

12. GB Club – Menstruation: What is it and why does it happen?

Title of session: Menstruation and contraception – let’s learn more!

This episode will go into detail about menstruation, why it happens, what occurs and what to do about it. It also discusses contraception in more detail.

Length of recording: 40 mins

Actors: 2 hosts, 1 female community health worker (30’s, friendly, warm, confident, knowledgeable)

Sound effects (SFX): Intro music, transitional music, hands clapping, people cheering

Content	
Intro:	‘Girls and Boys Club Theme Song’ (for 1 min)
Awanatu (female host):	Hello everyone and welcome back to the Girls’ and Boy’s club! Awanatu here ready to host the girls and boys club. And of course, I must introduce our second host, Mohammed.
Mohammed (male host):	Hello everyone! It’s great to be back! Thanks for joining our Girls’ and Boys’ Club this week. We’re very glad that you’re here!
Awa:	Now, Mohamed and I are both part of the Leh Wi Lan programme sponsored by UK Aid.
Mohamed:	And Leh Wi Lan supports the Ministry of Basic and Senior Secondary Education to deliver Free Quality School Education to <i>all</i> students in Sierra Leone.
SFX:	Hands clapping, people cheering
Awa:	Now Mohamed, before we start, do you remember the club rules?
SFX:	<i>Hands clapping, people cheering</i>
Mohammed:	Let me hear you say it! R-E-A-L! Time to keep it REAL! R is for Respect. E is for Equal participation. A is for Ask questions. L is for languages! The Languages of the club are English and Krio.
Awa:	Great stuff!
Mohamed:	So, when we follow the club rules, we’re keeping it REAL.
SFX:	<i>Keeping it real song</i>
Awa:	Excellent. Now, Mohamed, do you remember what our last session was about?
Mohamed:	I sure do: last time, we talked about the physical changes in our bodies during adolescence.
Awa:	Yes, we looked at how girls and boys will be growing and seeing new features in their bodies as they develop from being children to becoming adults.

Mohamed:	We told students that the process for your body to change from child to adult can take a long time, and that students should be patient with this process.
Awa:	We also learned about how the male and female bodies change on the inside during puberty. We learned about what causes periods to happen and how sex works in order to create a baby.
Mohamed:	Then we discussed four main ways to <i>prevent</i> pregnancy from happening: condoms, the pill, Auntie Marie depro injections and Captain Band implants. Oh, we also talked about how abstinence or not having sex at all, is the only 100% effective way to prevent pregnancy.
Mohamed	And we also learned that only condoms and abstinence are the ways to prevent getting a sexually transmitted infection or STI. The pill, injections or implants still leave males and females vulnerable to getting an STI.
Awa	Yes, that's it. And Mohamed, we also did some activities last time, right?
Mohamed:	Yes, we also played the TRUE or FALSE game, when we talked about different beliefs and myths out there. Some people think you should have sex as soon as changes happen to your body, but we informed students that this is <i>not true</i> . Students should not feel rushed into sex when their bodies start changing - young men and women are <i>not</i> ready or responsible enough to bring up a child, even if their bodies are capable of making one.
Awa:	True. And as we were discussing the physical changes in the body, we noticed that there were a lot of questions from ourselves and from students about menstruation and contraception. So we're going to focus on these topics today.
Mohamed:	Yes, so today we will give students much more detail about menstruation, contraception and correct any misunderstandings they have.
Awa:	Great, I think we're ready to start today's session! Girls and boys, are you ready to participate? If so, say 'yes!'
SFX:	<i>A group of people shouting 'yes!' but at a quiet/low mixing level. We want to give students an idea of what they should be shouting.</i>
Awa:	I couldn't hear you!
SFX:	<i>People shouting 'yes!' but at a quiet/low mixing level</i>
Awa:	Okay, let's get started!
SFX:	Transition music
Awa:	Okay students, in order to help us with our discussions today, we've invited a new guest to join us.
Mohamed:	You mean Dr Koroma isn't coming? But she is amazing!
Awa:	Don't worry, Mohamed. Dr Koroma will be visiting us again in a future episode. But I thought it'd be good to speak to Mrs Patricia Ngombu, who is a Community Health Officer who provides adolescent and youth friendly services at her Community Health Centre. Welcome Mrs Ngombu!
SFX:	Clapping and cheering – maybe a trumpet salute!

Mrs. Ngombu: Ha ha. Thank you. It is my pleasure to be here.

Mohamed: Mrs Ngombu, it's really good to have you here.

Mrs. Ngombu: Thanks, Mohamed. I actually know Dr Koroma very well – she told me about the discussions you've been having so far. Well done. We both believe in the importance of providing all young people with helpful and detailed sexual health information.

Mohamed: That's wonderful, and you're right, it's very important information. Do all Community Health Centres have youth friendly services and officers like yourself?

Mrs. Ngombu: Well, it is certainly the goal. Many hospitals, community health centres and maternal-child health posts have staff trained in youth-friendly sexual health services. Of course, this might not always be the case *everywhere*, but we are trying. There have been many nurses, and health officers like myself who have been trained specifically to support young people. There are also NGO programmes doing this too.

Awa: Mrs Ngombu, what type of support do you specifically give to young people?

Mrs. Ngombu: Well, we can answer any questions that young people have about puberty, sex, preventing pregnancy and sexually transmitted infections. We try to provide a private place to have these discussions and we keep these conversations confidential. We won't tell anyone in the community or parents. We also have contraceptive methods onsite, like condoms, pills injections and implants, as well as educational materials on these.

Awa: Wow, that's very helpful and good to know. So, we can ask you any questions we may have about puberty and sex, like we did with Dr Kormoa?

Mrs Ngombu: Absolutely.

Awa: Great. Let's start then. Today we thought it would be good to go into more detail about menstruation and contraception. We thought it'd also be helpful to answer some general questions that students have been asking.

Mrs Ngombu: That sounds like a great idea!

Awa: Good. So why don't we start with reminding students about what menstruation is. When we talk about menstruation, we are talking about when a female bleeds once a month. This is also called a period. It is a completely natural and healthy occurrence, and we want to make sure all students understand why it happens.

Mohamed: Wait, Awa. I have a question - why should boys know about this stuff? It doesn't happen to them. Can't the girls just listen on their own?

Mrs Ngombu: I'm glad you asked this question, Mohamed. It is very important that boys understand what menstruation is because it affects them too! If a boy would ever like to have children one day – or wants to *avoid* having a child at the moment – he needs to understand why and how menstruation happens.

Mohamed: Yes, that makes a lot of sense.

Mrs Ngombu: And boys and men need to also understand how difficult it can be to manage menstruation, so that they can be supportive of their female colleagues, sisters and mothers. Can you imagine if you cut your arm and it kept bleeding heavily for five days? What would you do? How would you feel if people were not supportive or sympathetic to your situation? How would you feel if some people even made fun of you!

Mohamed: Wow. I would feel horrible. I never thought of it that way, Mrs Ngombu.

Mrs Ngombu: Exactly. It is very, very important that all girls *and* boys understand what menstruation is, why it happens and how to manage it. Menstruation is not dirty, it is not bad, and it is not something to be ashamed of. It is 100% natural and healthy – none of us would be here right now if women didn't menstruate.

Mohammed: I agree. You've convinced me to learn more and be supportive of my sisters. Guys, let's give our full attention today and show our respect. We would not like it if girls did not respect our bodies, so let's show them the same in return.

Awa: Thank you Mohamed. Okay Mrs Ngombu, we spoke about why and how menstruation happens last session – could you remind us of some of the key points?

Mrs Ngombu: Sure, not a problem. First I'd like to start with everyone placing their hands on their hips. That's right, everyone please place your hands on your hips! Your fingers should be pointing towards your private parts, right?

Awa: Right.

Mrs Ngombu: Now, look at where your fingertips are placed...it's sort of the lower part of your stomach, right? On the inside of a female body where your left and right fingertips are, there are two small sacks. They are called ovaries.

Mohamed: Of course, males do not have these but we can still imagine where they are in a woman's body! And, I remember these two ovaries are connected to two arms called fallopian tubes. And these tubes lead to a central part which is called the uterus. It's about the size of a fist, right?

Mrs Ngombu: Exactly. Do you remember what is inside the ovaries?

Mohamed: I think there are eggs....but not chicken's eggs!

Mrs Ngombu: Haha, correct. These eggs are actually tiny little cells. And once a month, hormones in a woman's brain signal the ovaries to release one cell into a fallopian tube so that it makes its way to the uterus. The hormones also signal the uterus to develop a lining made up of blood because this is what a fertilised egg needs in order to develop into a baby.

Awa: So does this mean a woman's body is ready to have a baby every month?

Mrs Ngombu: Yes, but only if the egg has been fertilised by a male sperm. And this can happen if a woman and man have sex. But if the egg does not get fertilised by a sperm it will leave the body along with the lining that was in the uterus. Which is what we call a period. So, the body gets rid of the egg so that a new one can be released in a month's time.

Mohamed: So, if a couple *wants* to have a baby, they should have sex when a woman's egg has been released and is on its way to the uterus?

Mrs Ngombu: Correct.

Mohamed: And if a couple *does not* want to have a baby, they should not have sex, especially during this time.

Mrs Ngombu: Yes, the best way to prevent pregnancy is to not have sex at all. But I think you also spoke about different methods of contraception as well?

Awa: Yes, we learned about condoms, birth control pills, depro injections, which are sometimes

called 'Auntie Marie' and implants, which are often called 'Captain Band'.

Mrs Ngombu: Good. We'll be talking about these again today, but I'd like to talk about managing menstruation first.

Mohamed: When you say, 'managing menstruation', do you mean how females should deal with bleeding for several days?

Mrs Ngombu: Yes, that is correct.

Mohamed: I'm glad you will explain this. Because when you asked me how I would feel if I cut my arm and it wouldn't stop bleeding for five days straight, I got quite worried. I'm not sure what I would do!

Mrs Ngombu: Good, I'm glad you felt that way. Because that's how many girls feel when they get their periods.

Awa: So, what should girls use to manage the blood when they are menstruating?

Mrs Ngombu: There are a couple different of things that females can use. One item is called a sanitary pad and there is a disposable version and a reusable version. Disposable pads are made out of absorbent material and attach to your panties or underwear. Depending on how heavy the flow of blood is, it can take a 4-6 hours for it to fill with blood, and then it should be disposed and replaced with a new pad.

Mohamed: And does the reusable version work the same way?

Mrs Ngombu: It does. Except a reusable sanitary pad is made out of absorbent cloth that can be washed, dried and used again and again. So after 4-6 hours of absorbing blood you can replace it with another reusable pad, and wash it so that it can be used another time.

Awa: I know that some girls are not able to access disposable or reusable sanitary pads so they use a piece of cloth or toilet paper to absorb the blood instead. Is this okay?

Mrs Ngombu: It is okay but not ideal. Cloth or toilet paper is not as absorbent as a sanitary pad, nor does it stay in place very well. It is easy for blood to leak and stain your clothes.

Mohamed: I can understand why that happens – if I were to wrap toilet paper around a cut on my arm that kept bleeding, I doubt it would work very well. And I feel bad because sometimes I see boys tease girls when they see a blood stain.

Mrs Ngombu: Now this teasing because of a stain – it is not supportive. It is not nice. And it is not fair.

Mohammed: Agreed. If people laughed at or teased me because I didn't have the right item to absorb the blood from my cut, I'd be very angry. But Mrs Ngombu, I just realised that many schools don't even have any water by the toilets. How can girls clean up if there was a leak?

Mrs Ngombu: That is a very good point Mohamed. We know girls face very difficult conditions at school. And this is where boys can help. Boys and girls can work together to bring some water to the school in a bucket or a jerry can and put the water by the toilet for girls to use. Boys will also benefit because they too can wash their hands.

Mohammed: I think that's a great idea.

Awa: That is a good idea. But Mrs Ngombu, what happens if toilets are shared between the boys and the girls. This is the case in some schools. If the toilets are shared, I know I would

	feel uncomfortable going to the toilet to change a pad or to wash.
Mrs Ngombu	Well, I think students should try to support each other and see if they can come up with solutions that support girls during their periods. Maybe girls can stand guard at the toilets when other girls need to wash or change. Or together they can build doors for the toilets. And boys can be more careful not to make the toilet dirty, so girls feel that it is clean enough to use.
Awanatu:	Those are great ideas Mrs Ngombu. Students, I think this is a good opportunity for some Padi-Padi time to discuss things we can do to make the school more supportive of girls during menstruation.
Mohamed:	Yes! Students, can you think of ways that we can work together to be supportive of girls during their periods? What can teachers and the principle do as well?
Awa:	Please pick a partner and you will have three minutes to discuss. If there are any ideas that you think are very good, please write them down and hand them to the Club Leader. The Club Leader can give all ideas to the school mentor to see if we could make them happen at our school.
Awanatu:	Great! Are you all ready for Padi-Padi? Remember, the background music will come on and we will give you a warning is you have 1 minute left and 10 seconds left. The club leader can sit close to the radio to shout out the warning if the class cannot hear it.
Mohammed:	Okay everyone, please discuss ways that both students and teachers can make a supportive place for girls during menstruation. Padi-Padi now!
SFX:	Background activity music for 2 minutes.
Awa:	Club Leaders, we have 1 minute left!
SFX:	Background activity music for 50 seconds
Awa+Mohamed:	Club Leaders, we have 10 seconds left! We will start our countdown now. 10...9...8...7...6...5...4...3...2...1! Okay stop your Padi-Padi!
SFX:	<i>Clapping and cheering</i>
Awanatu:	Wonderful! I am sure you have some great ideas about how to support girls when they are menstruating.
Mohammed:	And remember, if you have any good ideas, you can write them down and hand them to the club leader. You know Awa, I think I had a good idea.
Awa:	What was that, Mohamed?
Mohammed	Well, remember a few sessions ago we were talking about psychological violence and we said that this school has a zero-tolerance policy towards all teasing and bullying?
Awa:	I do remember that.
Mohamed:	Well, I think that rule should include all teasing of girls if they are having their periods or if they have a stain. And that includes any other changes that are happening to their bodies during puberty as well. No teasing or laughing should be allowed!
Awa:	Absolutely. And I think this rule should also apply to boys whose bodies are changing as well. No one is allowed to tease another and make them feel bad!

Mohamed: Agreed. And Awa, I also heard that there was another good idea that is coming. Leh Wi Lan and the Ministry of Basic and Senior Secondary Education are in the process of providing reusable sanitary pads for all girls in JSS and SSS.

Awa: That is correct, Mohamed. The programme and Ministry have recognised how difficult it is for girls to access sanitary pads and how this can affect their schooling.

Mohamed: Yes, I can see how it might be easier to stay at home during this time. When I imagine trying to use toilet paper on my arm that is continuously bleeding, and then to have everyone tease me about it - I know I'd rather stay at home. But then I'd fall behind in school.

Awa: That's exactly what happens. If girls go to school using a cloth or toilet paper, they risk having a leak or a stain and being uncomfortable. But if girls stay home instead, they fall behind! So Leh Wi Lan and the Ministry are in the process of distributing reusable sanitary pads to all JSS and SSS schools across the nation. Some schools have already received them, others will get them soon. And the female school mentor aims to provide a brief lesson to girls on how to use them, wash them, dry them and reuse them again.

Mohamed: That's great. After learning about how difficult it is to manage menstruation, I think it is amazing that the government is supporting girls with this.

Awa: Exactly. Now, Mrs Ngombu, thank you again for giving us more information on menstruation. Is it okay if we ask you some questions now on the topic of contraception?

Mrs Ngombu: Of course, it is. It would be my pleasure to help.

Awa: So, just to recap for you, in the last two sessions we were learning about how during adolescence, hormones send signals to our bodies to start changing from childhood into adulthood. As we discussed, menstruation is one of the changes that happens to a girls' body. And boys' bodies change into adulthood too; for example, their voices change, they grow facial hair and they start to produce sperm.

Mohamed: That's right. Both boys' and girls' hormones also cause them to feel sexual attraction and this can prompt curiosity and sometimes peer pressure to try adult activities, like sex. But clearly, there are risks – like getting pregnant or and STI. And just because our bodies might be physically ready to produce babies, this *does not* mean we are ready to take responsibility for having a baby and raising a child. Which is something that both the female *and male* are responsible for.

Mrs Ngombu: That is absolutely correct.

Awa: So, we discussed the ground rules for sexual activity – RNRM. R is for respect that both people should have for each other. That means that they are kind and understanding. If two people *are not* kind or understanding to each other and their wishes, they should *not* have sex.

Mohamed: N is for 'say No at any time'. Either person can say 'no' or 'stop' at any time, even if they have agreed or explored some sexual activities before. No one should ever feel forced to do something they aren't comfortable doing. And if you respect the person, you'll never force them.

Awa: R is for 'know the Risks and prevention strategies'. We know that one risk of having sex is getting pregnant. Another risk is getting a Sexually Transmitted Infection or STI – which we

will be discussing these in a future session.

Mohamed: And M is for 'have a clear Mind if you decide to engage in sex'. Your mind should not be clouded by alcohol, drugs or any peer pressure.

Mrs Ngombu: Those are very good ground rules. RNRM - I think I'm going to introduce that at my health clinic!

Awa + Mohamed: Good!

Mrs Ngombu: So let me see what you discussed about sex and contraception. I'm assuming that Dr Koroma discussed how a man's penis fills with blood and becomes erect when he is sexually excited and aroused?

Awa: Yes, that is what is called an erection because the penis stands up.

Mrs Ngombu: Correct. And when a woman gets sexually aroused her vagina, which is the opening of the uterus, fills with lubrication. So, when the penis stands up, it can enter a woman's vagina, and it enters more easily because of the lubrication. After some stimulation, the penis shoots out a liquid called semen that contains millions of sperm. The sperm in now inside the woman's body and they start to look for the egg to fertilise.

Awa: That's right. And we learned that there are four main methods of contraception that can prevent the sperm from fertilising an egg and causing pregnancy. Students, do you remember what these methods were? Please raise your hand if you remember and club leaders, please pick someone to give one of the methods! We'd like to hear from three different students. Club leaders, pick someone to give the first method!

(pause for 3 seconds)

Thank you for answering! One of the four methods of contraception is the condom.

Mrs Ngombu: Yes, condoms are available at most health clinics and pharmacies. You can buy them at a low cost and some clinics and NGOs even give them away for free. They are safe with no side effects on males or females. And when used correctly are 98% effective.

Mohamed: Mrs Ngombu, could you tell us how to correctly use one?

Mrs Ngombu: Of course. To use a condom correctly, follow these steps:

- First, carefully open the foil packaging that the condom is wrapped in, taking care not to tear the condom.
- Second, hold the tip of the condom between your forefinger and thumb to make sure it's put on the right way and no air is trapped inside (the condom may split if air is trapped).
- Third, place the condom over the tip of the penis.
- Then, while squeezing the tip of the condom, roll it down over the length of the erect penis.
- If the condom will not unroll, it's probably on inside out – start again with a new condom as there may be sperm on it.

Mohamed: And if there is sperm on it, it could get in the vagina and uterus and fertilise the egg?

Mrs Ngombu: Correct. So, if you got it wrong, use a new condom.

- Now, make sure that the condom stays in place while you're having sex. If it comes off, stop and put on a new one.

- After the male releases his sperm (which is called ejaculation), and while the penis is still hard, he should hold the condom in place and carefully withdraw the penis from the female's body.
- Then wrap the used condom in a tissue or toilet paper and put it in the rubbish. You should never flush condoms down the toilet as they may block the toilet. And you should never wash a condom and use it again. It can only be used once or else it will break!

Awa: Wow, Mrs Ngombu, that was very informative. Thank you. Now students, do you remember what the second method of contraception was? Please raise your hand if you remember and club leaders, please pick someone new this time! Club leaders, pick someone to give a second method!

(pause for 3 seconds)

Thanks for your answer! Another main method of contraception is the birth control pill.

Mrs Ngombu You're right. This is a pill that a woman has to take every day and it contains hormones that *prevent* her ovaries from releasing an egg every month. A woman cannot get pregnant if there is no egg to be fertilised. And I want to be clear, taking the pill will *not* prevent a woman from getting pregnant in the future – it only prevents pregnancy while she is taking the pill. Once she stops she can get pregnant again. Pills can be acquired at health or family planning clinics.

Awa: Good. Can you tell us what the strengths and weaknesses are of the pill?

Mrs Ngombu Sure. If you take the pill, you won't have to interrupt sex, which tends to happen with a condom. But a big problem is that the pill *will not* protect you against STIs – only condoms can protect against these. So the pill only reduces the risk of pregnancy. So if one person has an STI, they will give it to the other person. The risk for that is high.

Awa That's useful info. So the pill is probably best for couples who are dedicated only to each other and who do not have any STIs.

Mrs Ngombu Correct. But a female who is on the pill can still ask her a male to wear a condom. That is fine too. This is double protection against pregnancy and STIs.

Awa Now students, do you remember what the third method was? Please raise your hand if you remember and club leaders, please pick someone new! Club leaders, pick someone to give the third method!

(pause for 3 seconds)

Thank you! Another main method of contraception is depro injections, also known as Auntie Marie.

Mrs Ngombu Very good. You're right, depro injections are given to a woman, usually once every two or three months. The injection contains hormones like the pill, and they prevent the ovaries from releasing an egg. Again, this effect *is not* permanent – it only lasts as long as a woman gets these injections. Once she stops, she can get pregnant.

Mohamed: Can you tell us what the strengths and weaknesses are?

Mrs Ngombu Sure, one bonus is that you don't have to remember to take a pill everyday. Like the pill, it doesn't interrupt sex but it again leaves you unprotected against STIs – only condoms can protect against these. Another disadvantage is that some women's periods may change and become shorter, lighter or stop altogether – this can carry on for some months after they stop the injections.

Mohamed Okay, so the injection is probably again best for couples who are dedicated only to each other and who do not have any STIs.

Mrs Ngombu Correct. But like I said earlier, a female who has had an injection can still ask her partner to wear a condom. Double protection against pregnancy and STIs is a good thing!

Awa Now students, do you remember what the fourth method was? Please raise your hand if you remember and club leaders, please pick someone new! Club leaders, pick someone to answer!

(pause for 3 seconds)

Thank you! Another main method of contraception are implants, also known as Captain Band.

Mrs Ngombu Correct. A nurse or doctor inserts two tiny sticks into a woman's upper arm and this will prevent pregnancy for three years. The sticks contain hormones like the pill and injections, and they prevent the ovaries from releasing an egg. Again, this effect *is not* permanent – it only lasts as long as a woman has the implant and she can take them out before the three years is finished. Once she takes them out, she can get pregnant.

Mohamed: Can you tell us what the strengths and weaknesses are?

Mrs Ngombu Of course. Well, with Captain Band, you don't have to take a pill everyday or get an injection every three months. But like the pill and injections, it doesn't protect against STIs – only condoms can protect against these.

Mohamed Okay, so the injection is again best for couples who are dedicated only to each other and who do not have any STIs.

Mrs Ngombu Yes, but remember, a female who has a Captain Band implant can still ask her partner to wear a condom.

Mohamed: Double protection against pregnancy and STIs is a good thing!

Mrs Ngombu You got it.

Mohamed: Mrs Ngombu and Awa, I think there was also a *fifth* method to prevent pregnancy that we spoke about last time.

Awa: Oh yes, Mohamed. You're right! Students, do you remember what this fifth method was? Please raise your hand if you remember and club leaders, please pick someone new! Club leaders, pick someone to give the fourth method!

(pause for 3 seconds)

Thank you! The most effective method of contraception is abstinence, or not having sex at all.

Mrs Ngombu That is very true. This is something that some religions and parents advocate for. I agree that abstinence is the most effective way to prevent pregnancy and STIs, but I am realistic and I know that young people can be curious. Hormones and sexual attraction can be powerful. That is why it is so important to know what the risks are and *how* to prevent an unwanted pregnancy or STI.

Mohammed:	Like using a condom <i>or</i> using both a condom with the pill, Auntie Marie injections or Captain Band implants.
Mrs Ngombu	Correct. And I should mention that there are actually some more methods of contraception that can also be used to prevent an unwanted pregnancy – such as the coil or IUD and the female condom.
Mohammed:	Wow, I didn't realise there were so many other options.
Mrs Ngombu	Yes, there are, but they might not all be available at community health clinics and some require a doctor or trained professional to administer them. All methods of contraception have their strengths and weaknesses and youth friendly clinics should provide this information so that young people can decide which is best for them.
Mohamed:	Mrs Ngombu, I know some students complain because these clinics are very far away from where they live so some cannot be bothered to go and get contraception.
Mrs Ngombu	Well, I understand if walking a far distance can take a long time, but I would ask the young man or woman this question – would you rather spend an hour walking to a clinic to get contraception or would you rather spend the next 18 years taking care of a baby you weren't prepared for? Or spending <i>the rest of your life</i> with a sexually transmitted infection?
Mohamed:	Wow, when you put it that way, walking a couple of hours doesn't seem so bad. But Mrs Ngombu, many males don't think that taking care of a baby is their problem. They can be a father but just keep going to school and continuing their lives.
Mrs Ngombu	Well, it is a real problem that males can feel that way. Any baby – wanted or unwanted – should be <i>equally</i> cared for by the male and the female. Otherwise it is completely unfair that all the responsibility is on the shoulders of the female.
Awa:	That is exactly the unfair treatment that we spoke about a few sessions ago on gender discrimination. Do you remember?
Mohamed:	Yes, I remember. True Awa, very true. If we promise to not allow for unfair treatment of people, we should not expect females to do all the childcare!
Awa:	Correct.
Mrs Ngombu	I know you've discussed this already, but being physically capable of making babies does not mean a girl or boy is ready to have a child. And pregnancy for a girl at a young age can be dangerous - girls who give birth before the age of 15 are 5 times more likely to die in childbirth than women in their 20's. And their babies are less likely to live beyond their first birthday.
Awa:	Wow. I didn't know that. I do know that most teenage girls are not socially ready to be a mother. For example, they still want to finish their school, spend time with their friends, and pursue other goals. And girls are still relying on their parents and caregivers emotionally and financially, so they are not able to provide for their child themselves.
Mohamed	And if the father is young too he will also be unable to take social, emotional and financial responsibility for the baby.
Mrs Ngombu:	You are both right. Most teenage girls are not emotionally ready to be a mother. It is a huge responsibility to take care of a child, and it can also be a big burden while a girl and boy are still in a phase of learning and developing themselves.

Awa: Sadly, many girls who become pregnant have to drop out of school, either because of social pressure, shame and stigmatization, or because her parents or school administrators force her to leave school. And this is not at all fair because a boy who is the father can still stay in school.

Mohamed: You're right. This is not fair *at all*. Awa, I think I have some ideas on how we can reduce teenage pregnancy in our schools and communities.

Awa: What are those?

Mohamed: First, we have to make sure that all students follow the ground rules of RNRM – Respect, say No at any time, know the risks and prevention strategies and have a clear Mind. If we *all* followed these ground rules, we would never pressure our partners or our friends to have sex. Because we would respect them – even if they said no.

Awa: Correct. And if we are very aware of the risks of unwanted pregnancy, we would also make sure to use prevention strategies like contraceptives.

Mohamed: Exactly. And second, we have to make sure that *all* teachers and community members follow our zero-tolerance policy against sex for grades and sex for gifts. Because forcing a girl to have sex against her will is rape and a criminal act. It is also a reason why there are so many unwanted pregnancies these days.

Awa: Correct. And girls, we need to be aware of these sex for grades and sex for gifts situations. We must avoid them and report them if they happen. I know that sometimes a teacher or a man might make you feel special – he might even say that he loves you or that he wants you to be his wife! But be aware that he might be tricking you and that he only wants sex. The best policy is to say, 'no thank you' and stay away!

Mohamed: Absolutely.

Awa: Mohamed, I think we should take a vote to see if students agree with your ideas. Club leaders this is a quick vote so no need to count the hands! Students, please raise your hand if you agree that it is important to reduce the amount of unwanted pregnancies in our schools and communities. If you agree, raise your hand now!

(Pause for 2 seconds)

Mohamed: Good idea, Awa. Students, please raise your hand if you agree to follow the ground rules of RNRM. If we *all* follow these ground rules, we will never pressure our partners or our friends to have sex. Because we will always respect them – even if they say no. If you agree to follow RNRM, raise your hand now!

(Pause for 2 seconds)

Awa: And finally, students, please raise your hand if you agree that we need to ensure that sex for grades and sex for gifts does not happen in our schools or communities. That means we must avoid such situations, and we must report them if we see or experience them! This applies to both boys and girls. If you agree, raise your hand now!

(Pause for 2 seconds)

Mohamed: Well done! Thank you students!

SFX: Clapping and cheering

Awanatu: Right, I think it's time to wrap up. But before we do so, I'd like to thank Mrs Patricia Ngombu for being with us today. Mrs Ngombu thanks so much and we look forward to

seeing you again next session!

Mrs Ngombu: It has been my pleasure and I look forward to next session too!

Mohamed: Thank you, Mrs Ngombu!

SFX: Cheering and clapping

Awanatu: Great, Mohamed, could you recap what we discussed today?

Mohamed: Sure, we started with a detailed discussion on menstruation – what it is, why it happens and how to manage it. It can be really difficult for females, especially if they don't have access to sanitary pads. So, we then discussed ways that we can all work together to support girls when and if they are having their periods!

Awa: Exactly. Then we had a detailed discussion about contraceptive methods – we learned how to put a condom on and what the strengths and weaknesses are of the pill, Auntie Marie injections and Captain Band implants. Of course, not having sex at all is the most effective way to avoid unwanted pregnancy or an STI, but if done correctly, using these contraceptive methods can be very effective.

Mohamed Correct. And finally, we had a group vote on ways that we can reduce unwanted pregnancies in our schools and communities: first, by making sure that *all* students follow the ground rules of RNRM and second, by doing everything we can to avoid, prevent and report *all* cases of sex for grades or sex for gifts.

Awa: Excellent.

SFX: Transition tune (3 seconds)

Awanatu: Thank you everyone, we will wrap up with some 'Reflection Time' now. We're going to take 30 seconds for everyone to sit quietly and reflect on what we've discussed today. Students, you can use this time to think about what you liked most about today's session.

Mohamed: I liked listening to Mrs Ngombu – she had a lot of smart things to say.

Awa: Good. You can also use this time to think about something that you found interesting or that you didn't know before.

Mohamed: I definitely learned more about menstruation and contraception!

Awa: Good! And students, you can also think about any questions you may have. Please write down your questions and give them to your Club Leaders after Reflection Time.

Mohamed: Will do.

Awa: Okay everyone, please be quiet now and enjoy your 30 seconds of Reflection Time.

SFX: Reflection Time music (30 seconds)

Awa: Okay, thank you for reflecting. Remember, if there was something that you liked from today's session – share what you learned with others. If there was something that you have a question about, I hope you wrote it down. Please give your questions to your Club Leaders now.

Mohamed: Now, we're going to have Question Time. Club Leaders, we're going to play the

background music for three minutes and give warnings when you have one minute and 10 seconds left. Please read out any questions that you have received and see if anyone can help answer. If not, save the question and ask your Mentor for help.

- Awa:** If you can't finish answering *all* the questions during these three minutes, feel free to continue after the session if there is time. Ready? Club Leaders, please read out the first question!
- SFX:** Background activity music for 2 minutes
- Mohamed:** Club Leaders, we have 1 minute left!
- SFX:** Background activity music for 50 seconds
- Mohamed:** Club Leaders, we have 10 seconds left! We will start our countdown now.
- Mohamed/ Awa together** 10...9...8...7...6...5...4...3...2...1! Stop Question Time!
- Awa:** That was great. I think it is time to wrap up the session now. Did you have any other points to make?
- Mohamed:** I want to make sure that everyone promises to come to the next club session on time!
- Awa:** Agreed.
- Mohamed:** Club Leaders, could you please remind us of the day, time and place for our next session?
- SFX** (drums and pause for 3 seconds)
- Mohamed:** Thank you. Students, do you promise to be on time?
- SFX** (group of people shouting 'yes!')
- Mohamed** I didn't hear you!
- SFX** (group of people shouting 'yes!')
- Mohamed:** Great. See you then!
- Awa:** Okay, thank you again for your participation and we look forward to seeing you for our next session, which is called: **An informed adolescence**. We'll be learning more about STIs and other important issues.
- Mohammed:** Good. I will definitely be there.
- Awanatu:** Great. Hope to see you all at the next session!
- Mohammed:** See you all soon! (in Krio)
- SFX:** Closing music (2 minutes)