

HINTS AND TIPS

TO BECOME A MORE
PERIOD FRIENDLY
ORGANISATION

no
more
taboo.

FACILITIES

You might think that it's too difficult to change the facilities at your organisation, but there are a few simple things you can do to make the facilities a bit more period friendly.

It's important that anyone who gets a period can have access to the products and information they need when they go to the toilet.

- **Make sure bathrooms are clean**, well-stocked with soap and loo roll and in good working order. There is nothing worse than changing your period product somewhere that doesn't feel comfortable.
- **Make sure toilets have locks**, a toilet brush (in case blood stains the bowl) and that there is a mirror available so people can check for stains, many people are still very embarrassed by periods so make it easy for people.
- **Why not print off some posters for the loos with some instructions for disposable menstrual products?** I.e. 'Please don't flush tampons or sanitary pads down the loos, put them in this bin'.
- **Make sure free menstrual products are accessible** in gender neutral spaces or the toilets of both genders (don't forget the disabled loos!) because there might be trans men who have periods in your organisation or because males might like to stock up some sanitary products to give out to someone in need.
- Similarly, speak to the caretaking team at your organisation to **make sure that there are sanitary bins in all toilets and that these are emptied regularly**. It is unacceptable to ask people to use the disabled toilet or special staff toilet when they have their period just because they don't fit a stereotypical person who menstruates.
- Often organisations worry that providing free products might get 'abused' or a big mess might be created. By **explaining and educating people as to why products are available**, eg. a sign saying "These products are here especially for people who might not be able to afford them every month or those caught by surprise by their period, please take them if you need them for yourself or someone in need." Or pointing them out to people during an induction to the building.

FACILITIES CONT.

- It's not always possible to change the configuration of a bathroom but if you are having them re-done or new ones built **consider putting a sink in the cubicle for people to wash their menstrual cup or wash blood off their hands in privacy.**
- **Leaks happen! Make sure your service users have access to a spare change of clothes.** Keep tabs of what's in the lost property to make sure there's something suitable for most people. If it's possible, have access to shower and laundry facilities on site.

PRODUCTS

At the moment menstrual products are still classed as a luxury, that's not fair! Why should we have to pay for something natural that happens every month? Especially if you are in a situation where that cost can be difficult to bear each month. Think about the people who access your organisation and the ways in which they could be managing their menstruation.

- **Are free menstrual products available and accessible at your organisation?** A good first step would be to look into providing free menstrual products – get in touch with **The Red Box** to see how they could help, or put a call out on your social media for donations and see if there is anyone in your local area collecting. Some organisations like **Fareshare** get large donations from supermarkets to distribute to organisations that need them. **Let people know you are in need.**
- **Make sure your stash of menstrual products is stocked with different ranges and sizes,** ie. tampons for light, normal and heavy flow as well as mini, medium and night pads. No use having 5 mini pads to get you through the night on a heavy flow!
- **Why not add in some extras – like chocolate, tea, extra pairs of pants,** this can really make people feel valued and make a big difference to them on their period.
- **Make sure your service users can access your supply of menstrual products without having to ask.** The toilets are a good place as they can be used here directly or a basket in an area open to everyone.
- **Want to go one step further, why not provide access to reusable sanitary products?** Menstrual cups and washable pads are so much more cost effective than disposable pads or tampons. Get yourself clued up with some simple information and guidance from the list below and then tell your service users about them. Many of the manufacturers including **Organicup** will donate cups to organisations in need.
- **Add a suggestion box next to your free sanitary products** or send round a survey to ask people what products they need and what is most useful to them.
- **Ask people if they need sanitary products!** Don't assume they will ask you, be open, respectful and straight forward about it.

CULTURE

Creating a period-friendly culture in your organisation can be tricky, due to the amount of stigma and taboo that we associate with periods.

However, there are small changes you can make to let your both staff and service users at your organisation know that it's OK to talk about periods.

For example...

- **Why not become a Period Hero at your organisation?** Make it known to the service users that you're happy to talk about periods with them and can provide the products they need. You could print off a sign for your office, or make an announcement in a team meeting.
- **Why not make this a group activity?** Get a group of staff and service users together and have a think about the different period friendly changes you could make as individuals, as well as a list of bigger things that need to change at your organisations. What sort of things need to be done? Who are the right people to talk to about this? Make a plan of action as a group.
- **Set a goal for yourselves to bring up periods with a few different groups this week**, eg. with colleagues, at a drop-in, during a 1:1 with a service users.
- **Put up posters around your organisation, including in the toilets to say you are period-friendly!** Download the poster from the **No More Taboo** website.
- **Change starts with you, be open about your menstrual health.** Tell people you feel unwell due to your period, call people out for making jokes about menstruation, carry your tampon in your hand rather than hidden up your sleeve, encourage people to ask questions.
- **Create space to talk about periods in a group**, it may seem like a daunting task but once you break the ice it's amazing what else will come out of those discussions.