, or that you want to learn more about?'. Invite a few students to share their reflection with the whole class.

Educator/facilitator reflection

- ▶ What is one thing that you learnt during this unit that will influence or change the way you teach/instruct/lead?
- ▶ What lesson/topic did you feel most comfortable delivering? What topic do you want to learn more about?
- If you were to deliver this unit again, what is one thing you would change or do differently?
- What was the students' overall response to the unit? How did this align with your expectations?



Information for educators and practitioners

'Girls should be able to feel comfortable to talk about their period to both female AND male teachers.' (Young Samoan woman)

Educators and outdoor practitioners need to take an active role in rewriting outdoor culture. Research shows that young people who menstruate want their teachers (regardless of the teacher's sex) to talk with them about periods. Many rangatahi believe that menstruation is nothing to be ashamed about. Instead, they want teachers to explain how to safely manage their periods in the outdoors and be considerate of the challenges they face.

Practitioner reflection

Young people look to their leaders as role models and for guidance. Your experiences, perceptions and biases about menstruation, gender and sexuality (among other things) shape how you lead. Recognising these influences is an important part of your ongoing development as an educator or practitioner. Reflect on the following questions and consider what immediate actions you can take to implement more inclusive outdoor practices.

Consider:

- ▶ What do I believe and know about menstruation? What has informed my thinking?
- ▶ How comfortable am I talking about menstruation? Who do I feel most and least comfortable talking to about it?
- ▶ What do I know about different cultural perceptions and practices of menstruation and gender? How do the outdoor experiences I provide support or limit students from cultures different to my own?
- ▶ How do I think and talk about bodies? Is the language I use inclusive of all people's bodies and experiences? How could I encourage and celebrate different bodily expressions or experiences?
- ▶ How do I think about and plan for students who may be menstruating in the outdoors? What am I currently teaching them about menstruation and menstrual care?
- ▶ What are my beliefs about gender and sexuality? What messages am I sending to my students about gender and sexuality through what and how I teach?
- How do my students support and limit each other (knowingly and unknowingly)? How do I manage these gendered interactions?
- How does my school/organisation/club ensure that students who are intersex, transgender or gender-diverse feel safe and supported in the outdoors? Is there a policy that upholds this? How many staff and students are aware of it?







Age appropriateness

Periods, gender and sexuality tend to be absent from everyday conversations, and so many young people turn to the internet and other media for information. This means that some of the tamariki and rangatahi you work with may have prior knowledge you might not typically expect, or they may have inaccurate information or ideas about menstruation, gender and sexuality.

As you work with your rangatahi to develop more inclusive practices, identify and incorporate their prior knowledge. Check their understanding of basic concepts such as the menstrual cycle and gender and sexuality terminology before moving on to more complex ideas and topics.

Don't be afraid to discuss 'controversial' topics. Use your professional judgement to decide what is appropriate to discuss with each of the groups you work with. Also consider your role boundaries and capabilities. Don't teach or discuss topics that you aren't knowledgeable about or that are not appropriate for students' age and developmental stages. If in doubt, ask for feedback and support from a well-informed colleague.

Remember that the key purpose of raising these topics is to help students learn about their own bodies and identities, and to develop respect and show support for people who have different experiences and views. The more we normalise these topics, the easier it is for our rangatahi to maintain a positive wellbeing and to ask for support when they need it.

Thinking about facilities

A simple and powerful action that educators and outdoor practitioners can take to deliver inclusive outdoor experiences is to consider what toilet and changing facility trans, intersex and menstruating people might need during outdoor experiences. If you have a positive and open relationship with students, and you have spoken to them about menstruation (for example, you have given the start-of-the-year 'hygiene and menstruation' talk, see 'Practical Considerations' on pages 33–35), you could invite students to share what support or facilities they need for the trip. If students do not feel comfortable to discuss this openly, invite students to complete an anonymous form. Include questions about whether they will be menstruating, whether they are prepared or feel comfortable managing their period in the outdoors, and if there is any other support they need. You could also include general fitness and mind state questions to help you plan a trip that responds to your students' needs.





'As a young Māori woman, I was always taught that we weren't allowed to swim in any body of water while we were on our period, whether that be a lake, river or the ocean as it is seen as tapu (sacred).' (Young Māori woman)

'Wearing a pad can be uncomfortable. Not all girls have worn a tampon or a menstrual cup, so it's difficult to do all activities, especially water-based activities.' (Young Samoan woman)

There are activities and outdoor environments that can be more challenging for people who menstruate. Below we offer suggestions on how these challenges can be managed. When an inclusive and supportive culture has been established, it's also a good idea to raise these challenges with the group and to brainstorm together different management strategies. This will help to reinforce awareness and empathy.

Water activities

Individual preferences, the type of period products a person uses, and cultural beliefs and practices can influence if and how a person participates in water-based activities. If a person does not use tampons or a menstrual cup, managing period blood while on or in the water can be especially challenging. Period pads and undies will soak up any water that the participant is submerged in, and this may cause blood to leak into their clothing or boats. This can also be very uncomfortable, especially if the person is physically active directly after being submerged (i.e., walking after a river crossing). Period togs are a good alternative. Also consider that for Māori, water is tapu. This means that if they are menstruating, being in the water may not be appropriate (see 'Ways to maintain hygiene' on pages 37-39).

Always respect the individual's decision and find alternative ways to include them in the activity. This might mean using the nearest bridge (if available) instead of doing a river crossing. Otherwise, allow time for a person to change their period products after they get wet. If kayaking, consider ways to reduce the need for menstruating students to get in the water. For example, if students are demonstrating kayaking techniques, allow menstruating students to perform 'above water' instead of 'in water' techniques.

Trans and intersex students also experience specific challenges relating to water activities. Some activities require students to be in clothing or equipment that is skintight, such as wetsuits or polypropylene clothing (thermals). This can make it hard for trans and intersex people to maintain bodily privacy. Where possible, up-size their clothing or allow them to wear additional items that help to maintain their privacy (such as shorts or vests).







Alpine activities

Alpine environments generally offer limited shelter or privacy, particularly for toileting and getting changed. Limited facilities can also make changing period products more challenging, especially if there is no water. In this case, snow can be used to clean menstrual cups. Whenever possible, make sure there is at least one toilet facility available during the day. This will give menstruating students the opportunity to change their period products in privacy. Make sure to disclose when facilities will be available so people can plan for this. The 'How to change period products when in the outdoors' section on page 43 has further ideas on how to create privacy when there are no changing or toilet facilities.

Activities in remote locations

In remote environments it's unlikely that you will have access to toilet facilities. As in alpine environments, this can make it hard to maintain privacy when changing period products. A sarong, towel, skirt or dress, sleeping bag, tent, rock or a patch of bush can offer some cover. Other group members can keep watch to make sure people don't move into the area where the person is going to the toilet or changing. Remember that all items (apart from menstrual blood, which can be buried) need to be carried out and appropriately disposed of at home. This includes hygiene and biodegradable wipes. It is preferable that hands are washed with biodegradable soap before handling period products. However, if water is not available, hand sanitiser also works well.

Be aware that some students will not express their need for privacy but may go to great lengths to obtain it (i.e., by going to the toilet or getting changed when the group is preoccupied, or by moving far away from the group). Set clear and distinguishable boundaries for groups when toileting in remote locations. Also make it clear that you are happy to speak with people about their menstruating, toileting or other bodily needs or concerns in confidence.

Expeditions or longer trips

On longer trips, preparation is key. Make sure you carry a group period kit that is well stocked with a range of items. It's also a good idea for people who menstruate to carry an individual period kit as well (see 'Outdoor period kits' on pages 41–42). Students will need to think about how they will wash reusable period products or pack and carry non-reusable products so they don't contaminate other items, such as food, cooking equipment or clothing.





During new, intense, or long outdoor experiences, people's bodies can be under stress. This might alter the timing and flow of their periods. Highlight this possibility during the pre-trip 'menstrual and hygiene' talk, to reduce people's anxiety if they experience changes to their 'normal' cycle.

Activities that use harnesses

Harnesses can make it hard for trans and intersex people to maintain their privacy. They can also make menstruating people feel more exposed. Up-sizing a harness is not appropriate. Instead, some people find that wearing longer-fitting t-shirts (worn under the harness) and looser, dark-coloured pants help them to feel more comfortable and relaxed.

Common scenarios

It can be difficult to know how to respond to complex and new situations. In this section we explore some common scenarios that happen during outdoor experiences and offer practical advice on how to manage them.

Scenario one: Today your outdoor education class will be assessed on their bush craft skills, which includes their ability to safely cross rivers. One of your students arrives at school and explains that they can't attend the trip because they have their period and they don't want to get in the water.

While this situation can be frustrating, it is important to remember to respect the student's reason for not wanting to go into the water. Explain to the student that they are still able to attend the trip, as the other assessment tasks don't involve water. During the river-crossing activity, provide an alternative task for the student that enables them to demonstrate their knowledge and skill. For example, they can participate in and lead 'dry crossings' (demonstrating the correct crossing technique while on land). They could pretend they are an instructor explaining how to do a river crossing safely to a group of beginner outdoor participants. You could also ask the student to 'assess' or comment on the rest of the class's crossing technique.

Use your professional judgement to decide if they have demonstrated adequate knowledge to pass the standard. If possible or necessary, organise an alternative practical assessment date, arrange for the student to join another class or group on their assessment day, or allow the student to submit a video of their river-crossing technique.







Scenario two: You are the teacher in charge of the Year 7–8 camp. One of your students came out as intersex earlier in the year. The student and their whānau have requested that the student shares a cabin with classmates of their identified gender (not their sex assigned at birth). You work with the student to identify a suitable bunk group. A few weeks before camp, you receive an email from a concerned parent, who does not want their child to share a bunkroom with the intersex student.

Often, these situations come about because people are fearful and don't have adequate or accurate information. It's best to speak directly with the parent to identify their primary concern. During your conversation refer to the school's inclusion policy (if you have one) to explain how student safety and wellbeing will be managed during camp. If the parent is still unhappy with the arrangement, organise for their child to sleep in a different bunkroom (don't move the intersex student). The transgender or intersex student's wellbeing is the priority in this situation, as they are more likely to experience harassment and exclusion than any risk they pose to their peers.

It's a good idea to include the school's inclusion and sleeping-arrangement policy when camp information is sent out to students and whānau. This will help whānau to understand the school's inclusive approach and reduce the likelihood of issues occurring later. Remember, you cannot disclose an intersex student's status to other students or parents, or require them to disclose it, if the student has not already done so. This scenario and guidance also apply to transgender students, who experience similar discrimination based on their gender and sex assigned at birth. For more information, check out the 'Inclusive practices: Practical considerations' section on pages 33–35.

Scenario three: Your Year 6 class have just completed a cycle-safety course at the local park and are biking back to school. On the way you notice that one of your students has got their period. The other children have noticed and are making fun of them.

The menstruating student is your first priority. Discreetly ask the student to stop cycling and explain to them what has happened. If necessary, you could disguise this by asking them to help you with a specific task. If you don't have a good relationship with the student, ask one of their friends (or another adult) to help you speak to them. Be aware that this may be the student's first period, and therefore they might need extra support. Find something that the student can use to wrap around their waist, to hide the blood stain. Depending on how far away you are from the school, the size of the group and the number of supervising adults, you could stop off at a café or public toilet on route to school. Provide the student with a menstrual pad. Hopefully you have one in the group period kit or first aid kit. You may need to explain to them how to use the pad.

Once back at school, find a change of clothes for the student. It is also a good idea to contact their parents, so they are informed. Follow up with the group of students who made inappropriate or unkind comments. Explain to them what menstruation is, how it affects people's bodies and emotions and the importance of being an ally. If





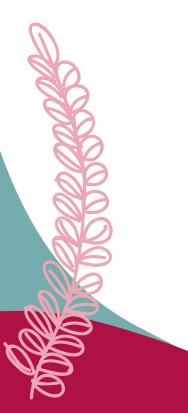
you haven't already spoken to the class about puberty, menstruation and period kits, make time to (it's best to wait several weeks after the event, so that the menstruating student doesn't think it's directly related to them). Also consider delivering the lessons provided in this resource!

Scenario four: Your youth group is tramping (hiking) for the weekend. It's a hot day and the track is steep and challenging. One of the fitter group members appears to be really struggling. After checking in with them, they explain that they're on their period and have cramps and low energy. Several group members are beginning to get frustrated with the slow pace.

Stop the group. Ask the menstruating student what they need to feel more comfortable. This might include taking pain relief, reducing the weight of their pack, loosening their pack hip belt (if it's causing discomfort), taking a moment to rest, hydrate and eat food, or setting a slower or more steady pace. Following the lead of the student, you or they may want to disclose that they have their period. Otherwise, you could simply tell the group that the student is feeling unwell.

Depending on the aims of the tramp, the track or navigation difficulty, the risk level, the group's skill and the supervision structure, assess whether the group can walk as two groups (a slower and a faster group), or whether to keep the group together and set a slower pace. If you decide on the latter, move the menstruating student towards the front of the group (not directly at the front, as this often puts additional pressure on them), and give the faster members of the group extension activities. For example, to identify specific navigational points or features, identify plants or explain how they would manage common tramping safety scenarios.

Like in scenario three, if you haven't spoken to the group about menstruation or period kits, make sure you do before the next trip. Take time to build a positive and supportive group culture, which includes how to respond to the needs of people who are menstruating.



Appendices

Appendix A: Resources and professional support

Key documents

Resource name	Access	Description
Ministry of Education: <i>The New Zealand Curriculum.</i> (2015)	https://nzcurriculum.tki.org.nz/The- New-Zealand-Curriculum	
Ministry of Education: Te Marautanga o Aotearoa. (2017)	https://tmoa.tki.org.nz/Te-Marautanga- o-Aotearoa	
Ministry of Education: Relationships and sexuality education guidelines (Years 1–8 and Years 9–13). (2020)	https://health.tki.org.nz/Teaching-in- Heath-and-Physical-Education-HPE/ Policy-Guidelines/Relationships-and- Sexuality-Education	This resource is a revision of Sexuality Education: A guide for principals, boards of trustees, and teachers (2015). In this edition, explicit links are made to the key learnings at each curriculum level. This resource is intended for all state and state-integrated English-medium schools in Aotearoa New Zealand with ākonga (students) in years 1–8 and 9–13.
Ministry of Education: 'Inclusive education' guides, particularly the 'Guide to LGBTIQA+ students'.	https://www.inclusive.tki.org.nz/ and https://www.inclusive.tki.org.nz/guides/ supporting-lgbtiqa-students/	Practical guidance for teachers and educational leaders. These guides will help you to recognise, plan for and meet the learning and wellbeing needs of diverse learners.
InsideOUT: Making Schools Safer: A practical resource for schools on supporting transgender, gender diverse, and intersex students in Aotearoa. (2021)	http://insideout.org.nz/resources/	A practical resource for schools on supporting transgender, gender diverse, and intersex students.
InsideOUT: Creating rainbow-inclusive school policies and procedures. [2021]	http://insideout.org.nz/resources/	A resource for school boards, leaders, teachers, guidance counsellors, and school communities.

Useful organisations

Resource name	Access	Description
Education Outdoors New Zealand (EONZ)	https://www.eonz.org.nz/	EONZ is the national professional organisation for education outside the classroom (EOTC). They provide professional learning and development (PLD), good-practice information and advice, and develop teaching and learning resources.
New Zealand Health Educators Association (NZHEA)	https://healtheducation.org.nz/	NZHEA is the subject association for health education. They advocate for and support the development of health education, as well as provide a range of resources and PLD.
Family Planning	https://www.familyplanning.org.nz/	Family Planning provide a range of services including sexual and reproductive health information, clinical services, education, training and research. They also have a range of free resources for schools on their website.
Inside0UT	https://insideout.org.nz/	A national charity that provides resources, information, workshops, consulting and support for anything concerning Rainbow or LGBTQIA+ issues and education for schools, workplaces and community organisations.
Rainbow Youth	https://ry.org.nz/	Rainbow Youth offer support, information, resources and advocacy for Aotearoa New Zealand's queer, gender diverse, takatāpui and intersex youth.
Intersex Trust Aotearoa New Zealand (ITANZ)	http://www.ianz.org.nz/	ITANZ provides information, education and training for organisations and professionals who offer services to intersex people and their families.
Gender Minorities Aotearoa	https://genderminorities.com/	A national transgender organisation. They offer a range of resources and forms of support, including a great range of posters suitable for schools and classrooms.
Village Collective	https://www.villagecollective.org.nz/	Village Collective equip Pasifika youth with the knowledge and resources they need for better-informed, well-being and sexual health decisions.
Te Whāriki Takapou	https://tewhariki.org.nz/	Te Whāriki Takapou provide services that help strengthen Māori sexual and reproductive wellbeing. In 2021 they released Te Ira Tangata, relationships and sexuality education programmes for Māori medium schools.





Menstruation related resources

Resource name	Access	Description
Re: First Blood video series (2020)	My flat finally threw a period party: https://www.renews.co.nz/my-flat- finally-threw-a-period-party/ Finding out how my Muslim faith views periods: https://www.renews.co.nz/finding-out- how-my-muslim-faith-views-periods/ My Indian family celebrated my period: https://www.renews.co.nz/my-indian- family-celebrated-my-period/	First Blood is a series where women from different backgrounds revisit the arrival of their first period and share what they've realised since.
Re: 'Competing in sports with your period'. (2017)	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=s- KeNAO6uvk&t=2s	Length: 3:17. 'Have you ever been told you're weaker when you have your period? Meet the rowing team from New Zealand who don't accept that at all.'
The Outlook for Someday short film: 'Super special'. (2019)	https://www.maoritelevision.com/mi/nga-hotaka-katoa/outlook-someday/S01E004/someday-stories-3-super-special	Length: 11:58. 'In the midst of her first period, a quiet resilient young girl must choose between a surprise for her beloved little brother or buying pads for herself.'
JOE: 'How much does your boyfriend know about periods?'. (2020)	https://www.youtube.com/ watch?v=x4yiNk5jlME	Length: 10:59. A discussion between a woman and her boyfriend about her period.
National Outdoor Leadership School (NOLS): 'Inclusive hygiene talk'. (2018)	https://www.youtube.com/ watch?v=Ec7nabLq1VI	Length: 5:58. This is an example of a nongendered (USA-based) hygiene talk.
Lucy Peach: Period Queen (book and podcast)	https://www.mygreatestperiodever.com/ Podcast access via Spotify Note: The podcast includes some swearing and adult content (more suitable for young people aged 13 and above)	'Author and musician Lucy Peach urges us to stop treating periods like nature's consolation prize for being a woman. Through her book, podcast and online courses you can become an expert in recognising what you need at different times of the month and learn how every cycle gives you a chance to cultivate the most important relationship of your life: the one with your precious self.'

Rainbow resources

Resource name	Access	Description
	https://www.renews.co.nz/im-intersex- and-i-wish-doctors-had-left-my-body- alone/	Length: 11:22. More suitable for older students (Year 9 students and above).
InsideOUT: YouTube channel.	InsideOUTKoaro/videos	A range of videos covering topics including Rainbow primary school student experiences, pronouns, non-binary people and Schools Pride week.

Resource name	Access	Description	
Rainbow Youth and Tīwhanawhana Trust: Takatāpui: A resource hub.	https://takatapui.nz/	A resource hub for Takatāpui (Māori gender- and sexuality-diverse people) and their whānau.	
Gender Minorities Aotearoa: 'Trans 101: Glossary of trans words and how to use them'.	https://genderminorities.com/database/glossary-transgender/	An evolving glossary of trans words in Aotearoa New Zealand.	
CORE Education: 'Ko tātou tēnei This is us'. (2021)	https://core-ed.org/research-and- innovation/ko-tatou-tenei-this-is-us/	This resource, based on action research, highlights the experiences of ākonga Māori who identify as rangatahi takatāpui – members of the LGBTQIA+ community.	
New Zealand Parliament 'Rainbow voices of Aotearoa New Zealand: A documentary short film'. (2019)	https://www.youtube.com/ watch?v=nlavjpujl0l	Length: 20:37. 'From staring down thousands of protestors, to Parliament narrowly passing bills giving fundamental rights to LGBTQ+ people, this documentary showcases personal stories of New Zealand's turbulent Rainbow history.'	
REI: 'LGBTQ+ adventurers, in their own words'. (2019)	https://www.rei.com/blog/camp/lgbtq- outdoor-adventurers#allison-tucker	In this article REI (USA based) talk to more than 30 LGBTQ+ adventurers to get a sense of their lives in the great outdoors.	
NBC News: 'For transgender men, pain of menstruation is more than just physical'. (2020)	https://www.nbcnews.com/feature/ nbc-out/transgender-men-pain- menstruation-more-just-physical- n1113961?cid=sm_npd_nn_tw_ma&fbcl id=lwAR1QolPRS6wfxhVnC89WfEXwZFL T48RJky5Y_Ko4HYcCQeEk5IzEpbyvjsk	A USA-based article explaining the challenges trans men face when they have their periods.	
Outside: Venture out. (2020)	https://www.outsideonline. com/2410291/venture-out-lgbtq- outdoors	Length: 14:44. This US-based video shows participants from the Venture Out Project, a Queer and Trans outdoor group, on an outing to Colorado's Rocky Mountains. More appropriate for older students (Year 9 and above). Includes themes of suicide and eating disorders.	
MyPronouns.org	https://www.mypronouns.org/	An online resource that provides information about the use of personal pronouns in the English language.	
HiHo Kids: 'Kids Meet a Gender Non-Conforming Person'. (2018)	https://www.youtube.com/ watch?v=DZsBei4nCkU	Length: 7:05. A US-based video showing a facilitated discussion between young people and a non-binary person.	
Leap Sports: Non-Binary Inclusion in Sport. (2020)	https://leapsports.org/files/4225-Non- Binary%20Inclusion%20in%20sport%20 Booklet.pdf	This resource, published by LEAP Sport (Scotland), includes case studies of non-binary people's experiences in sport and offers tips on how to be a non-binary ally.	





Appendix B: Lesson activity sheets

Activity sheet 1: Unit topics list

The following topics are covered in this unit (basic topic description):

- ▶ Communication strategies.
- Learning attitudes: 'Be curious, not judgemental'.
- Celebrating diversity.
- Identity and identity expression.
- Gender behaviours.
- Sex characteristic and Variations in Sex Characteristics (VSC or intersex).
- ▶ The menstrual cycle and period care and management.
- Period management in the outdoors.
- Being an ally.
- Creating safe and inclusive group cultures.

The following topics are covered in this unit (detailed topic description):

- Communication strategies.
- Learning attitudes: 'Be curious, not judgemental'.
- Celebrating diversity.
- Identity and the different ways people express their identity (including gender identity).
- Sex characteristic and Variations in Sex Characteristics (VSC or intersex).
- Societal views and expectations of gender and sex.
- ▶ Beliefs and myths about menstruation (periods).
- The functions of the menstrual cycle.
- Period care and management strategies.
- Having a period in the outdoors.
- Rainbow, transgender, and intersex people's experiences of menstruation.
- Environmental considerations for period management in the outdoors.
- Being an ally.
- ▶ Creating safe and inclusive group cultures.

Note: For younger students, you may need to define or explain each topic.

Activity sheet 2: Post-box instructions

The anonymous post-box (also called a 'question-box') is a useful tool that enables students to ask questions confidentially. The post-box can help students to:

- Raise topics that are important and relevant to them.
- Ask questions they may feel unsafe or too embarrassed to ask in front of others.
- DClarify information they may not have fully understood in class

Set-up:

- Create a post-box: Anything can be used as a post-box. For example, a shoe box, hat, bag or lunch box. Make sure the item is not see-through. Decorating the post-box can also make it more interesting and welcoming for students to use. Before each lesson put the post-box somewhere central in the classroom (for example near the door so students can put their questions in as they leave the room).
- During the first lesson, explain the post-box to students. Say:

 'Every lesson the post-box will be placed here.' (Indicate the location of the post-box.) 'Each lesson you will receive a blank piece of paper (or you can use your own if you run out). At any time, you can write a question about the topics we have covered, or something you want more information on, and put it in the post-box. You don't need to write your name on your slip of paper, unless you want me to follow up with you individually.

 'Sometimes we may spend a few minutes at the end of the lesson writing our questions. When that happens, and you do not have a question, draw a happy face or write a funny joke so that everyone has something written on their piece of paper. You can put your piece of paper in the post-box as you leave the classroom. I will answer the questions during our next class or otherwise email them to the whole class if we don't have time in class to answer them.'

It's a good idea to remind students of the post-box each lesson, in case students have been absent or need some encouragement to ask questions.

Answering the questions:

- Decorporation Collect in the questions and read them before the following lesson to allow time to prepare your response.
- Accept all questions as genuine. Sometimes questions might seem to be 'joke' questions, intended to get a laugh from the group. However, they may still be genuine questions and should be treated as such.
- If you get a curly question, aim to be unshockable and try not to show your discomfort. Instead, focus on providing the facts (not your personal experiences).
- ▶ Ensure your answers are simple, accurate, concise and age-appropriate.
- It's a good idea to group questions into common themes, as some questions may build on others.





Activity sheet 3: Curious conversation guidelines

discussion. Keep the conversation focussed on learning.

Curious conversation guidelines
1. Show active listening
Look at the speaker.
Wait for the others to finish speaking before you speak.
2. Talk to your classmates
Talk to your classmates, not just the teacher.
Speak clearly, calmly and loud enough so that everyone can hear.
Your comments may be in response to a particular classmate's thoughts, or directed to the entire group.
3. Build your ideas on what others have said
▶ When you speak, refer to the previous speaker. For example: 'I agree with because', or: 'I partially agree
with, in that but I'd like to add'
4. Back up your statements
Refer to ideas or concepts shared in the lesson or previous lessons.
Provide reasons or personal examples.
5. Feel free to challenge the opinions of others
Challenge ideas and assumptions.
Comment on ideas, but never the person who said them. For example: 'I disagree with your point,, because'
Disagree politely. If there is something you agree with in the other person's argument, state this first. They are
much more likely to listen if you acknowledge what your arguments share.
▶ Keep an open mind and welcome opinions other than your own, because that is what makes for an interesting

Note: These guidelines have been adapted from the 'Discussion Guidelines for Edutopia'. Source: Edutopia (2018). https://docs.google.com/document/d/1fllDsYwLz08_op-sfvQByAH8IUQmJkmSQvUQ3kN8jXU/edit Curious conversation guidelines: Discussion stems

ACCOUNTABLE TALK

Discussion stems for effective conversation

CONTRIBUTE	I thinkI wonder ifI have an ideaI'm thinking	
AGREE	 I agree with your answer because I think you are correct because I agree with your reasoning of I like what said because 	
DISAGREE	 I agree with, but I also think That's a good point, but I respectfully disagree with you because Another way to look at it is 	
SUPPORT	 That's true because In the text, it says I know that is correct because An example of that is 	
ELABORATE	 I think you are right, but I would like to add To build on what said I would like to add I would like to add on to what said. 	
CHALLENGE	 What if Have you considered? I respect your opinion but Some people feel that 	
SUMMARIZE	To clarify, I heard you sayWhat I think you said wasSo you're sayingLet's recap	
CLARIFY	 Can you clarify what you mean? Could you say that again? What do you mean when you said I don't understand what you mean. 	
CONNECT	 That reminds me of What you're saying connects to Going back to what said I can relate to what said 	

Source: Jenn Keigher (2019). <u>www.eastnashteacher.com</u>



Activity sheet 4: 'I am...' example poster

IAM

BRAVE - COMPLEX - KIND MĀORI - NERD - ANIMAL LOVER
- ARTISTIC - OUTSPOKEN
DISABLED - FUN - RELIGIOUS CHANGING - BEAUTIFUL
LEARNER - BROTHER - SOFT FLUID - SMART - DAUGHTER DIFFERENT - SWEET - ACTIVE

PACIFIC - CRAZY - A WARRIOR
- EARTH PROTECTOR - TALL PĀKEHĀ - SHORT - STRONG FIERCE - COMPLICATED

Activity sheet 5: Mix and Match terminology cards

Note: The below definitions come from Part A of this resource. Please refer to the section 'Supporting gender diversity and variations of sex characteristics' for the origin source of each definition. For this activity (described in Lesson two) you will need to cut the cards along all dotted lines. The terms and definitions are matched correctly below

Cisgender	A person whose gender aligns with the sex they're assigned at birth.		
Transgender (trans) An umbrella term for people whose gender differs from the sex or gender they we assigned at birth. E.g. a trans woman is a woman who was assigned male at birth the assumptions made about her body.			
Non-binary	An umbrella term that describes all genders other than woman/girl or man/boy, or the rejection of gender entirely.		
Gender diverse A term for a diverse range of 'genders', including culturally specific ones. This term especially relates to those whose gender(s) is outside of the binary of men and work who may or may not use the term 'transgender' or 'trans' to describe themselves.			
Intersex	A term describing people who have innate sex characteristics that don't fit medical norms for female or male bodies (sometimes known as Variations in Sex Characteristics or VSC). Intersex people have many different kinds of bodies and life experiences.		
Characteristics Describes a person's physical features relating to sex, including genitalia and other and reproductive anatomy, chromosomes and hormones. A traditional Māori word that, literally translated, means 'intimate friend of the same that has since been embraced to encompass all Māori who identify with diverse gender characteristics and sexualities. Refers to a person's identity as male, female or otherwise. This may include the gen a person internally feels ('gender identity') and/or the gender a person publicly expression') in their daily life. A person's current gender may be different from the sex recorded at their birth and from what is written on their current legal documents of the sex recorded at their birth and differ across cultures. Some people may not identicate any gender.			
		Endosex	The term for someone who is not intersex.
		Rainbow	An umbrella term that describes people of diverse genders, sexualities and sex characteristics. This term often used to refer to a group or community of people, rather than an individual person.
LGBTQIA+	An acronym that stands for lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer, intersex, asexual and other genders and sexualities.		



Activity sheet 6: 'Understanding the menstrual cycle' handout



An overview of the menstrual cycle

- The menstrual cycle is caused by hormone changes in a person's body.
- The average menstrual cycle is 28 days (approximately one month). However, some people have shorter (24 days), or longer cycles (38 days).
- A menstrual cycle starts with the first day of the period (also called menstruation) and ends with the start of the next period.
- A person will typically experience periods for 30-40 years of their life. Periods begin around puberty (10-14 years old) and finish at menopause (48-54 years old).
- If a person becomes pregnant, their period will stop. It will return a few months after they give birth.
- During each menstrual cycle, a person will experience changes to their hormone levels, energy, mood, and other body functions (including to their skin and vaginal discharge).
- Each person experiences periods and the menstrual cycle differently. Although there are common things that happen, it's important to learn what is normal for you.

The menstrual cycle has four phases:

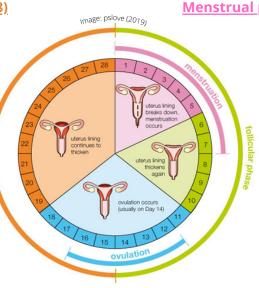
menstruation; follicular; ovulation; luteal

<u>Luteal phase (day 15-28)</u>

This follows right after ovulation. Unless an egg was fertilised in this cycle, the uterus lining will keep building up, before shedding during the menstrual phase. Toward the end of the luteal phase, people can experience PMS (premenstrual tension). This can include feeling tired, irritable, bloated and develop acne.

Ovulation phase

During this phase the body ovulates. This is where an egg is released from an ovary (usually around day 14). During ovulation people are most fertile (it's the easiest time to get pregnant). People also tend to feel energised and positive during their ovulation phase.



Follicular phase (day 8-14)

In the follicular phase, signals from the brain tell the ovaries to prepare an egg to be released. At the same time the uterine lining thickens. This lining is created to nourish an egg if it is fertilised.

Menstrual phase (day 1-7)

A period is the normal shedding of blood and endometrium (the lining of the uterus) through the cervix and vagina.

Menstrual flow can vary greatly, from light to heavy. On average, only 6-12 teaspoons of blood will be lost each period. Bleeding starts gradually, with light spotting. The color of flow can be red, light pink, brownish, and even blackish sometimes.

Some people experience cramping with their period but significant pain isn't normal.

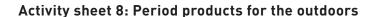
Activity sheet 7: Bus stop activity sheets

Use one large sheet of paper (A3 or A2) for each question or prompt. When writing out the question, make sure you leave plenty of room for the students to write their responses.

See pages 76–78 for the bus stop activity instructions, including set-up and facilitation.

- 1. What challenges might people who menstruate have in the outdoors (e.g., being away from toilets)?
- 2. Brainstorm ways that people can find privacy (to go to the toilet or change period products) when they're in the outdoors and there are no toilets.
- 3. What things could the group do to support someone who is menstruating on an outdoor trip?
- 4. What equipment or resources might be helpful when managing periods in the outdoors?
- 5. What would be helpful to discuss as a whole class before an outdoor trip (regarding periods and how to be inclusive more generally)?
- 6. When you're in the outdoors, how can you take care of the environment? What about when managing periods outdoors?
- 7. What questions do you still have about periods and how people can manage them in the outdoors?





Note: The information provided here comes from Part A of this resource. See pages 43–49 for more information. It is recommended that you print pictures of the relevant period products for each topic/group to refer to, particularly if you don't have the physical items to show students.

Topic: Reusable period items

	Description	Positives for outdoor use	Negatives for outdoor use
Menstrual cups	A menstrual cup is a small funnel- shaped reusable menstrual product made of soft, flexible silicon or rubber. The cup is folded to insert into the vagina. Once inserted it unfolds to create a 'cup' that collects the menstrual blood. To remove, the bottom of the cup is squeezed and pulled on to slide the cup out of the vagina. The collected blood is then disposed of, and the cup can be washed and reinserted.	 Reusable, so very cost- and waste-efficient. Able to be worn during water-based activities. Little waste/gear to carry when in the outdoors. Discreet. No odour. 	 Not everyone can use menstrual cups, due of bodily or discomfort reasons. Some people find they take a while to get used to inserting and removing. Requires clean hands.
Period underwear	Period underwear are like regular underwear, except they are made of multi-layered leak and odour-proof fabric. That means any menstrual blood or vaginal fluid that is caught by the undies does not leak. Period undies can be worn and washed similar to regular underwear. People use them with or without other period products.	 Reusable, so very cost- and waste-efficient. Very easy to use. Can be worn with other period products. Discreet. Little waste/gear to carry when in the outdoors. Limited/no odour while being worn. 	 Can create more mess, due to blood not being 'contained' inside the body. Not suitable for water-based activities (although period togs are available). Cleaning period undies while in the outdoors can require more effort. Harder to find in some countries.

Period undies

Period underwear has become more common in the past few years and there are now a range of brands that offer undies and swimwear that are specifically for people to use when they have their periods.

Period undies look like regular underwear except they have two or three layers of fabric that catch the period blood (or other discharge) much like a pad does. The type of fabric means that period undies won't leak, unless your flow is more than the recommended amount for the undies. Some period undies use special fabric technology, while others use natural fibres such as merino wool. Almost all have antimicrobial properties, which means that they don't hold smell as much as other period products and there's less chance of an infection if you wear them for longer. Period undies are an excellent option for people who are keen to reduce the waste associated with typical period products, as they are reusable. They are also less likely to cause chafing than disposable pads and are often less bulky.

Going with the flow

Most brands recommend rinsing the undies straight after use and then hand washing them later on. This means they can easily be taken on outdoor trips. Some people who use period underwear during outdoor adventures recommend not rinsing them (unless you are going to properly wash them straight away), as this can sometimes increase their smell as they dry. They instead say to put them in a separate 'undie bag' and wash them back at home. However, on longer trips they can be washed 'in the field' using natural or biodegradable soap and then dried on the outside of a pack (or elsewhere) during the day. Always remember to follow 'Leave No Trace' principles when washing your clothes in the outdoors by washing them at least 50 meters (about 70 steps) from a water source.

Pads

Period pads come in many shapes and absorbency types. Some people who don't want to or can't use 'insertable' period products (like tampons or menstrual cups) prefer to use pads. When in the outdoors pads can sometimes be uncomfortable if they get wet, and because they can be bulky they can cause chafing, especially when walking or cycling on longer adventures. 'Winged' pads (ones with 'wings' that stick onto the side of underwear) are less likely to move around or leak. However, 'non-winged' pads are less likely to cause chafing but are more likely to shift during movement. Reusable pads are like period underwear in that they are a multi-layered cloth liner or pad that sits inside the underwear. Care and washing instructions are similar to those of period undies.

Menstrual cups

While they were invented in the 1930s, menstrual cups have only become more common in the past five years. They are reusable funnel-shaped 'cups' that are inserted into the vagina and collect menstrual fluid. These cups are made of high-grade silicon or rubber. Menstrual cups are an excellent environmentally conscious option, as they don't create any waste. If looked after properly, a single menstrual cup can last up to ten years!

Depending on a person's flow, the cup only needs to be emptied every four to twelve hours, and because it is non-absorbent, there is less chance of developing TSS (Toxic Shock Syndrome). This means that wearing one for a full day trip or leaving it in overnight isn't an issue.

When using a menstrual cup in public toilets or where facilities are limited you can:

- Rinse your cup with water using tap water, a drink bottle or small squirt bottle. Dispose of the washing water and menstrual fluid in the toilet or in soil 50 metres away from a water source, track or hut.
- ▶ Use toilet paper to wipe out your cup. You can also use a hygiene wipe, although wipes create more waste for you to carry. If you do use wipes, make sure to find ones that are suitable for use on genitals, so they don't cause irritation when you reinsert the cup. Also make sure to take the wipes out with you they cannot be placed in the toilet or long drop.





- If you're in an alpine environment (or where there is snow), you can also use snow to clean your cup. Just be aware of where you throw the used snow be discreet and respectful.
- DON'T use hand sanitiser to clean your menstrual cup, as these chemicals will cause skin irritation.
- If you decide to boil your cup while in the outdoors, it's best to use a separate pot or bowl, mainly for other people's sense of comfort, if not your own. While the boiling process will make the menstrual cup and the bowl/pot clean and safe to use, for cultural or other reasons, people may want to use separate pots, especially when cooking equipment is shared.

Some people find that it takes a while to get used to a menstrual cup. There are different sized cups (for people who have had children or have larger/smaller vaginas). Cups also come in different shapes and rigidity – finding one that feels comfortable can take some time, so it's worth persevering. There are several online guides that compare different menstrual cup brands to make it easier for you to figure out which brand/type is going to suit your needs and body.

Tips for using a menstrual cup:

- Most cups come with instructions on how to best fold or use them (folding techniques can vary between cups). If inserted correctly a seal is created between the cup and the vaginal wall. This means it is rare for the cup to leak, even when you're participating in physical activity.
- ▶ Removing the cup can also take a bit of practice, to ensure none of the menstrual fluid is spilt. It is best to practice inserting and removing a menstrual cup when you don't have your period. Using lubricant or practising in the shower can help. Gently pinching the sides of the cup to release the seal, rather than pulling straight down on the stem can make the removal process a lot more comfortable.

It's important to stay relaxed when removing a cup, as the walls of your vagina can tense up if you become stressed. If you're really struggling, take a break, relax and try again later. Don't be afraid to ask other people for advice. Most menstrual cup users have shared similar 'getting used to' experiences to support new users.

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Topic: Non-reusable period items

	,		:
	Description	Positives for outdoor use	Negatives for outdoor use
Pads (all types)	A single-use or reusable strip of material that is placed on the inside of underwear to catch period blood or other fluids. Pads are available in a range of absorbencies and designs. Some have 'wings', which are used to fasten the pad to underwear.	 Easy to use. Often easier to find in different countries compared to tampons. Winged pads stay in place more easily. Non-winged pads are less likely to cause chaffing. Great for first-aid situations as well! 	 Creates a lot of waste and requires proper disposal. Can create more mess, due to blood not being 'contained' inside the body. Less suitable for water-based activities as they will absorb water. May be less discreet as they are bulky. Winged pads are likely to cause chaffing. Non-winged pads may move around during movement. If not changed regularly, they create odour.
Tampons (non-applicator)	A tampon is a small single-use plug of fabric (cotton) that is inserted internally into the vagina using a finger. The tampon will expand as it collects menstrual blood or vaginal fluid. The tampon is removed from the vagina by pulling on a string that is connected to the end of the tampon.	 Reasonably easy to use and discreet. Small and light. Effective and rarely leak. Clean and cause less odour compared to pads. Able to be worn during water activities. 	 Requires clean hands to insert. Not everyone can use tampons. Creates a lot of waste and requires proper disposal. Used tampons can cause odour, although there are strategies to manage this. Harder to find in some countries.
Tampons (applicator)	An applicator tampon is similar to a non-applicator tampon, except instead of inserting the tampon into the vagina using a finger, the tampon has an extender piece (applicator) which pushes the tampon into the vagina. The applicator is then removed and thrown away and the tampon remains in place, until removed by pulling on the string.	 Very easy to use. Can be used in situations where having clean hands is challenging. Able to be worn during water activities. Effective and rarely leak. Clean and causes less odour compared to pads. 	 Creates a lot of waste and requires appropriate disposal. Not everyone can use tampons. Used tampons can cause odour, although there are strategies to manage this. Harder to find in some countries.





Tampons

Tampons come in many different absorbances and types. Regular tampons are inserted using a finger, whereas application tampons have an inner tube that is used to push the tampon into the vagina.

One thing to consider when using tampons in the outdoors is hand cleanliness. Having a way to properly clean your hands prior to inserting a tampon is important to avoid infection or developing (the very rare) TSS or Toxic Shock Syndrome. TSS is caused by inserting a tampon with unclean hands, using a tampon that is no longer sterile (i.e., has touched other surfaces) or leaving it in for over eight hours.

If you use tampons regularly, then using them in the outdoors is no different. However, you do need to think about how you will carry used tampons with you, until you can dispose of them appropriately. Putting tampons in any toileting system (including long drops) can cause blockages and damage septic tank systems. Only organic tampons can be disposed of in composting or biodegradable toileting systems (not flushing toilets). This is because organic tampons are free of chemicals that can damage the environment or stop the good 'decomposing' bacteria from doing their work.

Pads

Period pads come in many shapes and absorbency types. Some people who don't want to or can't use 'insertable' period products (like tampons or menstrual cups) prefer to use pads. When in the outdoors pads can sometimes be uncomfortable if they get wet, and because they can be bulky they can cause chafing, especially when walking or cycling on longer adventures. 'Winged' pads (ones with 'wings' that stick onto the side of underwear) are less likely to move around or leak. However, 'non-winged' pads are less likely to cause chafing but are more likely to shift during movement. Non-reusable pads often have a lot of packaging, so make sure to carry all the waste out with you. Period pads cannot be placed in any toilet (including pit toilets or long drops). Make sure to change your pads regularly as they can start to smell.

Topic: Changing period products

Hygiene in the outdoors

During their period, people are often much more aware of their personal hygiene. Some people prefer to shower several times a day. Obviously, this is much more challenging when you're in the outdoors as access to showering facilities are often limited. However, don't assume that someone who has their period will want to wash in a river or lake. In certain cultures, including for many Māori people, swimming while menstruating is not commonly practiced. Sometimes it is not culturally appropriate for Māori who are menstruating to get in the water, while other times it is appropriate. This decision depends on factors like the person's whakapapa, as well as the swimming location, context and whether it is sea water or fresh water. It is important that Māori trust their own intuition regarding what they do and don't do when menstruating, to ensure they maintain their own tapu. Colonisation has undermined the Māori values system, and so individuals need to determine for themselves what is appropriate for them.

Strategies to keep clean during an outdoor trip

The most common technique used in the outdoors by people wanting to 'freshen up', including folk who are menstruating, is to have a 'splash wash' (splashing water on your body to clean it) or to use personal hygiene wipes, especially when water is scarce. Be aware that not all wipes are suitable to use on genitals and some can cause irritation or increase the chances of developing an infection, especially if used for long periods of time. Wipes, even if they say they are biodegradable, cannot be flushed down the toilet or put in long drop or pit toilets. They can block septic tank systems and interfere with the bacteria that breaks down human waste. Make sure that people who use wipes bring a separate plastic bag to carry used wipes in before disposing of them at home in the general rubbish.

Another option is to use a bandana or antibacterial cloth. Some people use a similar cloth as a 'pee rag' to wipe after urinating in the wilderness. Wet it with water (or snow) before and after use and allow it to dry between uses. Some people feel comfortable drying their period or pee cloth on the outside of their pack, but not everyone will feel this way. Darker coloured, lightweight cotton cloths are best as they dry quickly.

Changing period products more regularly in hot, wet weather or during high intensity activity can also help to maintain hygiene. Remember to dispose of non-reusable period products properly. Most of the time this means carrying them out with you.





How to change period products when in the outdoors

When you're in the outdoors or in places where facilities are limited, or there is limited natural cover, finding a private place to change period products can be difficult. Here are some strategies that some people find useful.

- ▶ Find a natural feature (patch of vegetation/fallen log/rock) that provides some cover. Send some group members or friends further away from your spot to keep a lookout for other people coming into the area. They can stop people from coming towards your spot.
- ▶ Set up a fly sheet or tent that people can use to get changed behind/in. During experiences where carrying weight isn't an issue and there is no toilet, a shower tent is an excellent replacement. This is a great option when you are going to be based in one location for a few days.
- When there is limited natural cover (vegetation), a small, lightweight towel or sarong is an excellent alternative. This can be wrapped around someone's waist while they change, or some friends/group members can hold the towel up (while they face in the opposite direction).

Topic: The history of period products + carrying out used items and how to bury menstrual blood

When period products became mass-produced rather than made at home, there was a shift in perception. Having your period was not as limiting, because disposable period products offered greater freedom. Even so, the messaging from companies often sent limiting and harmful ideas. In fact, in an advertisement, a company described their menstrual products as being the remedy for 'nature's handicap'! Imagine what message that sent to people who menstruate.



'Nature's handicap': This 1920s Kotex advertisement shows a nurse tending to a wounded soldier sitting in a wheelchair. The advertisement reads, '...although a woman's article, it started as Cellucotton – a wonderful sanitary absorbent which science perfected for use of our men and allied soldiers wounded in France'.



Think about period product companies today. What messages about menstruation do their advertisements communicate? Watch the following video promotion by Modibodi, released in 2020, and compare the differences you see in this video to the 1920s Kotex advertisement above.



'Modibodi: A new way to period'. Watch - https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gSnZSaWhtJs&t=9s

What's wrong with the term 'sanitary products'? Periods aren't dirty!

It's best not to use the phrase 'sanitary products'. The word sanitary relates to hygiene, and so needing 'sanitary products' to manage you period implies that periods are unclean in some way. We recommend using the phrases 'menstrual products' or 'period products' instead.

Carrying tampons out with you (the same advice applies for pads):

- ▶ Have a designated plastic sealable bag or container.
- Wrap your items in toilet/newspaper or tin foil before placing them in your bag/container. Tin foil is helpful when you're trying to manage pack space, as items can be squashed more easily than when wrapped in newspaper. Tin foil also helps to contain smell.
- To manage smell, you can crush an aspirin tablet or sprinkle some baking soda into the bag.

How to bury your menstrual cup waste when in the outdoors

Dig a 15-20cm deep hole that is 50m (70 adult paces) away from any water source, campsite or track. Tip in the contents and then cover with dirt. These guidelines are the same when burying any digestive/body waste.

Minimising environmental impact

We are all responsible for protecting and caring for our environment. There are many ways we can reduce or manage our impact on the environment while we are out enjoying it. Managing menstruation is no different. Period products or waste that is disposed of incorrectly can negatively affect the flora and fauna, and can block toilets and make huts, campsites and reserves unpleasant for future visitors. Encourage people to think about how they can reduce their carbon footprint and waste. The best way to do this is by giving them all the options and discussing their pros and cons.

These days there are a range of period products and management strategies that make it easier to reduce our environmental impact. However, it's important to respect a person's choices. If someone is using a high impact product (such as single use tampons or pads), it doesn't necessarily mean they don't care about the environment. Cost, bodily differences and cultural or religious practices can influence the decisions people make.

Ways to reduce menstrual waste impact:

- Use reusable/cloth pads, period undies or menstrual cups.
- If using tampons, choose organic options or ones that have biodegradable wrapping. If using applicator tampons, find a brand that has a cardboard rather than a plastic applicator (outer).
- Carry out all menstrual waste products. After use, put them in a separate plastic bag and dispose of them properly at home (in the general waste). Don't bury or put menstrual products down the toilet or long-drop.
- Dispose of menstrual blood in the toilet, or in soil at least 50 metres (about 70 steps) away from a water source. Don't wash menstrual products or dispose of blood in waterways, especially if people are using them for other activities (such as swimming or collecting water).





Topic: Period kits and pain management

Period kits

It's a good idea to create a 'period kit' that includes everything people might need to manage their periods. You can name this kit whatever you like. Some people choose fun or unrelated names (like 'happy castles'), as this can be more discreet. Some transgender folk prefer to use alternative words to 'period' so it is less gendered. Others like to call it what it is, as they feel that using correct terminology will help to normalise menstruation.

Groups who use shared period kits, like those at Outward Bound, encourage all participants to take turns in carrying the kit. This can reduce the stigma of menstruation and challenge people's perceptions of who menstruates. Treat a period kit as a group item, similar to a first aid kit. This can help diverse groups of people to be more aware of and empathetic towards menstruation. These kits can also be created for individual use. In some instances, this might be more appropriate than having a shared period kit, particularly for trans or intersex folk who want to maintain privacy.

Here are some items commonly included in 'period kits':

- ▶ The kit itself people use a variety of bags or reusable containers. Coloured or opaque bags or containers can help to keep things discreet. Dry bags or coloured drink bottles are also good containers, although soft bags are easier to fit into a pack. Any old plastic bag will also do the trick. Some people also wrap duct tape on the outside of their bag/container, which helps to hide the items inside, but also provides an emergency supply of duct tape! Win-win!
- Period products (enough products of your choice for your typical period length, and some spares).
- A couple of plastic/biodegradable bags to put used period products in. A bread bag or zip-lock bag also works well for this.
- To help manage odour, put a black tea bag, crushed aspirin tablet or some baking soda in the plastic bag with the used period products.
- Folded up newspaper or tin foil (to wrap used tampons or pads in).
- Toilet paper.
- Hand sanitiser.
- Pain medication.
- Wipes.
- Mild biodegradable soap (if you have a menstrual cup or period undies you want to wash). If you can find a multipurpose soap that you can also use for your body, that's even better.



An example of a personal period kit

- ▶ For people who use menstrual cups, a small squirt bottle can be useful when rinsing out the cup after use. However, some people are happy to use their water bottle or collect water from a river/lake etc. Having a designated cup or pot to boil menstrual cups in is also recommended for longer trips.
- Some people also carry a small trowel or shovel that they use to dig small toileting holes with. This is important if you are going somewhere where there are no toileting facilities.

Pain management

Some people experience significant pain during their period and need medication to manage it (either over-the-counter or prescribed). For some people, this pain can be debilitating, can cause headaches, vomiting and emotional sensitivity, and may mean they are unable to fully participate in activities. While there is a common belief that physical activity during your period can help ease period pain, this strategy is not effective for everyone. Telling people who have cramps to move through the pain is not helpful or supportive. Instead, encourage those who menstruate to speak with their teacher or outdoor leader prior to a trip if they often experience cramps so this can be taken into consideration during activities. Pain medication, hot water bottles (or instant/reusable hand warmers) and gentle stretching, yoga or movement are some common ways people manage or reduce their period pain. Most menstruating people will know how to best manage their pain, so respect their experience and intuition. Make sure people bring the pain medication they might need with them.

'My period can affect my participation in sport... usually when I'm on my period I quite often feel hot, faint and sick.' (Young Samoan/Pākehā woman)

'Sometimes having my period is an unintended blessing. When I hike with my period, I generally take it easier on myself - I slow down a bit more and spend more time "still". Doing this can help me to enjoy my surroundings even more.' (Adult Pākehā woman)

'I think it's important to keep a balanced diet when you're menstruating. I've found that can have a big effect on how you can deal with it. When you're bleeding it can be draining, so it's important to keep eating healthy foods. Sometimes I feel like eating nothing all day, but I've realised that I really need food to keep me going.' (Young Samoan/Pākehā woman)

Life doesn't, or shouldn't, stop when you have your period, but that doesn't mean it's always easy to manage and doesn't affect your mood or physical ability. Some people have less energy during and/or in the three to four days leading up to their period. This is important to keep in mind, especially if you notice someone is having a rough time or appears less physically able than usual. This is where developing a positive and supportive group culture is important. The rest of the group can respond respectfully by slowing the pace or showing empathy when people are emotionally sensitive.





Activity sheet 9: Responding to challenges

Scenario one: Your class has just completed a cycle-safety course at the local park and are biking back to school. On the way you notice that one of your classmates has got their period. They don't seem aware of the situation.

How do you respond? What could the class do to support this person?

Scenario two: Your youth group is tramping (hiking) for the weekend. It's a hot day and the track is steep and challenging. One of the fitter group members appears to be really struggling. You decide to ask if they're ok. They explain that they're on their period and have cramps and low energy. Several group members are beginning to get frustrated with the slow pace.

How do you respond? What could the group do to support this person?

Scenario three: You and a group of your friends decide to attend a 'have a go at surfing' afternoon. One of your friends, who is normally really confident and outgoing, seems really hesitant to get involved. When you ask them what is wrong, they say that they don't want to wear a wetsuit because it's too tight and shows off their body.

How do you respond? What could you and your friends do to support this person?

Scenario four: Your class is going on camp next week. One of your peers came out as intersex earlier in the year, and they have requested to share a cabin with classmates of their identified gender (not their assigned sex at birth). You hear some other students talking badly about the intersex student and saying that they don't 'belong' in their cabin.

How do you respond? What could you and your classmates do to support your intersex classmate?ww

