

Menstrual Care Club

Menstruation care starts with awareness

Menstruation awareness is crucial as it empowers individuals through education, helps dismantle harmful stigmas, promotes effective health management practices, and addresses economic barriers.

By fostering a **culture of openness and understanding around menstruation**, organizations can support healthier and more equitable experiences for all menstruators.

I didn't know there were different menstrual products available. In the past, I used pads, but they were quite annoying to use while playing sports. Two years ago, I learned about tampons, and they changed my life. I feel much more comfortable playing while on my period now.

Girls have mentioned that their parents told them not to play sports while on their period.

Only recently did I learn that it's possible to exercise and remain physically active during menstruation. Just a couple of years ago, I started light workouts during my period.

Many of us have similar experiences – Let's TALK about it!

Girls stop coming to training when they are menstruating but not saying that they have their period but rather 'stomachache'.

How can we tackle barriers

Equal Play Effect APAC Partners have come together to brainstorm what else they can do. Here are some of their ideas that could help your organisation too:

Key Barriers to Menstrual Awareness in Sports Organizations across APAC

Stigma and taboo

Social and cultural norms make menstruation a sensitive or avoided topic, leading to a lack of open discussion in many contexts. Common misconceptions and myths such as periods being unclean and impure or that physical activity is harmful during menstruation.

Lack of information

Coaches and staff often lack accurate information about menstruation, impacting how they support players. Often there is a language barrier too since most resources and jargon are in English only.

Access to menstrual products

Without access to menstrual products, many are forced to use unsafe alternatives or skip daily activities including school/work.

Strategies for Addressing Common Barriers

Making sure products and facilities are available at training venues to all people who menstruate

- Toilets, disposable bins, paper towels/tissues
- Menstrual care products (and awareness of how to use and dispose of them)
- Partnering with local brands or fundraising with the aim of making products available
- **FUNDLIFE INTERNATIONAL** gives out hygiene kits as prizes during events/tournaments – using those moments as an opportunity to advocate for such products and facilities

Building staff members' and coaches' (of all genders) capacity to increase understanding of the menstrual cycle

- Offering trainings/workshops with experts
- Referring to resources and creating infographics
- **PLAYONSIDE** held menstrual health sessions with their coaching staff—all genders—so that all coaches are equipped with knowledge/awareness

Educating players on what a healthy menstrual cycle looks like vs. when they need to see a doctor about it

- Encouraging players to track their cycles
- **WE UNITED** had trouble accessing health care experts in rural areas in Nepal – instead they built valuable partnerships with other organisations who specialise in this subject (win-win!)

Educating parents/community members about physical and emotional benefits of physical activity during menstruation

- Challenging misconceptions and encouraging supportive attitudes
- Educating parents about menstruation and menopause
- All partner organisations have incorporated ways to engage their communities with sessions that encourage conversation and understanding

Formalising period talk – adding it to the curriculum and including role-playing to help coaches tackle facilitating important conversations

- Avoiding euphemisms
- Addressing personal biases and misconceptions about menstruation
- Learning to leveraging the power of the menstrual cycle
- **FUNDLIFE INTERNATIONAL** has developed a series of sessions that aim to do just this. Find out more in the resources section below!

Learn more

- adidas Breaking Barriers Academy: **It's time to talk. Period.** (Europe) <https://breakingbarriersacademy.com/course/menstrual-awareness-in-sports>
- **Power to Play Period:** <https://powertoplayperiod.com/resources>
- **Red School** (menstrual cycle awareness and conscious menopause) <https://redschool.net>
- **The Menstruality Podcast** <https://redschool.net/podcast>
- **The Well HQ** (UK) <https://thewell-hq.com>
- **The Bra Professor** (breast health): <https://thebraprofessor.com> (UK)
- **WASH United Menstrual Health Management Education Guide** (available in different languages, and regions / South Asia, Muslim audience and general – can be downloaded only with commitment to use it in a program and reporting to WASH United) <https://wash-united.org/mhm-guide/get-mhm-guide.html>

Context

This infographic shares insights from the 2024 **Equal Play Effect Asia and the Pacific** (EPE APAC) Menstrual Care Collective Club. This Collective Club, consisting of **PlayOnSide** (Thailand), **WEUnited** (Nepal), and **FundLife International** (Philippines), connected to deepen their understanding of menstruation awareness through a series of online workshops. Guided by a shared leadership model, each organization actively contributed towards the learning objectives and outcomes with **Women Win** facilitating the space.

The Main Objective: exploring strategies for sports organizations to address menstruation and reduce menstrual stigma in their programs, with coaches, and within their organizations.

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