

### What can the Religious Leaders do?

- ✓ Correctly interpret religious writings on menstruation.

### What can the Community do?

- ✓ Create awareness on how to use and disposal of sanitary materials.
- ✓ Clear bushes and dangerous pathways for the children's safety.
- ✓ Guard against destruction of school property (e.g. water tanks, latrines, washing facilities).
- ✓ Mobilize resources for incinerators, washrooms, hand washing facilities etc.



HOW CAN THE COMMUNITY  
**SUPPORT GIRLS**  
DURING MENSTRUATION?

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## ADDRESSING MYTHS

**When you get your first period it means you are ready for marriage.**

Wrong. No, you are not ready for marriage, you must continue with your education.

**Men with AIDS get cured when they have sexual intercourse with girls before having their first period.**

Wrong. You can get HIV/AIDS. Please ABSTAIN.

**If you sit on a stone when you are menstruating, it will reduce the blood flow.**

Wrong. Sitting on a stone when menstruating does not reduce the flow of blood. Use sanitary pads during menstruation.

**If you carry a new born baby during menstruation, it will get a rash and the cord will not dry.**

Wrong. During their menstruation, girls can do all kinds of work including carrying new borns. Before carrying any baby, you should maintain personal hygiene.

**If you go to the garden or climb a tree during menstruation, crops or fruits will die.**

Wrong. There is no co-relation between menstruation and crops drying or fruits rotting.

**If you use the latrine when you are menstruating, you will become barren.**

Wrong. Using a latrine is a good and healthy practice; always make sure you keep it clean.

**Having sex cures painful menstruation.**

Sex does not prevent menstrual pains. Menstrual pains are normal, if too painful seek medical help.

## What can we as Parents or Caregivers do?

- ✓ Know that our children go through body changes.
- ✓ Value the body changes that children go through.
- ✓ Seek and share correct information about body changes with children.
- ✓ Provide nutritious meals rich in iron, and vitamins e.g. millet and vegetables.
- ✓ Teach children personal hygiene.
- ✓ Make sure children do not miss school.
- ✓ Provide re-useable sanitary pads, knickers and handkerchiefs; teach girls how to make and use sanitary pads. Encourage use of good materials such as: cotton wool wrapped in gauze or a clean piece of cloth.
- ✓ Encourage girls to drink plenty of water, eat fruits and vegetables.
- ✓ Take girls for medical treatment in case menstrual problems persist.

## What can the Cultural Leaders do?

- ✓ Explain the good cultural practices e.g. using a pit latrine rather than going to the bush.
- ✓ Discourage the bad cultural practices e.g. washing in the river/water source
- ✓ Protect the girl child from sexual abuse.

## What can the Opinion Leaders do?

- ✓ Explain myths and wrong beliefs on menstruation and its management.
- ✓ Advocate for children's rights in the community e.g. a right to education, privacy, health and parental care etc.
- ✓ Protect girls from defilers and rapists.

