

M8

MODULE 8

BARBERSHOP TOOLKIT

ESTD

2025



MENSTRUAL EQUITY & SRHR



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MENSTRUAL EQUITY & SRHR (SEXUAL AND REPRODUCTIVE HEALTH AND RIGHTS)

→ Why This Module Matter?

Menstruation, an integral part of Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights (SRHR) have traditionally been framed as “women’s issues,” reinforcing stigma, exclusion, and silence—particularly among men and boys. Yet men play a critical role: as fathers, partners, brothers, teachers, policy-makers, health workers, and peers. Their silence and discomfort can perpetuate shame, discrimination, and misinformation, while their engagement can foster dignity, health, and rights. Growing authoritarianism often targets reproductive rights and gender equity, seeking to control women’s bodies and enforce rigid norms about masculinity.

This module aims to equip men and boys to become informed, empathetic, and proactive allies in advancing menstrual equity and sexual and reproductive rights for all, while also understanding their own rights and responsibilities.

→ Learning Objectives

By the end of this session, participants will:

- + Understand what menstrual equity and SRHR mean and why they matter for everyone—not just women and girls.
- + Examine how stigma, taboos, and silence around menstruation and sexual health affect communities, policies, and relationships.
- + Reflect on their own beliefs, biases, and gaps in knowledge.
- + Gain tools to support menstrual equity and comprehensive SRHR in homes, schools, workplaces, and policy spaces.
- + Commit to at least one action that challenges stigma and promotes rights, dignity, and access.

→ Who This Module Is For

- + Fathers, uncles, brothers, and male guardians of menstruators
- + Male teachers, coaches, and school staff
- + Male students and youth activists
- + Healthcare workers, community health volunteers, and SRHR professionals
- + Faith leaders and community gatekeepers who influence local norms
- + Policymakers or NGO staff working on WASH, education, or SRHR access

TOOLS FOR ENGAGEMENT

1. MENSTRUAL MYTHS AND TABOOS BREAKER

➔ **Goal:** Challenge misinformation and surrounding this normal biological process and normalize menstruation as an everyday topic of discussion.

➔ How To Facilitate

- + Create cards with common menstrual myths or taboos (e.g., “Periods are dirty,” “Women shouldn’t cook during menstruation,” “Only women menstruate,” “Men don’t need to know about menstruation” “menstrual blood is impure” “menstruating people shouldn’t touch others” “one should not exercise or participate in sports while menstruating this.”).
- + In small groups, participants pick a card, read it aloud, and discuss:
 - ➔ Where have they heard this myth?
 - ➔ What’s the truth?
 - ➔ Why is it harmful?
 - ➔ Why are these myths a recurring theme of discussion and preventing menstruators from fully participating in society?

➔ Debrief Questions

- + How did you first learn about menstruation?
- + Did you feel empowered to ask questions about periods? What resources did you use to learn more about periods?
- + How are men and boys taught to think about periods? What factors contribute to them feeling awkward discussing menstruation publicly or openly?
- + When did you first see menstruation in the media? What was the context? Was menstruation depicted in a positive or negative light?
- + When was the first time you heard someone say the word period aloud? What can you do to reduce stigma in your own context?

➔ Facilitator Tip

- + Include trans and non-binary perspectives. Not all women menstruate, and not all people who menstruate are women. Discuss menstruation as a part of having a uterus and take some time to elaborate on the distinction between gender, sex, and sexuality emphasizing the difference between all three, that these terms are binary, and do not necessarily have to align in an individual.

TOOLS FOR ENGAGEMENT

2. SRHR KNOWLEDGE QUIZ OR MYTH BUSTER

➔ **Goal:** Address misinformation and improve knowledge on sexual and reproductive health.

➔ How To Facilitate

- + Prepare a simple multiple-choice or true/false quiz covering:
 - ➔ Consent
 - ➔ Contraception (importance of using during menstruation due to risk of STI & possibility of conceiving even during menstruation)
 - ➔ STIs and HIV
 - ➔ Male SRHR responsibilities
 - ➔ Reproductive rights
 - ➔ Importance of getting the HPV vaccine including the importance of men getting the HPV vaccine.
- + Debrief as a group and clarify misunderstandings.

➔ Optional Variation

- + Do the quiz anonymously on paper or online and show aggregate results on a screen to reduce embarrassment.

➔ Debrief Questions

- + Which questions were most surprising?
- + How does access to SRHR knowledge vary by gender and age?
- + How does misinformation affect real relationships?
- + What do you wish you knew about menstruation earlier and what is the most effective way in which this information could have been introduced to you?

TOOLS FOR ENGAGEMENT

3. STORY CIRCLE OR PERSONAL TESTIMONY SHARING

➔ **Goal:** Use real-life stories to humanize the experience of menstruation, pregnancy, access denial, or abortion stigma.

➔ How To Facilitate

- + Share short video stories or invite speakers (women, non-binary people, SRHR advocates) to speak about a real challenge they've faced—e.g., being mocked for menstruating, denied access to contraception, or navigating abortion without support.
- + Ask male participants to respond: not to fix, defend, or analyze—but to listen.
- + Ask male participants to reflect on actions they can take to be allies in these scenarios.

➔ Debrief Questions

- + How did this story make you feel?
- + How might this experience have been different with supportive male engagement?
- + What does active listening and support look like?

#HeForShe

UN Women Solidarity Movement
for Gender Equality

#HeForShe + HeForShe + HeForShe

UN WOMEN

United Nations Entity for Gender Equality
and the Empowerment of Women

#WomenEmpowerment

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TOOLS FOR ENGAGEMENT

4. MEN AS SRHR ALLIES ROLE MAPPING

➔ **Goal:** Identify the different roles men can play to advance menstrual health and SRHR for all.

➔ How To Facilitate

- + Ask participants to map the settings they influence: home, school, religious space, clinic, community, policy.
- + In each setting, discuss what allyship could look like:
 - ➔ **As a father:** Normalize period conversations, + purchase period products + take concerns about menstrual pain seriously.
 - ➔ **As a teacher:** Support menstrual hygiene access, take concerns related to period pains seriously, and create a safe space to answer questions regarding periods/push for comprehensive sex education and make an effort to educate students about menstruation in an age appropriate manner.
 - ➔ **As a colleague:** Advocate for workplace leave and dignity (free period products stocked in restrooms including gender neutral restrooms).
 - ➔ **As a leader:** Fund menstrual health or SRHR programs and support policies improving access to period products & mandating access to comprehensive sex education.

➔ Debrief Questions

- + What are you already doing?
- + Where is your voice or influence most needed?
- + What's one new ally role you could step into?

TOOLS FOR ENGAGEMENT

5. COMMITMENT WALL: “I WILL...”

➤ **Goal:** Move from learning to action.

➔ **How To Facilitate**

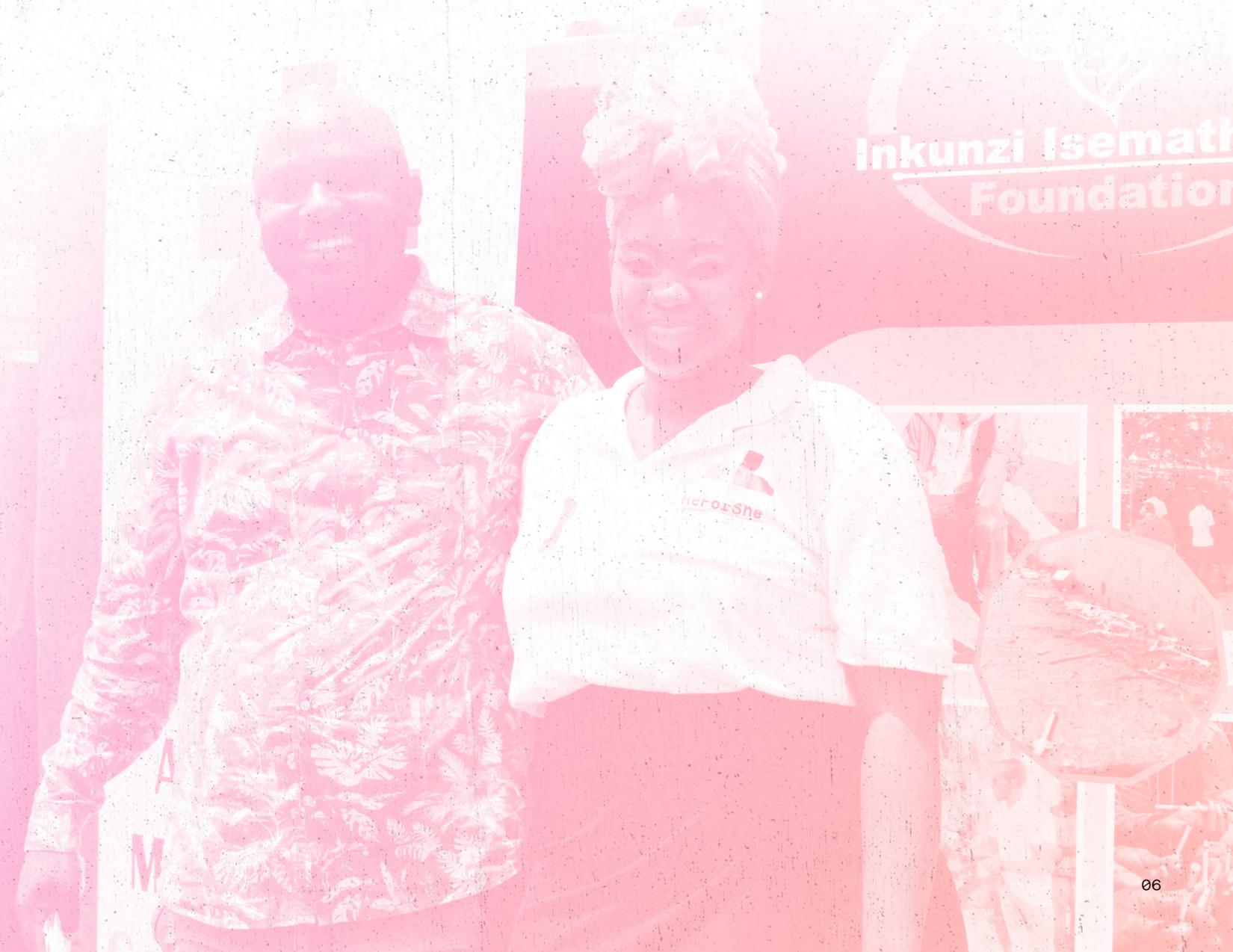
+ At the end of the session, ask each participant to write a commitment that starts with “I will...” on a card or poster.

“I will talk to my son about periods.”

“I will advocate for menstrual products in school bathrooms.”

“I will challenge sexist jokes about SRHR.”

+ Share commitments (voluntarily) or post them anonymously on a commitment wall.



FACILITATOR GUIDE FOR NEW OR INEXPERIENCED TRAINERS

→ Core Concepts to Know

- + **Menstrual equity** means ensuring everyone who menstruates can manage periods with dignity, safety, and choice - covering affordable products, private and safe WASH facilities, accurate education, pain and disorder care, and freedom from stigma and discrimination, and it is anchored in human rights and integrated with SRHR.
- + **Sexual and Reproductive Health Rights (SRHR)** includes the right to accurate information, consent, contraception, pregnancy care and safe abortion, Sexually Transmitted Infections (STIs) prevention, and healthcare, regardless of gender.
- + **Male allyship** does not mean “speaking for”—it means supporting, amplifying, and acting from a place of care and equity while centering the perspectives of menstruators to hear from them regarding where support is needed and in what manner.

→ Suggested Session Flow (90 Minutes)

Time	Activity
00:00 - 00:10	Welcome + Framing: “Why Men’s Voices Matter in SRHR & Menstruation”
00:10 - 00:30	Menstrual Myths Activity
00:30 - 00:45	SRHR Quiz & Group Discussion
00:45 - 01:05	Story Circle or Ally Role Mapping
01:05 - 01:20	Commitment Wall + Closing Round

→ Before The Session

- + Prepare quiz materials and myth cards.
- + Print role maps or provide blank paper.
- + Identify a video or speaker for the story circle.
- + Create a safe space: emphasize that discomfort is okay, but disrespect is not.

→ Ground Rules to Set

- + No laughing or shaming during sensitive content.
- + Speak from personal experience, not assumptions.
- + Listen more than you speak.
- + Everyone’s voice matters, but no one is forced to share.
- + Questions are welcome and encouraged.

FACILITATOR GUIDE FOR NEW OR INEXPERIENCED TRAINERS

→ Sample Script Openers

- + “Menstruation is not a women’s issue. It’s a human rights issue.”
- + “If we stay silent, we stay complicit. Our voices can help break shame.”
- + “Talking about SRHR isn’t awkward—it’s necessary.”

→ Reflect On

- + **Bodily Discomfort:** What discomfort do I feel discussing menstruation, reproductive health, or sexuality? How might my embarrassment or clinical detachment affect participants’ comfort?
- + **Knowledge Gaps:** What don’t I know about reproductive health, and how will I handle questions beyond my expertise? How do I avoid spreading misinformation while acknowledging limitations?

→ Cautions & Tips

- + Expect discomfort—many men have never been invited into these conversations.
 - + Avoid policing language too harshly, but correct misinformation gently and clearly.
- Be mindful that participants may have
- + personal histories related to SRHR challenges (e.g., pregnancy loss, abortion decisions, family health issues).

→ Key Takeaways

- + SRHR and menstruation affect all of us—directly or indirectly.
- + Men’s engagement is essential for breaking stigma, advancing equity, and building supportive systems.
- + Change starts with knowledge, empathy, and courage to act—even in uncomfortable spaces.

ADDITIONAL ENGAGEMENT TOOLS FOR MENSTRUAL EQUITY

1. MENSTRUATION SIMULATION CHALLENGE

➔ **Goal:** Build empathy by helping men physically and emotionally connect to the day-to-day experience of menstruation.

➔ How To Facilitate

- + Provide participants with a small “period kit” (pads, tampons, heating pad, calendar, water bottle, etc.).
- + Ask them to wear a pad (with clothes on) for a few hours or simulate the feeling of cramps using hot water bottles or mild weighted wraps.
- + Potentially use a period pain simulator (cramp simulator) under medical supervision.
- + Pair this with reflection prompts:
 - ➔ How would you manage this at work/school?
 - ➔ What infrastructure is lacking to support this experience?

➔ Caution

- + Avoid turning this into a joke or a spectacle. Emphasize that simulation can never fully capture lived experience, but it can generate understanding and respect.

ADDITIONAL ENGAGEMENT TOOLS FOR MENSTRUAL EQUITY

2. ROLE-PLAY: EVERYDAY PERIOD CONVERSATIONS

➔ **Goal:** Practice how to respond supportively and respectfully in real-life scenarios.

➔ How To Facilitate

+ Prepare situations like:

- ➔ A daughter asks her father to buy pads.
- ➔ A male colleague notices a stain on a coworker's pants.
- ➔ A male teacher notices a girl skipping school during her period.
- ➔ Role play having a conversation with a child about menstruation.
- ➔ Consider how you would approach management at your workplace to implement a period leave policy or stock restrooms with period products.

+ Participants role-play responses that show discomfort, and then try again showing support, normalcy, and care.

➔ Debrief Questions

- + What made the first version awkward?
- + How can we normalize period talk without patronizing or joking?

ADDITIONAL ENGAGEMENT TOOLS FOR MENSTRUAL EQUITY

3. BUILD-A-PERIOD-FRIENDLY SPACE DESIGN CHALLENGE

➔ **Goal:** Get men thinking about infrastructure, dignity, and inclusion.

➔ How To Facilitate

- + Divide participants into small groups. Assign each one a context: a school, a public bus station, a workplace, a refugee camp.
- + Ask them: “How would you make this space period-friendly?”
Include: access to products, disposal bins, privacy, pain support, breaks, and inclusive language.
- + Groups present their design ideas visually (sketches or mockups).

➔ Debrief Questions

- + What surprised you?
- + Who is currently left out of these spaces?



ADDITIONAL ENGAGEMENT TOOLS FOR MENSTRUAL EQUITY

4. "KNOW THE CYCLE" CARD GAME OR INTERACTIVE TIMELINE

➔ **Goal:** Build foundational knowledge about the menstrual cycle and bust myths.

➔ How To Facilitate

- + Create cards with different events from the cycle: menstruation, ovulation, hormonal changes, PMS, etc.
- + Address the biological basis of period pain/introduce related issues like Premenstrual dysphoric disorder (PMDD), Polycystic Ovary Syndrome (PCOS), endometriosis to emphasize how these impact many menstruators and are in certain cases still understudied/poorly understood.
- + In groups, ask participants to place them in the correct order or match symptoms to the phase of the cycle.
- + Clarify common misconceptions (e.g., "menstruation = fertility," "periods happen at the same time every month").

➔ Optional Variation

- + Include cards with emotional or physical symptoms (e.g., bloating, fatigue, mood swings) to build deeper understanding.

ADDITIONAL ENGAGEMENT TOOLS FOR MENSTRUAL EQUITY

5. MENSTRUAL EQUITY POLICY PITCH

➔ **Goal:** Empower participants to become advocates by designing and pitching solutions.

➔ How To Facilitate

- + Assign participants to small teams. Give each a challenge: e.g., “Improve menstrual dignity in prisons,” “Address period poverty in your city,” “Design a policy for free products in schools.”
- + Each team has 15–20 minutes to develop a quick policy or campaign idea and “pitch” it to the group.
- + Encourage creativity: include slogans, visuals, hashtags, and action steps.

➔ Debrief Questions

- + How can men use their voice and influence to support these solutions?
- + What systems and policies are needed to ensure menstrual equity?
- + Why are issues like reproductive rights and bodily autonomy often the first to be attacked by authoritarian regimes?

- + Period teasing and fear of stigma are widespread among adolescents; in one large survey, 13% of girls reported period teasing and over 80% feared being teased, most often by boys, underscoring why boys’ engagement matters for dignity and safety. (NLM, 2020)
- + Authoritarian backsliding often comes with coordinated attacks on SRHR and bodily autonomy, making proactive male allyship and rights-based education critical to defend freedoms and counter coercive control over reproduction. (ICRW, 2023)
- + Men can drive menstrual equity by using positional power to change budgets, policies, procurement, and culture, ensuring free product access, safe facilities, inclusive education, and stigma-free workplaces across government, corporates, and civil society.

USEFUL RESOURCES

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**GENDER EQUALITY
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