

Menstrual Stigma

Why does it matter ?

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Stigma: A working definition

- "A set of – often unfair - negative beliefs & attitudes that people have about something,"

www.merriam-webster.com

MENSTRUAL STIGMA: Does it exist ?

Discomfort because of it is associated with sexuality & reproduction

Shame because of girls' inability to manage effectively

Exclusion because it is associated with dirt & pollution



V Chandra-Mouli, S V Patel, M Sommer. Systematic Review: Knowledge and Understanding of Menarche, Menstrual Hygiene and Menstrual Health among Adolescent Girls in Low- and Middle-income Countries. Submitted to Journal of Adolescent Health.

Menstrual Stigma: Does it matter ?

Hinders ability to carry out every day activities

Weakens self-esteem & self-confidence

Conditions poor health-care seeking



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Menstrual Stigma: Does it matter ?

Core assets

(Adolescent development)

Competence – abilities to do specific things

Confidence – sense that one can do something and positive sense of self worth

Connection – positive bonds with people & institutions

Character – sense of right & wrong, & respect for standards of right behaviour

Caring – sense of sympathy & empathy for others

McNeeley, Blanchard J. The teen years explained. A guide to healthy adolescent development. Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health. Baltimore. 2009.





Girls need:

- To be well educated about menstruation
- To grow & develop in a context that sees menstruation as healthy & positive, not shameful & dirty
- To have access to sanitary products, running water, functional toilets & privacy for self care
- To be cared for & supported by their families when they have their menstrual periods
- To be able to consult a competent & caring health worker when they have menstrual health problems