

SESSION PLANS

Day 3



Module 7, Session 1:

Safe Handling and Disposal of Menstrual Blood

Session Learning Objectives

By the end of this session, participants should be able to:

1. Describe additional care needs when female clients have a menstrual period, especially those who are bedbound.
2. Identify ways that HBC providers and household members can protect themselves from spreading HIV when handling menstrual blood.
3. Identify the supplies available in Uganda that are useful in handling menstrual blood.
4. Identify how to safely dispose of materials soiled with menstrual blood that will not be re-used and identify how to properly clean cloth soiled with menstrual blood so that the cloth can be safely re-used.

Time: 1 hour

Prep Work

Before you teach:

1. Ensure that the flipchart paper with the Universal Precautions statement from the previous session is posted in the training room.
2. Assemble the following supplies: one sample sanitary pad/towel and one rag/towel/cloth which can be used to soak up menstrual blood.
3. For each participant, have one of each of the following three **Counselling Cards: Menstrual Period Management, Disposal or Cleaning of Menstrual Blood Soaked Material, and Making Sanitary Pads from Banana Fibres.**
4. Have one copy of the **Counselling Card** labelled **Cleaning Female Client.**

Trainer Steps: Safe Handling and Disposal of Menstrual Blood

A. Introduction

Explain that this session will cover the importance of caring for clients who have their menstrual period.

B. Climate Setter: (15 minutes)

1. Ask participants about any challenges they have faced while handling or managing menstrual blood, in their own household, with a client, or with their household caregiver. Specific questions you can ask include:
 - Have any of you had to deal with a client who had a menstrual period? How did you deal with it?
 - What challenges have you as an **HBC provider** faced while handling menstrual blood with a client who was very sick, frail, or bedbound?
 - How is it different for a **family member** who has to handle the menstrual blood of a woman in the household who is sick, frail, or bedbound?
 - How can you bring up the subject of menstrual blood management with a client or caregiver?



Trainer Note:

If not already mentioned by participants, be sure to include the following challenges HBC providers and household members may face in the handling and disposal of menstrual blood:

- **Privacy – No latrine or no privacy around the latrine.**
- **Getting a frail woman out of bed and to a latrine.**
- **Cleaning a woman in bed while she has her menstrual period.**
- **Having no available personal hygiene supplies to soak up the menstrual blood, especially sanitary pads, clean cloth, and banana fibres.**
- **Having no available gloves to protect the hands of caregivers or providers when they handle menstrual blood.**
- **Helping a woman who is too weak to get out of bed to change the sanitary pad, cloth, rag, or banana leaves, used to soak up the menstrual blood.**
- **Having no place to dispose of soiled cloth, rags, sanitary napkins,**

or banana fibres (e.g. in settings where clients have no latrine).

- Having no soap and water to clean a woman who is menstruating (in bed or not).
- Having no clean or alternate linens, bedding.
- Having a female client who is menstruating and who is uncomfortable with anyone else helping her during her menstrual period or handling her menstrual blood.
- Having a caregiver who is unable to disinfect bloody cloth, clothing, or linens.

2. Explain that field research in Uganda has shown that clients, caregivers, and HBC providers need more support so they can know how to safely handle and dispose of menstrual blood¹. Supplies needed to safely handle the blood often are unavailable. Many people do not realise that female clients who are ill can still have menstrual periods, although many who are severely ill do stop menstruating. Most women do not like to talk about their menstrual periods and are unclear that HIV (and other illnesses/infections) can be transmitted by unsafe exposure to menstrual blood. Female clients who may be very sick and/or bedbound require sensitive and practical care during their menstrual periods from household caregivers and HBC providers. It is essential to provide care in a way that helps the female client maintain her dignity so she can feel confident and in-control of managing her menstrual period.

C. Discussion and Demonstration of Materials Which Can Be Used for Menstrual Periods — Sanitary Pads, Cloth, and Banana Fibres (10 minutes)

1. Ask participants, "What products or materials do women use to help soak up menstrual blood and keep female clients clean?" Record responses on the flipchart.
2. Ask participants to turn to the **Participant's Guide, page 112, Unit 6, Menstrual Period Management**, and inform them that everything that you are about to cover will be included in this section of the guide. Encourage them to review this later, then ask them to turn to **page 114, item 39, What Materials Can Girls and Women Use to Manage Their Menstrual Period?**. Ask a volunteer to read this section while you pass around materials that can be used for soaking up menstrual blood, allowing participants to see and handle the samples.

¹ Xavier Nsabagasani and Brendon Barnes (2008). Report on the Implementation of Small Doable Actions to Improve Hygiene Practices In the Care of People Living With HIV/AIDS. Hygiene Improvement Project. Plan Uganda; and Xavier Nsabagasani and Brendon Barnes (2008). Identifying Small Doable Actions to Improve Hygiene Practices In the Care of People Living With HIV/AIDS: Focus Group Discussions and In-Depth Interviews. Hygiene Improvement Project. Plan Uganda.

Trainer Note:**Materials to soak up menstrual blood include:**

- **Sanitary pad (preferred) – These are bought at a store or market, used once, and thrown away;**
- **Rags, towels or cloth – These can be made from old clothes or material and can be washed and re-used;**
- **Banana fibre pads – These can be bought in the market or made at home.**

3. Distribute the **Counselling Card on Menstrual Period Management** (see copy Module 7 Annex 1) to the participants and point out that the image on the top, left side shows three materials that are used for soaking up menstrual blood. Explain that they can use this card when talking with clients/caregivers about menstrual period management.
4. Tell participants that formative research has found that some women in Uganda use banana fibre pads to soak up their menstrual blood. Distribute the **Counselling Card on Making Sanitary Pads from Banana Fibres** (see copy in Module 7 Annex 1). Tell participants they can read this card later (do not take the time to go through it now).
5. Clarify any questions participants may have.

D. Keeping Clean: Discussion on Menstrual Care of the Bedbound Female Client (30 minutes)

Part 1: Cleaning the Client

1. Explain that assisting female clients with their personal hygiene, ensuring they are clean, and safely handling their menstrual blood is very important for their health and wellbeing. The HBC provider should always encourage the client to do as much of her own care as possible to build and maintain her dignity and self-respect.
2. Cleaning the woman's "private parts" (the genitalia and rectum), is a sensitive issue and should be kept as simple as possible. The provider should do only what is necessary in this area, allowing the client to do as much as she can for herself.
3. Remind participants that in the previous session on faeces care, they learned how to clean the "private parts" area of a female client. Show participants a copy of the **Counselling Card** with the label, **Cleaning Female Client**. Point out that you would follow the same process when cleaning blood from the "private parts" area of a woman.

4. Ask participants if they have any questions about caring for the “private parts” (perineal area) of a female client who is having her menstrual period.

**Trainer Note:**

For additional information, refer participants to Module 6 on Safe Handling of Faeces, Blood, and Other Body Fluids, or to the Participant's Guide, page 94, item 32A, Private Parts (Perineal) Care of Females).

5. Explain to participants that menstrual blood of HIV-positive female clients can contain the HIV virus. However, there is an extremely low risk of getting HIV through caregiving activities if one follows universal precautions (such as using gloves or Jik to clean blood spills). Remind participants that maintaining universal precautions is an important role of HBC providers. Explain that it is important that HBC providers take universal precautions with ALL clients, whether they are HIV-positive or not. Universal precautions are meant not only to protect HBC providers and family members, but also the clients from unnecessary infection.

**Trainer Note:**

Ensure the Universal Precautions flipchart is posted on the wall to further emphasise the message on Universal Precautions. Refer to Module 2 for other questions on how to transmit HIV through caregiving activities. For more information on universal precautions, refer to Module 6 and the Participant's Guide, page 54, item 19, Universal Precautions (Blood and Body Fluid Contact).

6. Have participants look again at the **Counselling Card on Menstrual Period Management**. Review the rest of the card with participants and be sure to explain that:
 - If the client cleans herself or if her hands come in contact with blood or other body fluids, she should wash her hands. The caregiver should place water, soap (or ash), and a basin/large bowl within the client's reach. The client should wash her hands with soap (or ash) as outlined in Module 4 of the training manual or in the Participant's Guide, page 22.
 - It is important that clients and household members dispose of used cloth or rags, otherwise they will leave a bad odour, attract flies and other insects, and potentially spread diseases in the home.
 - The caregiver should always cover his/her hands with gloves/plastic material before touching anything soiled with menstrual blood. The caregiver also should wash his/her hands immediately afterward.

Part 2: Disposal or Cleaning of Menstrual Blood-Soaked Material

7. Remind participants that it is important to ensure that the bedding, linens, cloth, mattress, and other materials used by bedbound clients are kept clean and free of menstrual blood. Distribute to participants the **Counselling Card on Disposal or Cleaning of Menstrual Blood-Soaked Material** (see copy in Module 7 Annex 1), and ask them to turn to the **Participant's Guide, page 118, item 40, How to Dispose of Rags, Linens, Clothes, Banana Fibres, or Cloth Soiled with Menstrual Blood.**
8. Explain that soiled/used disposable sanitary napkins and banana fibres that are soaked with menstrual blood cannot be re-used, nor can they be thrown or discarded just anywhere. It is important that ANY soiled materials be handled with gloves plastic material and be disposed in the right location. Ask a participant to read the item on how to dispose of blood-soiled items in an urban area (Participant's Guide, page 116) and in a rural area (page 117). Explain that putting blood-soaked items in the latrine in urban areas is not an option in Uganda because many urban latrines are periodically cleaned by trucks that "suck" the solids out and rags/cloth/banana fibres/etc. can clog the trucks. Point out that the first line in the **Disposal or Cleaning of Menstrual Blood Soaked Materials Counselling Card** summarises the information on how to get rid of blood-soaked items that will not be re-used.

Trainer Note:



Key steps include:

- **For disposal of rags/linens, cloth, or banana fibre soiled with menstrual blood in an URBAN setting:**
 - **Option One (preferred): Burn the soiled material;**
 - **Option Two: Put the soiled material in a bag, tie the top, then put it inside another bag and tie its top before putting the sealed bag in the garbage.**
- **For disposal of rags/linens, cloth, or banana fibre soiled with menstrual blood in a RURAL setting:**
 - **Option One (preferred): Drop the material into the latrine hole;**
 - **Option Two: Burn the soiled material;**
 - **Option Three: Put the soiled material in a bag, tie the top, then put it inside another bag and tie its top before putting the sealed bag in the garbage.**

9. Ask the participants to turn to the **Participant's Guide, page 120, item 41, Cleaning Rags, Clothes, Linens, and Cloth Stained with Menstrual Blood so They Can Be Re-Used**. Have a participant read the steps on how to clean the materials. Ask if there are any questions, then have participants look at the second row on the **Counselling Card, Disposal or Cleaning of Menstrual Blood Soaked Material** and point out that a copy of this card can be found on **page 121** of the **Participant's Guide**. Review it with the participants and answer any questions.

Trainer Note:

To re-use any cloth/linens/clothes soiled with menstrual blood, follow these steps:



- **Step One: Put on gloves or plastic material to protect your hands before touching the soiled material.**
- **Step Two: Soak soiled cloth/linen/clothes in a “1 part Jik to 9 parts water” solution for at least 20 minutes (as described in Module 6 of the training manual and in the Participant's Guide, page 62, Unit 4, item 20). If there is no Jik available, then a less preferable method is to soak the material in soapy water for 20 minutes. To ensure there is enough soap in the water, make sure there are a lot of bubbles when you stir and shake the water with your hand.**
- **Step Three: While wearing gloves, plastic sheeting, or other plastic material, wash the cloth/linens/clothes as you normally would wash (with soap and water and rinse well).**
- **Step Four: Allow the cloth/linens/clothes to air dry in the sun. To throw out the soaking water, dig a hole to dump the water in.**
- **Step Five: Remove gloves, plastic sheeting, or plastic material from your hands.**
- **Step Six: Wash your hands, as outlined on in Module 4 of the training manual or in the Participant's Guide, page 22, in Unit 2, Section 5.**

10. Ask participants if they have any questions at this time and respond accordingly.

E. Review Summary Points (5 minutes)

- Point out to the participants that all of the Counselling Cards about menstrual blood are printed on pink paper.

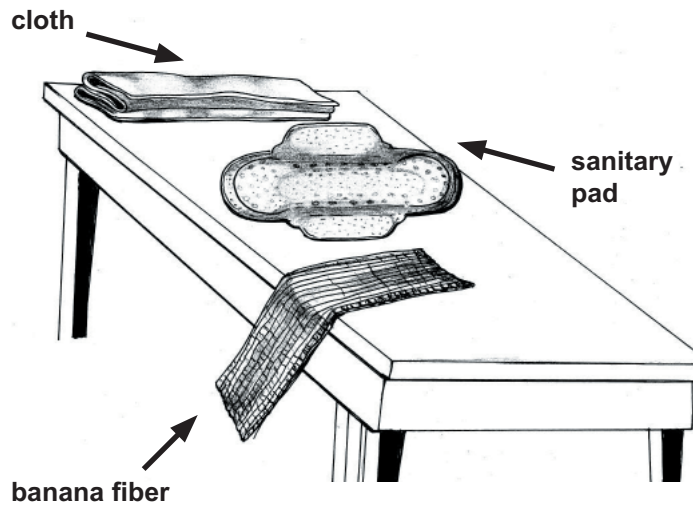
- Menstrual blood of HIV-positive female clients contains the HIV virus. However, there is an extremely low risk of getting HIV through caregiving activities if universal precautions are taken.
- Gloves or polyurethane should only be worn when the HBC provider is handling any type of body fluid or waste or when the client or HBC provider has open sores or cuts that will come in direct physical contact with the other person.

Transition

Thank the participants for their participation and tell them they are going to learn how to negotiate improved behaviours next.

Annex 1

MENSTRUAL PERIOD MANAGEMENT

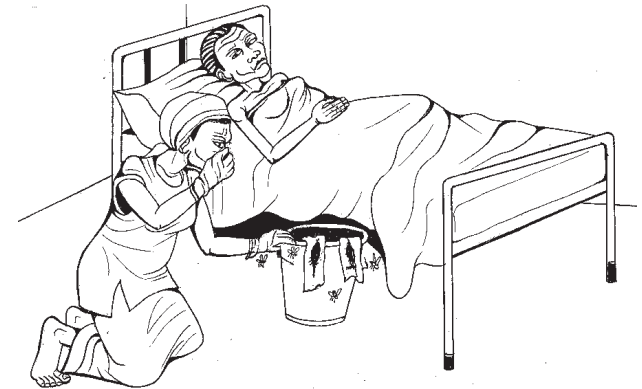


Soak up blood with sanitary pads, cloth, or banana fibers.

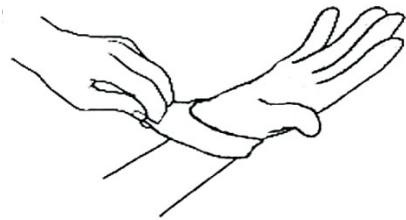
Counselling Card



Keep clean cloth, washing water, soap (or ash), and a container for soiled cloth near bed-bound woman.



Do not store soiled cloth for a long time.



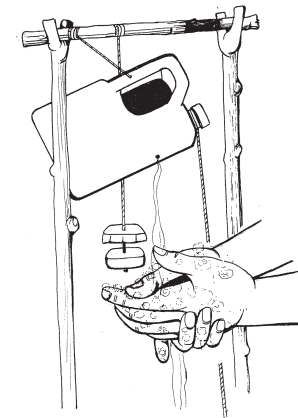
Use gloves

OR



Use plastic sheets

Always protect hands by wearing gloves or plastic material when touching someone else's blood.



Always wash hands with soap (or ash).

MAKING SANITARY PADS FROM BANANA FIBERS

Counselling Card

1 Harvest the Banana Fiber

Cut 1 to 1.5 meter long pieces of banana fiber from garden early in morning or late in evening when it is soft. (If it is picked when it is too dry it rips apart during preparation.)



Waterproof inside layer of 2 banana fiber pieces



Waterproof outside layer (called the "intestine layer") of 2 banana fiber pieces

2 Clean the Fiber

Wipe the banana fiber with a damp cloth to remove dirt.

3 Straighten the Fiber

Hold fiber with one hand and with your other hand gently, but firmly, pull your palm along length of fiber from one end of fiber to the other.

Straightening the fiber



4 Peel the Fiber

Carefully peel off waterproof layer from surface of fiber (the "intestine layer") that will lie against the skin.



Peeling the inside layer of the fiber

NOTE: CRACKED FIBERS

If banana fiber cracks near middle, it cannot be used. If it cracks near edge, tear off the cracked edge (as long as remaining uncracked width is sufficient for user.)



Cracked banana fiber
crack

6 FIBER READY TO USE:

The banana fiber is ready for use once the waterproof layer (the “intestine layer”) that will lie against the skin is completely peeled off.



Banana fiber with inside (intestine layer) completely peeled

7 Use the Banana Fiber

To use banana fiber, attach fiber to belt (made from leather, cloth or string) in front of belly button, then bring fiber down between legs and attach it to belt above buttocks. Banana fiber can be attached to belt by either rolling fiber around belt (see picture on left, below) or by tearing the ends of the fiber and tying the torn bits to belt (see picture on right, below). Change banana fiber as needed.



Banana fiber wound around belt



Banana fiber ends torn and tied to belt

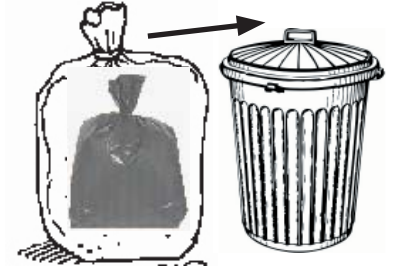
8 Disposal of the Used Banana Fibers

Get rid of used banana fibers by:

In URBAN areas:



1) Burning used fibers (preferred method)

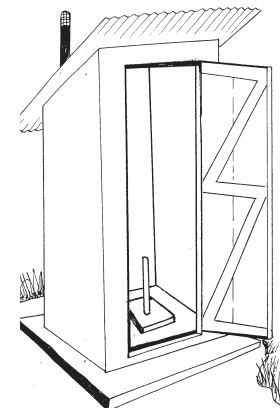


2) Putting used fibers in a bag and tying a knot in opening of bag. Put bag with used fiber in a second bag and tie it too. Put it in trash.

In RURAL areas:



1) Burning used fibers (preferred method)



2) Putting the used fibers in the latrine.



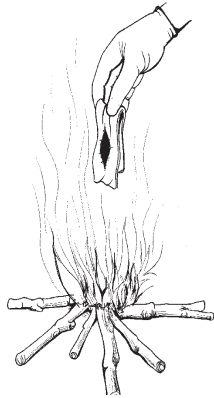
3) Putting used fibers in a bag and tying a knot in opening of bag. Put bag with used fiber in a second bag and tie it too. Put it in trash.

DISPOSAL OR CLEANING OF MENSTRUAL BLOOD SOAKED MATERIAL

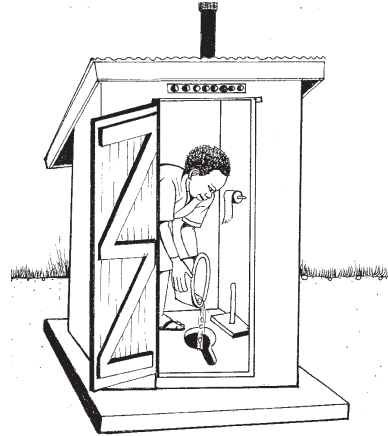
Counselling Card

NOT RE-USED

Soiled cloth that **will not be used again** and sanitary pads and banana fibers should be disposed of by:



Burning (preferred method for urban and rural areas)



Put in latrine (rural areas only)



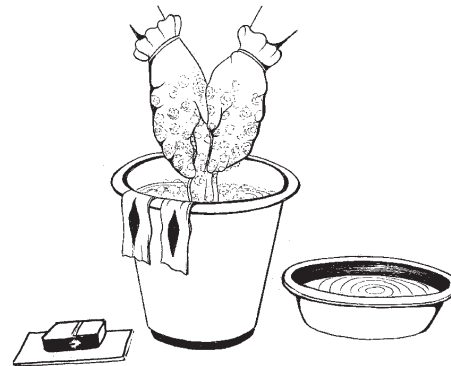
Double bagged and put in trash (least preferred method for urban and rural areas)

RE-USED

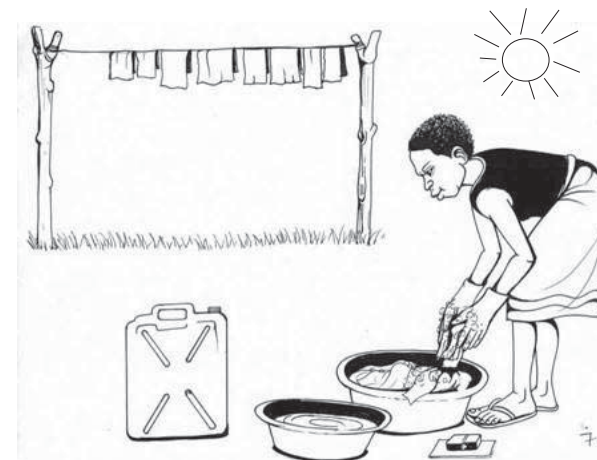
Soiled cloth that **will be re-used**:



Soak soiled cloth for at least 20 minutes in a mixture of nine parts water to one part Jik (if available)



Wash with soap and water



Dry in the sun

NOTE:
Always wear gloves or plastic material when handling blood and wash hands afterward.