

# TALKING ABOUT MENSTRUATION WITH YOUR SON:



## A GUIDE FOR PARENTS



# UNDERSTANDING

- Talk to your sons about menstruation at the same age you would your daughters.
- Reassure them that there are no dumb questions, you won't tease them, and you want them to understand.
- Boys are often expected to be magically experts in lots of vulnerable topics, including women's bodies, without ever getting information about it from a trusted adult.



# EMPATHY

- Look for everyday opportunities to talk about periods, and how they are a normal part of life. Half the population will have a period at some point, and it's useful if the other half knows the basics.
- Talking to boys about menstruation gives them a better understanding of the experiences of the women in their life including future partners and children.



# NORMALIZE MENSTRUATION

Ways to normalize menstruation for sons:

- Have them help put away period products after Mom or Dad has done the shopping. Extra points if Dad and son do the grocery run.
- Use positive, plain language around periods.
- Emphasize that periods are a normal part of human biology and nothing to be ashamed of.
- Talk openly in your household about periods.
- Provide opportunities for boys to learn more about periods while also sending the message that periods are normal.
- Look for teachable moments.



# SUPPORT

## Ways sons can be supportive:

- If your son has his own bathroom or you have a guest bathroom, have him stock them with period products for his friends.
- Help sons learn to be nurturing to their moms, sisters, and friends.
  - When someone in the house is menstruating, bring them a heating pad, pain reliever, or a back pillow.
  - Ask them what else makes them feel comfortable or cared for. Women who are menstruating aren't sick or incompetent, but some extra TLC can be affirming and validating.



# DO'S & DON'TS

- DO – be kind about menstruating bodies.
- DO – ask adults you trust questions.
- DON'T – make jokes about the physical process of menstruating or about menstrual products.
- DON'T – tease or joke about the emotions that can accompany periods.





# WAS THIS HELPFUL?

Be sure to save it so you can come back to it later!





# Program Overview

## Fayetteville Menstrual Dignity Program

The Fayetteville Menstrual Dignity Program (FMDP) is an effort to address period poverty and menstrual dignity in our public schools. Period poverty refers to the social, economic, and cultural barriers to menstrual products, education, and hygiene. Menstrual Dignity for students means that all menstruating students, regardless of gender, age, ability, or socioeconomic status have the opportunity for safe, dignified self-care. This program and the community education and advocacy we provide offer an antidote to the common narratives that say menstruation is something deserving of embarrassment and shame.

## Program Goals

**Privacy** Creates safe, private spaces where students can access menstrual products. This means students self-determine when they need access to products without having to ask an adult. Gatekeeping products leads to shame. FMDP wants students to have autonomy and maintain dignity around normal, human bodily functions. In participating public school classrooms, FMDP places bins filled with a variety of menstrual products. Students are instructed by teachers to take as much as they need, whenever they need it.

**Inclusivity** Encompasses all people, arming them with quality information, and honoring differences in how communities gather knowledge and make decisions about health. Gender-inclusive language is also essential when referring to menstruating students.

**Accessibility** Makes products available for all students. All students must have access, regardless of disability or language of origin. Too many students lack basic access to period products to manage their monthly flows. Lack of access can lead to missing school every month. For some, it can mean choosing between food on the table or managing a period with suitable products.

Follow us on [Facebook](#).

Follow us on [Instagram](#).

Make a DONATION to Fayetteville Menstrual Dignity from our [Wishlist](#).

Contact the FMDP Team via email:

Amber Jackson - [ajacksontherapy@gmail.com](mailto:ajacksontherapy@gmail.com)

Shanda Walden Sloan - [shandasloan@gmail.com](mailto:shandasloan@gmail.com)