

“What is Menstrual Equity?” Event Report

Event Details:

Date: Tuesday, March 12, 2019
Time: 6:00PM-8:00PM
Venue: Hugh Downs School of Human Communication
Facilitator: Professor Heather Switzer
Panelists: Camron King, #HappyPeriod
Demetra Presley, Go with the Flow
State Rep. Athena Salman
Abby Sharp, Trans Spectrum of Arizona

Total Attendees: 40

Feedback Responses: 30

What are three words that describe your experience from this event?

Three most used words: empowering, informative, enlightening

Others: Anger into activism, open minded, thought-provoking

- Amazing, enlightening, empowering
- Empowered, encouraged, excited
- Period poverty, facts, data
- Exciting, thought provoking, freedom
- enlightening, informative, motivated
- Eye-opening, challenging, enlightening
- Informative, frustrating, hopeful
- Inspiring, empowering, eye-opening
- Smile, community, awareness
- Informational, frustrating
- Informative, safe, engaging
- Educational, uplifting, personal
- Proud, empowered, excited
- Uplifting, informative, not alone
- Inspiring, educational, energizing
- Empowering, eye-opening, nerve-racking
- Enlightening, empowering, engaging
- Invigorating, expanding
- Informative, exposing, inspiring
- Equity, menstruator
- Encouraged, empowered, intrigued
- Powerful, informative, necessary
- Informative, confronting
- Anger into activism

- Empowering, educational, important
- Informative, interesting, empowering
- Comforting, open minded, educational
- Informative, inspiring, empowering
- Educational, inspirational, informative
- Motivated, hopeful, exhilarated
- Very informative, exciting, makes me so proud of our young people

What new awareness did you gain or what is your takeaway from this experience?

- That I can talk openly about my experiences as a trans person and not be ashamed
- The experience of trans individuals with menstruation
- Not all menstrual bodies are women bodies/struggle of trans community
- Awareness of trans/non-binary people who menstruate
- Menstrual equality is more than having access to products. Use of the words “menstruation” is more inclusive.
- Trans and nonbinary experiences
- How menstruation impacts homeless communities and school aged individuals
- I gained more information on the struggles of menstruating people as well as non-female menstruators.
- So many people miss work because of menstruating.
- Shaming people for a natural reaction or experience isn’t helpful.
- I had no idea that so many people miss school and work because of periods.
- Just to be open about menstrual hygiene.
- Disposal of menstrual hygiene products is an issue, especially in low income and resource limited areas.
- I work in an education-adjacent field, but never before thought about access to menstrual hygiene products in schools.
- So stunned by Demetra’s statistics - but everyone gave incredible insights.
- Using more inclusive language
- More understanding around the intersectionality that impacts menstrual equity.
- Many men are willing to participate when personally asked by women to connect. (In conversation, purchase, legislation, etc. maybe they are waiting)
- That communication for change is present and on the move.
- The language of menstruation
- Language around inclusion of menstruation
- I have never thought about menstrual equity including people that do not identify as women.
- 1 in 5 US students miss school because of lack of access to hygiene products.
- I now know other strategies of how to break these stigmas, and better educate others around me.
- Menstruation in different cultures and stigma for incarcerated menstruators.
- Did not realize they were considered “luxury” under SNAP and WIC. I knew transgender individuals menstruate too, but didn’t fully realize extra obstacles they face.

- The awareness of how hard it is to make “having your period” a comfortable thing to talk about.
- Trans rights intersectionality
- Our country, as a progressive as it is, still suffers from the stigma of periods. And also, disposing of period products is still a thing to work on.
- I am now seeing the need not only internationally but in our own backyard.
- Young people are so aware of what is happening in this world.

How might this event impact your life and work?

- I will reach out to others and look for more outreach opportunities.
- It definitely will change the language I use to talk about menstruation
- I am more aware and I want to get more involved.
- I will take info to the AZDOC and the ASU Public Health Efforts through my committees.
- I will write a column for a journal about this issue. It will be included in the course content for women’s health in the nursing program.
- Honestly, I feel so empowered to help some of these organizations!
- Work to de-stigmatize pain and encourage better menstrual education in the medical community.
- This event will reframe my mind while doing my work as well as just living my life in general.
- It reinforces my idea that periods are a public health/community issue.
- A reminder to use gender neutral language in regards to menstruation.
- I will continue to speak openly and proudly about the human body and all it can do.
- I’ll ask for more products to help the homeless.
- I am so proud of all the other people around me who are trying to better the world. I don’t feel so alone.
- Had a great conversation about this recently with colleagues and I am excited to share about this event to continue the conversation.
- It makes me think about ways in which I can be more inclusive.
- I will advocate even more thoughtfully and persistently at the state capitol on this issue.
- Academically - researcher of menstrual rituals. As a parent of both a girl and a boy.
- Assist to increase the awareness of menstrual equity knowledge with others.
- Imposing new language
- Creating space for dialogue, working to reduce the stigma and shame associated.
- I want to keep talking and being informed about this issue.
- I learned a lot about various concerns to hygiene products.
- This will definitely impact our work with PPGen on campus and this way we go forward to create this change.
- Aligns with PPGen’s menstrual equity campaign on campus.
- Being more open about my own periods and experience with men.
- At work, I usually hide a pad in my sleeve or packet when I go to the bathroom. Now I shouldn’t care.
- I want to help my campus community at the Polytechnic campus.

- I'm opening a student chapter of PERIOD & DWB at ASU and I'm the secretary of AMSA, so I think this event is the perfect foundation to advance these chapters.
- I know now that conversations on this topic need to be encouraged no matter how uncomfortable.
- This makes me feel that the world is in "good hands".

Other comments about this event:

- Thank you so much for having me!
- Amazing!
- Thank you for organizing
- Thank you. A great time!
- Well organized, good speaker, good intersection. When I am asked for products, I will bring tampons instead of pads.
- Good discussion on questions and great panel members.
- Great! People (not only women) should be comfortable to speak about women's health issues, just like any other topic.
- Thank you for hosting this!
- Great event! Thank you for holding.
- Very comfortable discussion conducive space.
- Menstrual equity workshop series
- Such a pleasure to serve on the panel with phenomenal speakers and moderator.
- I appreciate everyone here today.
- Fantastic
- Great panel of folks who are passionate and active in this work.
- Excellent!
- This was amazing! Please do more.
- Thank you for being trans-inclusive!
- This should be consistent
- Great job!
- This is bloody great. Can there be more?
- Very insightful and liberating

What other topics would you be interested in learning about?

- Sexual health, homelessness, accessibility/disability, harm reduction
- Other women's health topics, abortion?
- Incarceration, local poverty/those without homes, aging and loneliness issues
- Rape culture
- Stigma of breastfeeding
- Homelessness
- Other societal issues where people are "inconvenience" or suffer and actionable steps on how we can overcome them and make change.
- Trans issues, school-to-prison/deportation pipeline
- Socialized masculinity

- Women and economic justice
- Talking across divides
- The commercialization of female health
- STDs and how they are common
- Sex education - STI/STD stigmas
- Inclusive sex education
- Updating sex-ed at schools
- Anything about global health, feminism and race
- Abortion/Title X

Participant Feedback Demographic:

ASU Student: 15

ASU Staff: 3

Community: 9

Student-Other: 3

Resources:

Panelist Resources:

Go With the Flow (Demetra Presley's organization)

<https://gowiththeflowaz.org/>

#HappyPeriod (Camron King's organization)

<http://hashtaghappyperiod.org/>

Trans Spectrum of Arizona (Abby Sharp's organization)

<https://tsaz.org/>

Representative Athena Salman's social media

<https://www.facebook.com/SalmanforAZ/>

https://twitter.com/AthenaSalman?ref_src=twsrc%5Egoogle%7Ctwcamp%5Eserp%7Ctwgr%5Eauthor

When the Light is Fire: Maasai Schoolgirls in Contemporary Kenya (Heather Switzer's book)

<https://www.amazon.com/When-Light-Fire-Schoolgirls-Contemporary/dp/0252042034>

Compilation video from event

<https://youtu.be/nJeqbGVlZA>

Literature/ Music:

The Bluest Eye by Toni Morrison (book)

https://www.amazon.com/Bluest-Eye-Vintage-International/dp/0307278441/ref=sr_1_1?keyword=s=the+bluest+eye&qid=1552673741&s=books&sr=1-1

Their Eyes Were Watching God by Zora Neale Hurston (book)

<https://www.amazon.com/Their-Eyes-Were-Watching-God/dp/0060838671>

“we need a god who bleeds now...” by ntozake shange (book of poems)

<https://www.amazon.com/gp/product/0915124890?imprToken=xsHrC6m4CM91FG.5063.vQ&slotNum=4&ie=UTF8&tag=bustlebooks-20&camp=1789&linkCode=xm2&creativeASIN=0915124890>

Menstruation in Fiction (blog)

<http://www.slaphappyLarry.com/menstruation-in-fiction/>

The Red Tent by Anita Diamant (book)

<https://www.amazon.com/Red-Tent-20th-Anniversary-Novel/dp/0312427298>

Crimson Wave by Tacocat (music video)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DFH1BBdxGjw>

The Moon Within by Aida Salazar (YA book)

<https://www.amazon.com/Moon-Within-Aida-Salazar/dp/1338283375>

Articles/Podcasts:

Access to products for those experiencing homelessness (op-ed)

<http://www.dailyCal.org/2018/09/25/homeless-communities-need-access-to-menstrual-products/>

Access to pads vs. menstrual stigma

<https://brightthemag.com/sanitary-pads-the-it-girl-of-global-development-a38c7b3fda3?fbclid=IwAR2hyMAoZH1MqsDYm3p99cl7CGPXvVi5wnj2PHHuDuiLuzbDgcliX9dBFPQ>

Menstrual products are the “trend” for NGOs

<https://www.ozy.com/fast-forward/menstruation-is-the-new-development-fad/32285>

Marathon runner “free bleeds”

<https://people.com/celebrity/kiran-gandhi-period-runner-speaks-out-against-critics/>

Period Podcast

<https://periodpodcast2.libsyn.com/>

Menstrual Equity Fact Sheet

- On average, a person who menstruates has their period for 2,535 days (or seven years) of their life.¹
- Nine states have specifically exempted menstrual products from sales tax, and five other states have no sales tax at all. Thirty-six states still carry a sales tax on menstrual products.²
- SNAP and WIC exclude menstrual products, even though the FDA considers them "medical products." SNAP and WIC classify pads and tampons alongside "luxuries" like pet food, cigarettes, and alcohol.³
- Some people have reported giving up their food stamps for money to buy tampons.⁴
- Globally, menstruating students may miss school or even drop out due to shame or embarrassment, or inadequate sanitation facilities.⁵
- When people experiencing homelessness can't afford menstrual products, they resort to using methods such as socks, rags, cardboard, and paper bags, which can lead to dangerous infections.⁶
- U.S. consumers spent \$3.1 billion on menstrual products last year.⁷
- Individuals menstruating in Arizona prisons get 12 pads a month for their menstrual cycle (as of October 2018).⁸

¹<https://www.nytimes.com/2018/07/22/health/tampon-tax-periods-menstruation-nyt.html>

²<https://www.npr.org/2018/03/25/564580736/more-states-move-to-end-tampon-tax-that-s-seen-as-discriminating-against-women>

³<https://www.harpersbazaar.com/culture/features/a10235656/menstrual-period-united-states/>

⁴<https://www.girlshelpinggirlsperiod.org/the-facts--period->

⁵https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Menstrual_Hygiene_Day

⁶<https://www.period.org/>

⁷https://www.newsweek.com/2016/04/29/womens-periods-menstruation-tampons-pads-449833.html?utm_source=internal&utm_campaign=incontent&utm_medium=related1

⁸<https://kizz.org/content/602963/%E2%80%98pads-and-tampons-and-problems-periods-all-male-committ ee-hears-arizona-bill-feminine>