

Presents:

OLIVIA'S JOURNEY THROUGH MENSTRUATION



PUMA x *modibodi*®

This comic belongs to:



MAKE A DRAWING OF YOURSELF HERE

This comic book was developed by
GRLS X Women Win in partnership with **Puma** and
Modibodi for the **Spark Change Running programme**.

Spark Change seeks to mobilise and invest in a
global community of passionate grassroots running
organisations to champion the rights of girls and
women everywhere.

The programme is being implemented by Women
Win's partners on the ground, Latinas in Motion in the
U.S., Free to Run in Iraq, Amazing Maasai Girls in Kenya
and Girls Gotta Run in Ethiopia.



OLIVIA'S JOURNEY THROUGH MENSTRUATION

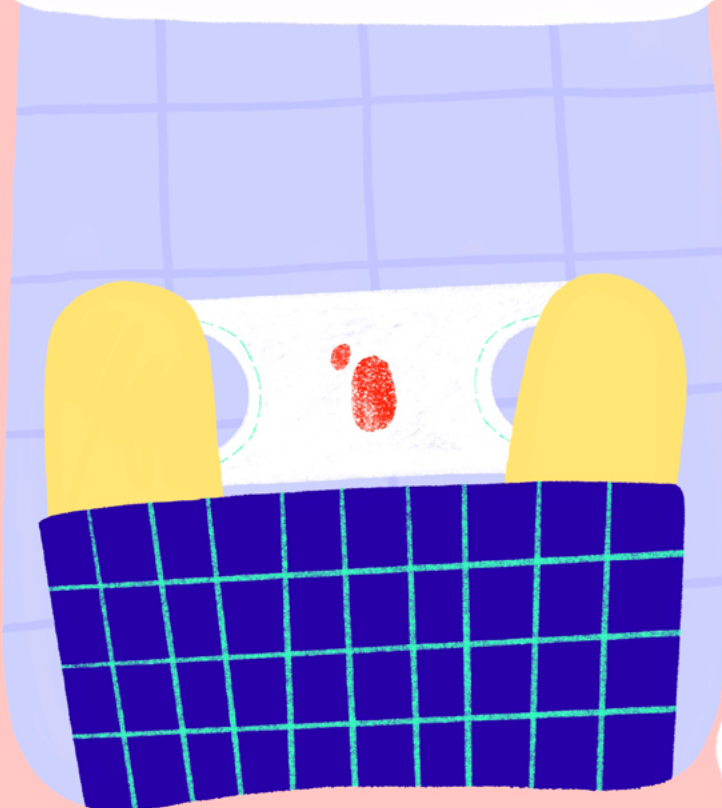


Please note that these stories discuss sensitive topics.
If you are having any similar experiences to the characters in the stories,
please contact your coach who can advise you on how to access support.

Today is Wednesday October 17th.
On her way back from school, Olivia felt some warm discharge coming out and quickly rushed home.



She opened the door, dropped her backpack in the kitchen and went straight to the toilet.



She sat down on the toilet to pee, but when she took off her underwear she saw spots of blood and got scared.

She called out her
younger sister.

Ana, Ana!

Quickly come here, please.
Look what happened to me.

Let's go to Granny and
show her so she can help.

Maybe I hurt myself
playing at school.
I am so scared!

Olivia and Ana went to their granny and started speaking both at the same time, telling her what happened.



Maria told them both to sit down so she could tell them what was happening. The only advice Maria gave the girls was to stay away from boys, otherwise Olivia would become pregnant. Olivia and Ana were very confused.

Maria recommended the girls to do what she did when she was young, to cut a clean cloth into pieces and use it as a sanitary pad.

She also suggested using old socks.



Olivia was confused and afraid of going to school.
She was scared because of what her grandma had told her.

Ana, being a child and younger than Olivia,
was very excited and told all her friends
about what was happening to her sister.

She told them that her sister was bleeding
and that her grandmother told her to stay
away from boys as she would otherwise get
pregnant.



She felt bullied and teased
and did not want to go to
school.



Some of the kids
twisted the words and
started spreading
rumors about Olivia.



Mrs. Zola was Olivia's Life Orientation teacher. She was worried because Olivia wasn't coming to school anymore. Mrs. Zola found Olivia sitting down with her grandma Maria.



Maria explained how she tried to convince Olivia to go to school but had failed.

Mrs. Zola asked what was happening. Olivia explained how she was bleeding and how the other kids were teasing and bullying her.



Mrs. Zola spoke to the principal and asked if they could have a workshop about menstruation. The school loved the idea.



Other teachers even offered to help and they contacted the coach Portia, who had a lot of information about menstruation.

The day of the workshop arrived. Coach Portia and Mrs. Zola began by introducing basic concepts about menstruation. Some elders were a bit upset about the approach of the workshop. The ideas were different than what they were told when they were younger but because Coach Portia was an expert, they listened to her presentation.

Portia began explaining:

12 - 13

Most people with a uterus/vagina* start menstruating when they are around 12 or 13 years old. Some will get it sooner and some later.

MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT	SUN
		*	*	*	*	*
*	*	*	*	*	*	*
*	*	*	*	*	*	*
*	*	*	*	*	*	*
*	*					

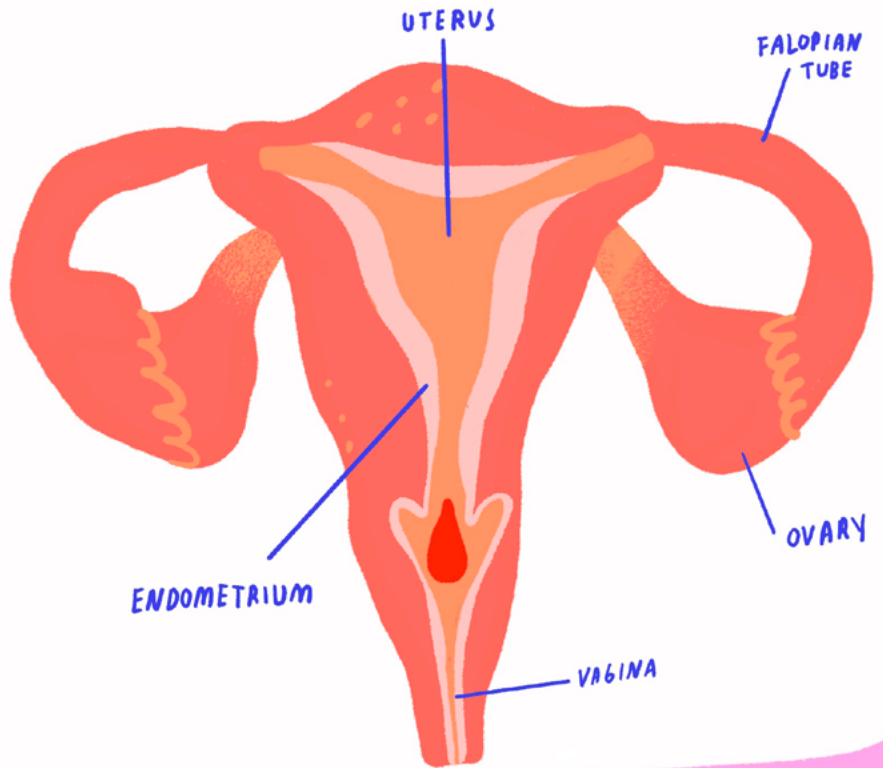
The average length between periods is about 28 days, however you may have your period more frequently or less frequently than this. Most menstruating people have a menstrual cycle length somewhere between 21 – 35 days.



After you start menstruating, you may find it takes a while for your period to become regular.

About once every 28 days the lining of your uterus (called the endometrium) builds up, getting ready to support a developing pregnancy.

If you don't get pregnant, this lining isn't needed, and your body will shed it through your vagina.



What comes out might seem like blood, but it's mostly just the lining being shed from your uterus. It may be red, reddish brown or even dark brown.



You will "bleed" for about 3-7 days. Sometimes your period might be quite heavy.

M	T	W	T	F	S	S
			●	●	●	●
●	●	●				

During your period, you can use menstrual products to catch or absorb your menstrual flow.



You can get these products at most drug stores, grocery stores, or convenience stores, or they may even have them at your school.

Some people even sew their own pads!

You should be able to do your regular activities without any interruption, but if you are having cramps or a back ache, it's okay to take a break.



If you're concerned about how much you're bleeding, talk to your health care provider.



Listen to your body. Some people gain weight, have tender breasts and feel bloated before their periods starts that month.



After coach Portia explained menstruation, menstrual products of different types were distributed and shared to show how they should be used.

Next, Coach Portia explained how to stay clean while menstruating:



1

Bathe regularly.



2

Eat healthy food to boost your body's metabolism.



3

Wash your genital area with clean water



4

Do not use other people's used towel or undergarment.



5

Clean clothes are likely to carry less germs.



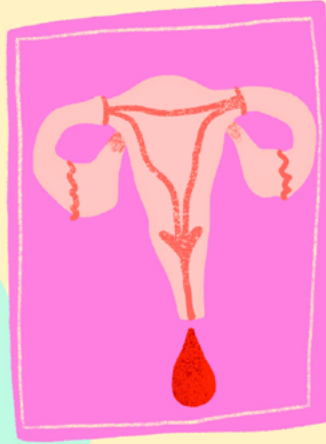
6

Some products are disposable and should be thrown away, not washed. But others are reusable and they can be washed. It is important to wash with soap and clean boiled water and dry them in the sun, to kill as many germs as possible.



As the workshop was about to end, coach Portia suggested a quiz to encourage active participation in the room.

Is menstruation a means of punishment?



False, menstruation is a natural and necessary process for our bodies to go through.



Is it unhealthy to bathe or swim while having your period?



False, there is no reason why having your period prevents anyone to participate in any activity. It's important to choose the right menstrual products to feel free to do whatever you want to do.

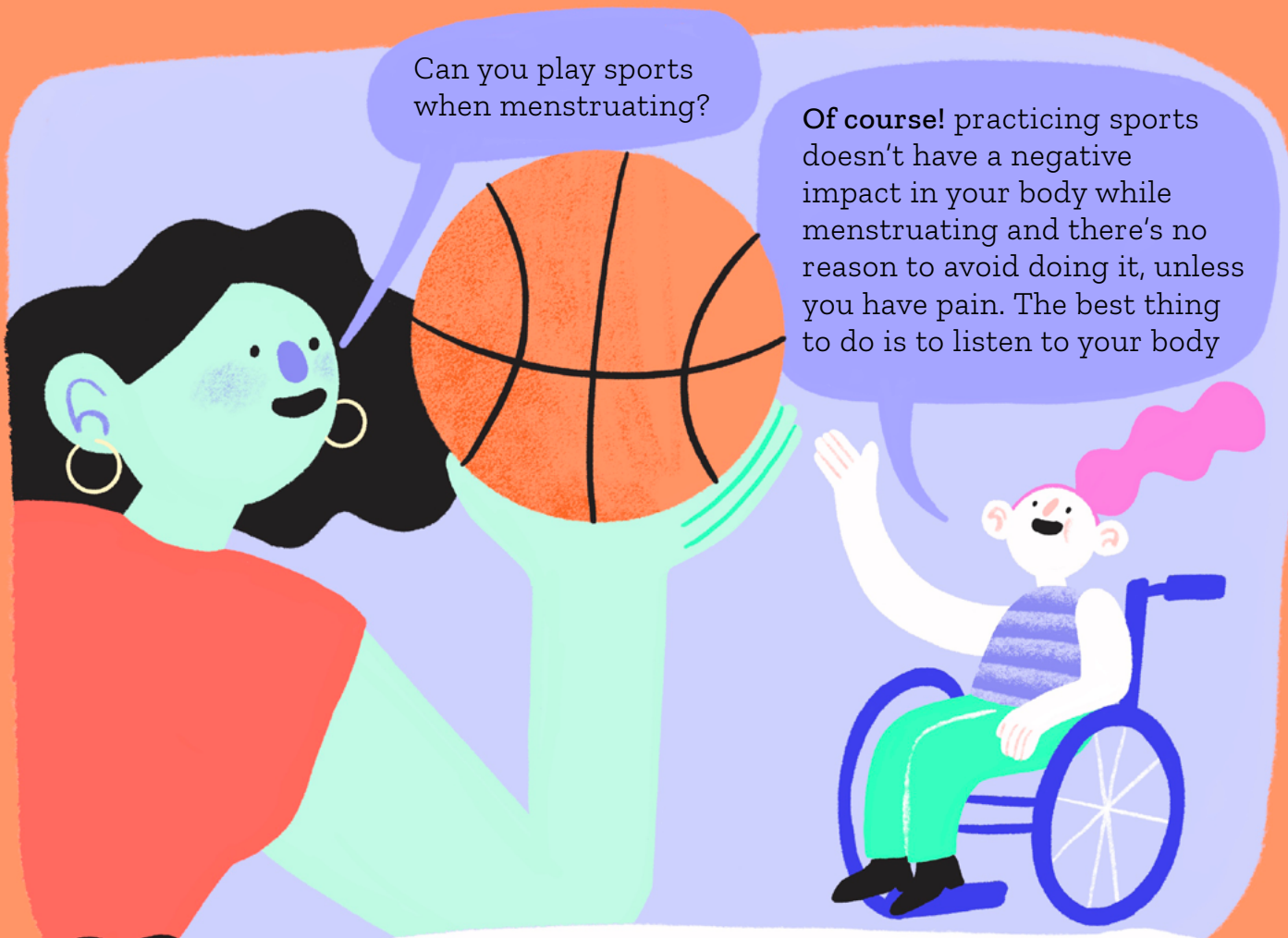


Does menstruation mean that you are hurt inside?



No, it is a natural process and it does not mean you are hurt on the inside. It means you are growing up





After the workshop, Maria had some time to think and process all the information they received. She realized she was old-fashioned and she welcomed all the new information.



She spoke to Olivia and Ana and tried to get their opinions. She asked if they had understood everything that was spoken at the workshop and if Olivia was ready to go back to school.

Olivia said she was still a bit scared. She still didn't know how the others responded to the information. She was still not happy with how her little sister "betrayed" her.



Ana frowned and said sorry insincerely, just laughing.

Sorry.



Maria said to Olivia that Ana was still young and curious and didn't know what she was doing.

She asked Ana to apologize.

Maria sat Ana down and spoke to her firmly and explained how her sister was feeling. She asked if Ana was in her sister's shoes, wouldn't she react the same way?



Ana apologized with a big tight hug and a lollipop and asked for forgiveness.



Luckily the workshop was on Friday, giving Maria enough time to speak to Olivia and encourage her to go back to school.

You don't want to miss your classes and not see all your friends. I know you miss school my child, you have to go back.

You must always remember, that in life you have to hold your head up high and keep moving forward no matter how much it hurts.

It takes a very brave and courageous person to stand up and dust themselves off and start over again, if not for you please do it for me.

Remember, menstruation is a natural process so there is nothing to be embarrassed about or ashamed of.

Monday came and Olivia was ready to face the world. She felt ready to take on anything and everyone thanks to Maria's advice and Ana's support.



At the assembly that morning, the school principal touched on the workshop and mentioned that from now on all genders' reproductive system, including menstruation, would be part of their Life Orientation classes.



Most of the kids that were bullying and shaming Olivia apologized to her and she accepted the apologies.

Olivia now sees having the **menstruation** as a **super power**.

It means she is strong
and capable of anything.



WORD SEARCH

☐ EAT

☐ MENSTRUATION

☐ HYGIENE

☐ PADS

☐ GERMS

☐ BATH

☐ CYCLE

☐ TOILET

☐ BULLY

☐ SCHOOL

☐ PERIODS

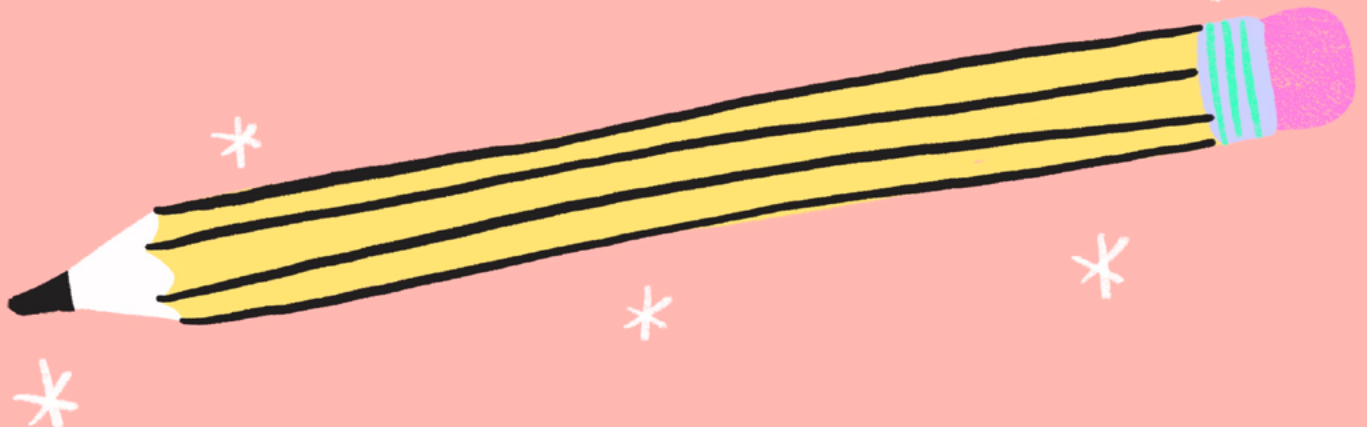
☐ SOAP

☐ VAGINA

☐ PLAY

☐ HEALTHY

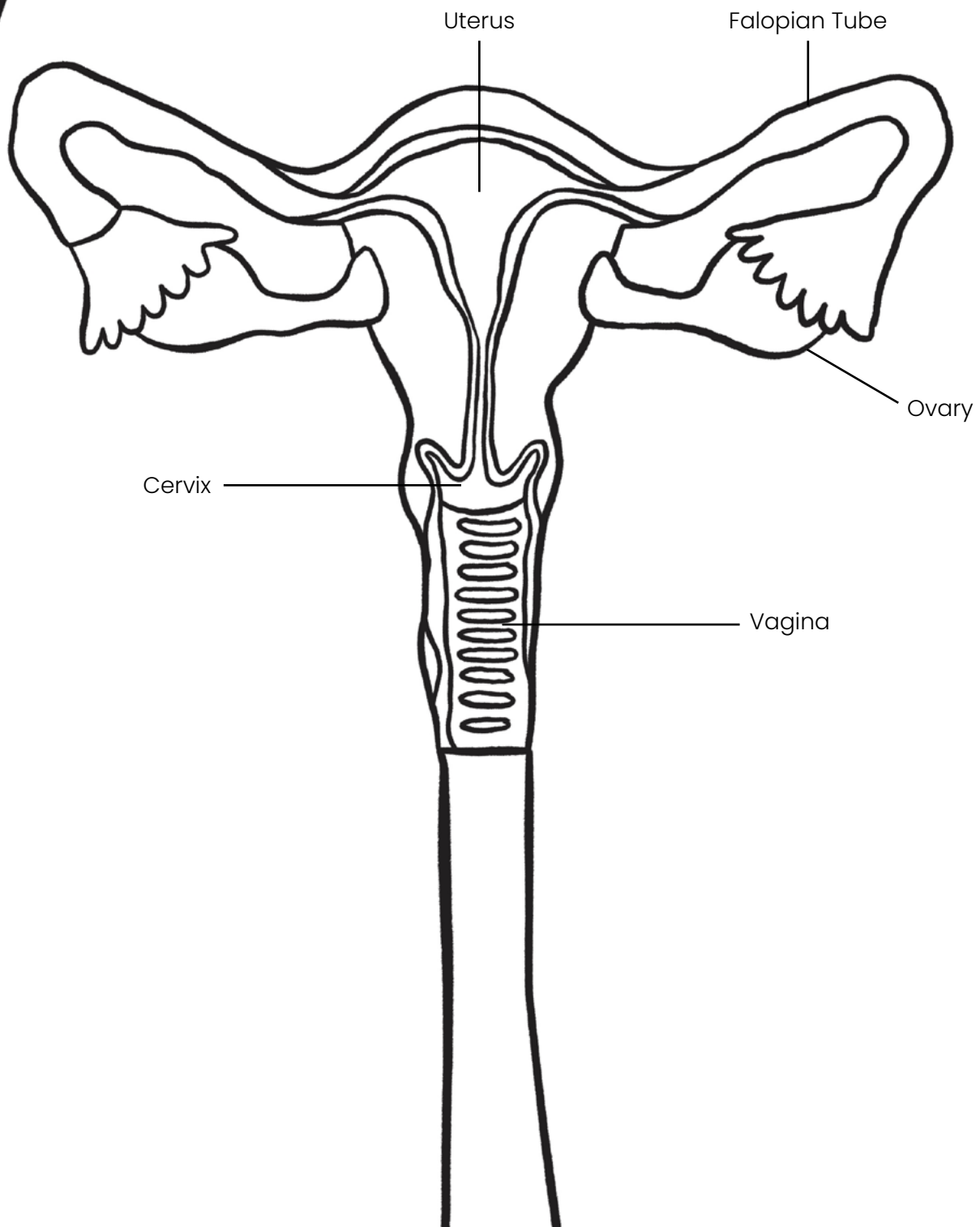
S	H	P	E	R	I	O	D	S	O	H	Z
C	Y	C	L	E	M	P	O	O	V	E	G
H	G	E	R	M	S	B	R	A	A	A	I
O	I	S	A	D	K	U	A	P	G	L	B
O	E	S	A	T	G	U	H	H	I	T	M
L	N	P	T	O	I	L	E	T	N	H	O
Z	E	H	T	A	B	Y	P	L	A	Y	T
M	E	N	S	T	R	U	A	T	I	O	N



PERIOD TRACKER

[illegible]

**Help Olivia color this
Reproductive system!**



GRLS



modibodi[®]