

HINE O TE KURA YOUTH SYMPOSIUM

QUALITATIVE INSIGHTS

JUNE 2023





FOREWORD

FIFA Women's World Cup 2023 Tāmaki Makaurau Auckland Host City Programme

aucklandnz.com/fifa-womens-world-cup

FOREWORD

The FIFA Women's World Cup 2023 Australia & New Zealand (FIFA WWC 2023) is the largest event held to date in New Zealand, bringing significant benefits to the region. Tataki Auckland Unlimited as the major event delivery arm of Auckland Council, is charged with the planning and delivery of the FIFA WWC 2023 Host City Programme in Tāmaki Makaurau Auckland.

A flagship legacy project delivered by the FIFA WWC 2023 Host City Programme was the Hine O Te Kura Youth Symposium which set out to change the game on menstrual equity. The Hine O Te Kura Youth Symposium was delivered on Tuesday, 20 June 2023 at the Due Drop Events Centre. The programme included speakers from Sport New Zealand, Dignity New Zealand, AWWA, Organic Initiative, InsideOut, and Education Outdoors New Zealand.

Over 250 students, teachers, and observers attended, which resulted in:

- 89.5% overall event satisfaction
- 86.8% agreed they felt more empowered to support others during their period
- 88.3% felt more confident to speak about periods to others
- 74.5% felt more confident to try new products
- 62.8% felt more confident to participate in physical activity

To ensure the programming was appropriate and informative for the attendees, Honoco was commissioned under the FIFA WWC 2023 Host City Programme to undertake quantitative and qualitative research prior to the event and the research is now being made publicly available as legacy to inform and validate future menstrual conversations and projects.

Tātaki
Auckland
Unlimited



PART 2: **QUALITATIVE RESEARCH**



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Carousel



Welcome!

Kia ora and welcome to this project.

We're Honoco a research and strategy agency helping Tāmaki Makaurau Auckland's Leverage & Legacy Programme team with some research and we'll be managing this community with you all this week.

What is this?

This research project is all about gaining a better understanding of New Zealand's perspectives on menstrual health and period poverty. There are no right or wrong answers and we just ask for your honest input and for everyone to be respectful to each other throughout. You are part of a small-ish group of people who will talk together and share their opinions on the design and delivery of the Tāmaki Auckland Unlimited Youth Symposium over the next few days through a number of tasks and activities.

These activities should only take 10-30 minutes of your time per day. For 7 days in a row. You can log in any time of day that suits you best and can access the community from your mobile, tablet or desktop. On the right side of the page, you will find a task list with all available tasks. Every day there will be new tasks, so check in every day to complete the tasks of that day. **The task list will update everyday at 7am with new tasks for that day, so keep an eye on your task list.**

What do I get for taking part?

If you take part in all 7 days of the study, you will receive a guaranteed \$500 gift card from The Warehouse Group. PLUS, you'll also receive 2 tickets to a Northern Kahu game of your choice in the Tauhīni Basketball Aotearoa league this winter. You will also get the feel-good factor of contributing to the development of the Youth Symposium and an education event that is going to help Tāmaki Makaurau Auckland's Youth Symposium to do some serious good for all Aucklanders!

What to do now?

- Keep an eye on the task list for your daily activities.
- Have fun :)

Contact

If you have any further **questions** or **comments**, please refer to the **Community FAQ** page that should be on the carousel in the home page or send a **private message** to one of our moderators via [this link](#). Your question or comment will be answered as soon as possible.

Countdown

TASK LIST

DAY 1

Activity 1.1 Breaking the Ice
Read and add a comment. →

Activity 1.2 Kia Ora
Add a journal entry. →

Activity 1.3 What's in a Name
Finish the questionnaire. →

DAY 2

Activity 2.1 Menstruation Reflections
Add a journal entry. →

Activity 2.1 Men-struation
Add a journal entry. →

Activity 2.2 What If...We All Got Periods
Read and add a comment. →

DAY 3

Activity 3.1 Menstrual Health Experiences
Add a journal entry. →

Activity 3.1 Menstrual Health Understanding
Add a journal entry. →

Activity 3.2 Menstrual Health and Sport/Exercise
Read and add a comment. →

RESEARCH DESIGN & METHODOLOGY

Using the insights from Phase A, we began a recruitment drive to provide a minimum of n = 40 respondents to take part in an online research community.

The community was built to test a range of perceptions, opinions and experiences with a focus on those that identify as female and young Māori and Pasifika.

The community ran from April 26-May 2. A total of 24 activities were designed and conducted over a 7-day period. Activities included a mix of private and public tasks with some directed to certain segments within the community (i.e., separate sets of activities for those who menstruate to share their experiences versus those who do not menstruate).

COMMUNITY HEALTH METRICS

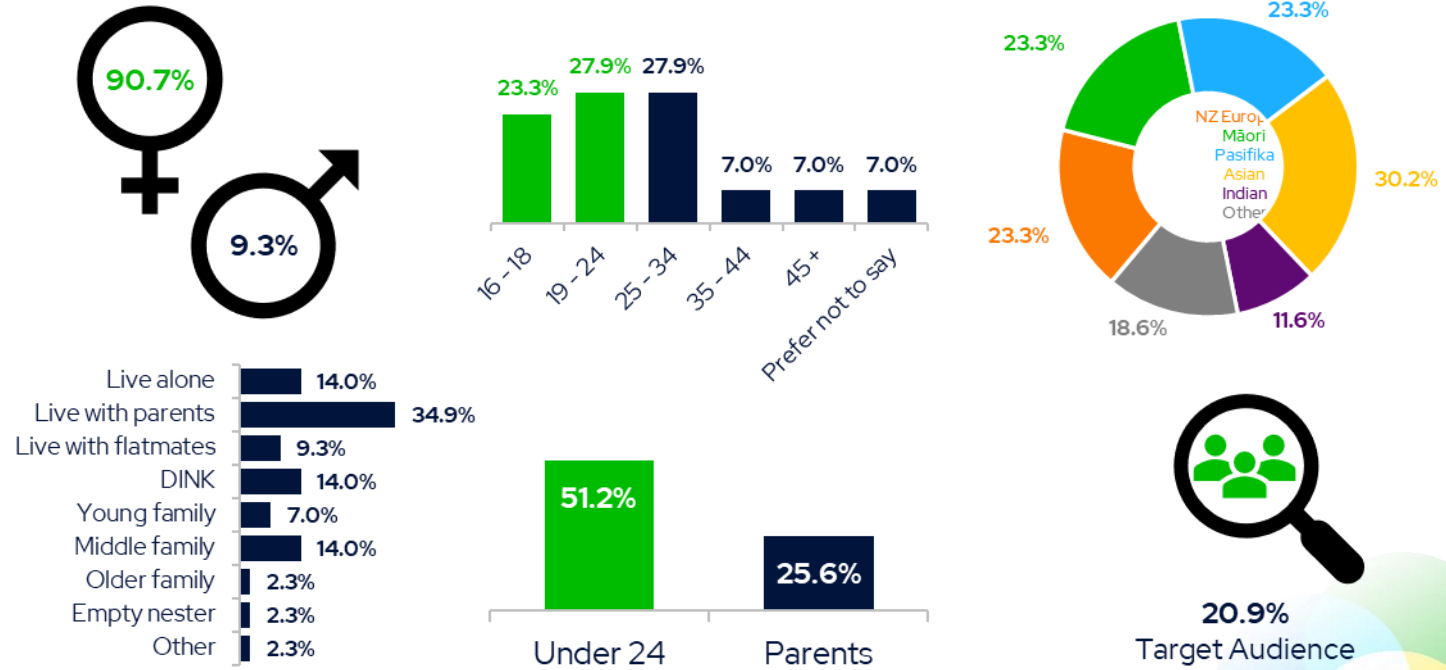
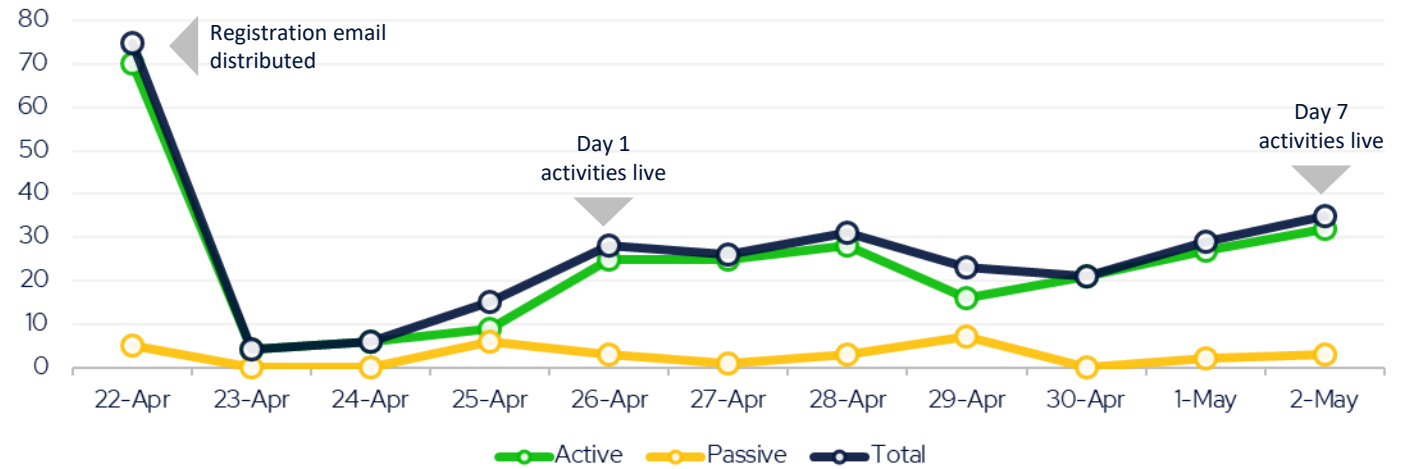
Total sign-up numbers peaked at 75 participants on the first day that the registration email was circulated.

Active participation, defined as logging in and completing an action such as posting, liking or commenting, peaked during the last day of the community at 32.

Saturday and Sunday took place during this project and there was a dip in engagement on the 29th and 30th of April.

23 participants completed 100% of the activities and 31 completed over 50%. Of this 31 participants, only 2 were male.

43 participants completed at least one activity. All demographic charts and infographics (right) are calculated from the group of 43.



ACTIVITY ANALYSIS



TO START THE WEEK OFF WE GOT TO KNOW A BIT ABOUT THOSE TAKING PART AND THEIR MOTIVATIONS FOR THE STUDY - FOOTBALL IS THE FAVOURITE SPORT FOR 46.2% OF THIS GROUP

1.1 BREAKING THE ICE & 1.2 MOTIVATION FOR TAKING PART

Football and Basketball ranked among the most common “favourite sports” for the community.

A familial connection or driver was often identified as the starting point for passion. Many spoke of loving the sport for the enjoyment and fun of playing/watching. There was little mention of physical wellbeing.

We had a range of engagement with sport within the community. Most of the cohort are currently playing or played sport themselves (both competitively, and socially), but many also love watching sport.

Serena Williams was the most popular athlete, with 7 people identifying the tennis legend as their favourite athlete. Only 29.4% of the favourite athletes mentioned were from New Zealand. Val Adams (3), Ruby Tui (2) and Daisy Cleverley (2) were the most popular Kiwis.

The reasons for why these were their favourite female athletes mainly involved how they play, their skills, and how they find them inspiring on and off the pitch/court.

In terms of motivation for the week, we heard that participants signed up to learn about menstrual health and to give their views and contribute to discussions.



Ranked football as their favourite sport



Ranked basketball as their favourite sport



Chose Serena Williams as their favourite athlete



OPEN FORUM

N = 39

“My favourite sport is football, and the reason football is my favourite sport is because my dad would always take me to the stadium to watch local football matches when I was little. I grew up to love football. I do play with my friends most weekends and it is very lovely.”

Māori, Female, 23 years

“My favourite female athlete is Sam Kerr, who has many achievements but also inspires young women who play soccer to not doubt themselves and to do great things with their life.”

Pasifika & Indian, Female, 17 years

“Basketball is life. And my favourite female athlete is Diana Taurasi. She’s the best because she plays effortlessly, and I hope to be like her one day.”

Māori, Female, 23 years

“I joined because I just want to gain more knowledge on the basic things, I need to know about females partaking in sports activities. I want to know if it’s right or wrong giving that we have very delicate bodies.”

Māori, Female, 22 years

92.5% OF THE COMMUNITY HAD USED A EUPHEMISM OR NICKNAME FOR A PERIOD IN THE PAST WITH “THAT TIME OF THE MONTH” THE MOST COMMON, USED BY 70.0% OF RESPONDENTS

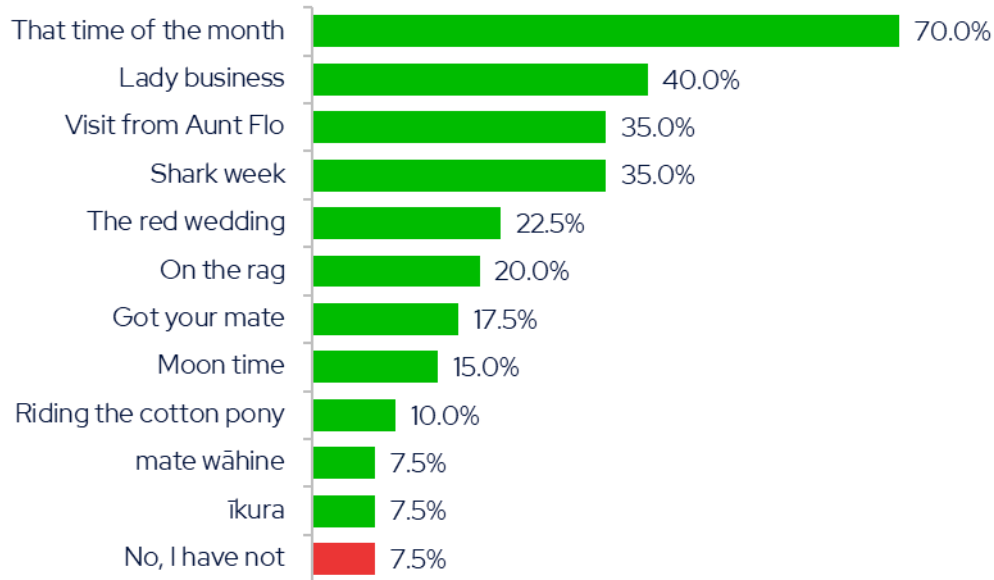
1.3 EUPHEMISMS & NICKNAMES



MINI SURVEY

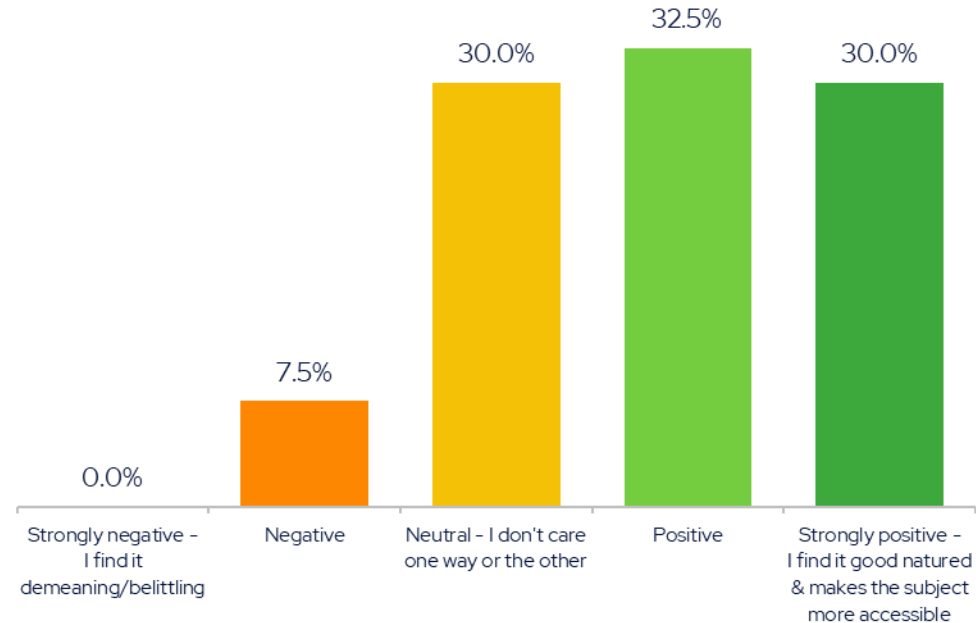
N = 40

All of the following are euphemisms for menstruation.
Have you personally used any of the following?



There was low awareness/usage for the te reo menstruation terminology we tracked in this question with both “mate wāhine” and “īkura” only used by 7.5% of people.

What is your opinion about people using language like the above when referring to periods?



When asked about the feelings people had for using such language to euphemise menstruation, we had nobody indicate they found this demeaning or belittling. 62.5% of people had a positive reaction to using this type of language.

TRADITIONAL PERIOD PRODUCTS SUCH AS PADS AND TAMPONS REMAIN MUCH MORE COMMON AMONG THE PREFERENCES OF THIS GROUP THAN MENSTRUAL CUPS OR PERIOD UNDERWEAR

2.1 MENSTRUATION REFLECTION

When asked where participants first received information about menstruation the most common source cited was “at home” for 13 people and mostly through “mum”. On the other hand, 12 participants mentioned that they first received information through school.

23 out of 27 participants who directly shared with us which products they prefer said pads; 9 said tampons; 5 said menstrual cups and only 1 said period underwear. Traditional products are still ahead of the likes of period underwear and menstrual cups for this group.

Over half (15) are interested in new products, most commonly period underwear. “Cost” was cited as a common barrier to trying new products, along with perceived health concerns. The latter could be alleviated with education on these products.

There was broad consensus that children should be spoken to at a young age with most saying somewhere between 8 and 10 felt like the right time. There was an emphasis on the first point of contact needing to be before the first possible age of getting their first period.



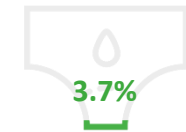
Prefer/use pads



Prefer/use tampons



Prefer/use menstrual cups



Prefer/use period underwear

"Unfortunately, I haven't used cups purely for the reason I don't want to rinse the cup out lol. As for the period underwear, I've just never been interested enough to invest in the product personally, but I've heard great reviews from other women within my workplace. It is not a common thing within both my Samoan and Tongan culture (that I have been raised to believe) is not to use any other period product other than pads."

Pasifika, Female, 24

"There are some period products out there that I don't use, and this is mostly due to health concerns. Some of those products may affect my body negatively."

Asian, Female, 22 years

"Personally, hearing about it later made it so much more uncomfortable and scarier for me. So, talking about it earlier would have gotten rid of that and nervousness around the topic, and maybe would have normalised it for me. I wish the topic was spoken in more detail by my mum or school when I was younger because there have been a lot of times, I thought I was dying or something was wrong."

NZ European, Female, 17 years

"It's important to teach young people about these [period product] options so they can choose the one that works best for them, and I regretted not know about them earlier"

NZ European, Female, 25 years



PRIVATE
JOURNAL

N = 30

TALKING ABOUT PERIODS WITH MEN STILL HAS CHALLENGES AND LED TO FEELINGS OF AWKWARDNESS AND A LACK OF UNDERSTANDING- EDUCATION SHOULD INCLUDE BOYS TO BRIDGE THESE CONCERNS

2.1 MEN-STRUATION REFLECTION

The aim of the study was to include men and those that do not menstruate in the conversation. However, more than half of those answering this activity spoke to the fact that it could be challenging and awkward at times when speaking to men.

There was a general agreement that boys need the education as well as girls to increase understanding, support, and reduce stigmas that may arise otherwise.

Lastly, the "what if men got periods too" video¹ was widely enjoyed and considered a powerful and impactful thought experiment. Almost all participants said that the stigma would dissipate if men menstruated as well, and that ensuring men and boys received education about menstruation early on in life could be a key to unlocking period equity.

"Explaining my mood, cravings or pain has been more difficult to explain rather than talking about it because it seems they will never understand no matter how much information you share with the male."

Māori & Pasifika, Female, 25

"Very difficult discussion for me as basically knew less than the children... It wasn't talked about at school much at all for a male. What is more frightening now is understanding how embarrassing it was for the females as it wasn't talked about and was made into a big deal.... Boys would be cruel.... Nowadays, I don't think it's that much of a deal as there's a lot more information out there. I think men should learn about it in school on their own at a high level. But they should also learn how to be supportive to females etc."

Māori, Male, 42 years

"I think my brother knows about it, but not too much because as I said in our primary School when this talk happens the boys get separated from the girls"

Asian, Female, 18 years

"Today even the men are encouraged to talk about it and how to take care of their loved ones during that time. Menstruating is healthy and even the growing lads should be taught about it so that they don't feel awkward or weird when they hear something about it."

Māori, Female, 24



OPEN FORUM

N = 32

¹ <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jUYIGud-SAo>

"SUSTAINABLE PRODUCTS ARE REALLY IMPORTANT TO ME. I DEFINITELY TRY TO BUY PRODUCTS WHICH ARE AS SUSTAINABLE AS POSSIBLE - I AVOID PLASTIC PACKAGED FOODS, OFTEN OPTING FOR ONES WRAPPED IN PAPER OR CARDBOARD, AND I BUY SECOND HAND CLOTHES AS OFTEN AS POSSIBLE.

ALTHOUGH, I FEEL LIKE I PRIORITISE THE PRICE OF PRODUCTS A TINY BIT MORE THAN SUSTAINABILITY."



A RANGE OF PRODUCTS AND MOTIVATIONS DRIVE PRODUCT CONSIDERATION - ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY, WHILST IMPORTANT, WAS NOT THE MAIN PURCHASE DRIVER

3.1 MENSTRUAL HEALTH EXPERIENCES

A wide range (15) of products and brands were listed as trusted to use with most common mentions for Kotex and Libra. AWWA and the Warehouse received one mention each. The main consideration when buying these products was comfort (11), absorbency (8) with sustainability ranking third (7).

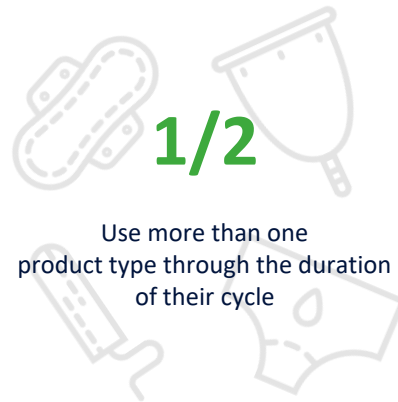
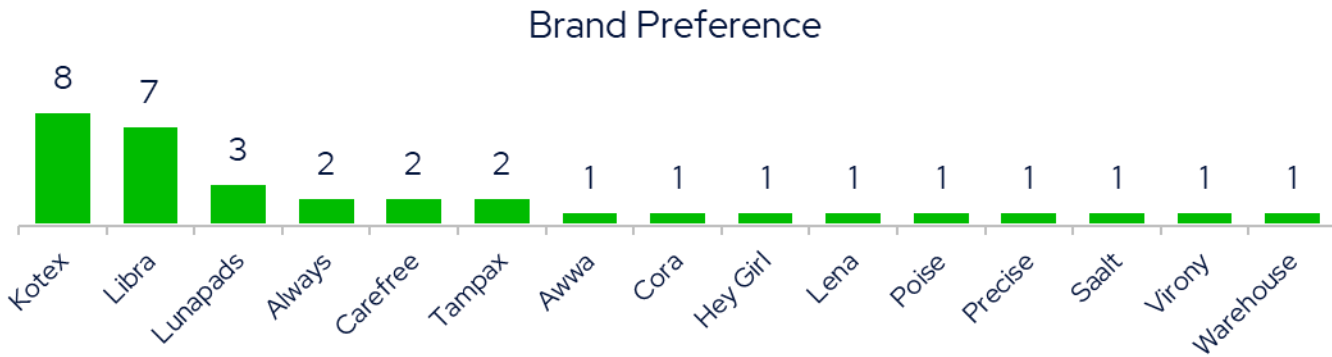
When prompted further about sustainability, it was seen as a high priority (20 saying it's important), and many concerned about the safety of products too (20). Cost of sustainable options was mentioned as a prominent barrier.

Most participants have found a specific product that they are comfortable with and continue to use.

Half of the participants used just one type of product (i.e., pads or tampons etc) throughout their period and the other half of the participants switch between more than one product type.

16 of 26 participants are currently tracking their period (10 with an app) with many saying they want to know when it's coming so they can prepare.

17 of 25 participants said that they share details of their period with others, often talking about flow, duration, and pain.



MOST OF THE COMMUNITY STILL PURSUE SPORT AND PHYSICAL ACTIVITY ON THEIR PERIOD - HOWEVER, THEY ARE INVARIABLY FORCED INTO ADAPTING EXERCISE CHOICES AND MANAGING PHYSICAL SYMPTOMS

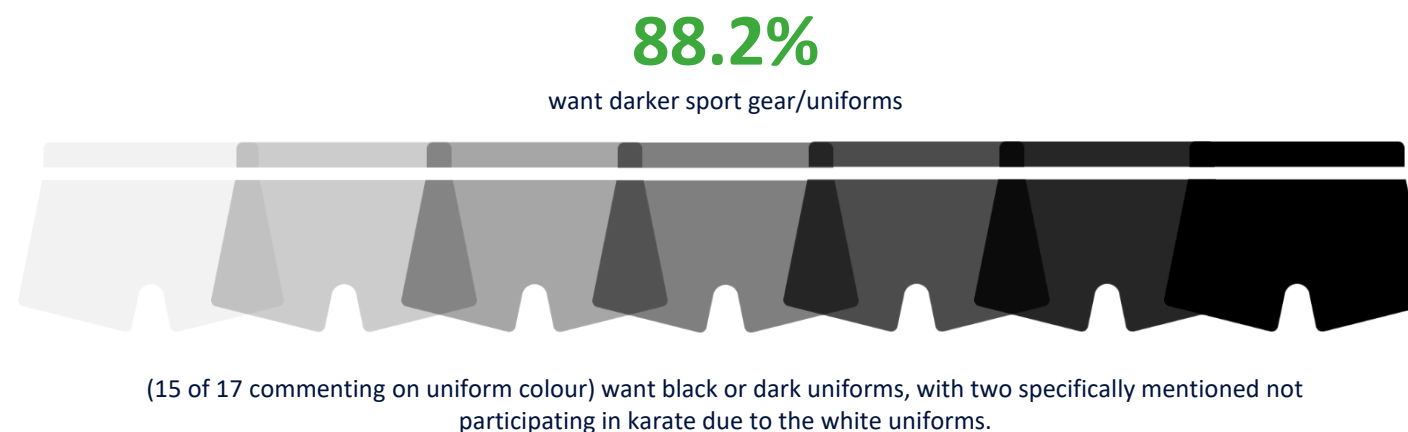
3.2 & 3.3 MENSTRUAL HEALTH IN SPORT & EXERCISE

89.3% (25 out of 28 applicable) of the community said they have played sport on their period, but many talked to having to adjust what they do and/or where, such as switching to a lighter intensity option like yoga and walking, avoiding swimming, and even choosing to work out at home instead of in public.

7 participants noticed that exercising during their period reduced period symptom like cramps and bloating. Most don't tend to use different period products for sport but change them more regularly. Whilst high performance players talked about having to get on with it and play (as it was not an option to miss practice/competition), with some talking about using pain medication to allow them to continue to perform.

This activity emphasised that periods are a barrier to sport and reduce participation with the major reasons cited as managing physical symptoms such as cramps/pain (17 mentioning) and fatigue (8) rather than any emotional or social deterrent.

4 participants spoke to painful memories of missing important competitions due to their period. There was a desire for greater support from clubs/teams, as well as communication/openness to reduce stigma and allow for consideration and empathy. Some sought rest/leave/adjustments from sport during their period.



"My period was what stopped me from representing my group in my high school final year, and this is one impact I won't forget",
Indian, Female, 17 years

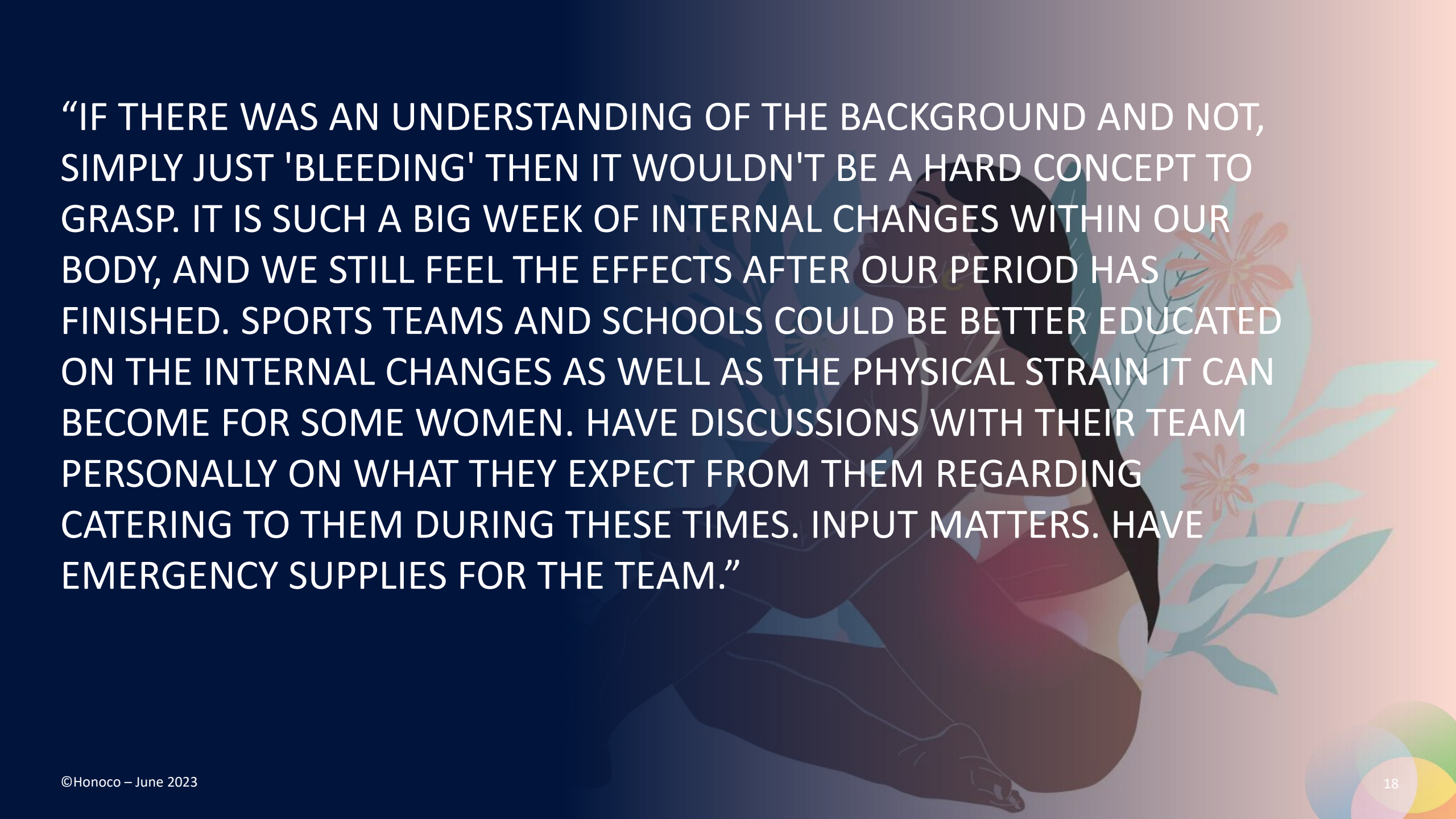
"my period impacted my participation in my high school team's finals netball game. I was heartbroken"
NZ European, Female, 46 years

"When I used to do karate, I would normally just skip classes if I had my period and didn't feel well" Indian, Female 15-24, and "... Karate was the most intense and it was risky because of the white uniform, so it did feel uncomfortable when there were some lessons that I couldn't skip" NZ European, Female, 46 years

“THE FEAR OF BLEEDING OUT ONTO SHORTS/PANTS SUCKS!

THE PHYSICAL DISCOMFORT OF CRAMPS & BLOATING ETC. COULD BE LIMITING ACCESS FOR SOME TO PRODUCTS IN FAVOUR OF A MORE COMFORTABLE EXPERIENCE.

SOME FACILITIES ARE NOT SUITABLE FOR CLEANING & CHANGING I.E., COMMUNAL SHOWERS, OR EVEN IF SHOWERS HAVE PARTITIONS, ALL THE WATER FLOWS OPENLY DOWN THE DRAIN.”

A stylized illustration of a woman in a yoga pose, specifically a seated twist, against a background of soft, colorful floral and leaf patterns. The woman is depicted in shades of brown and purple, with her legs tucked under her and her torso twisted to the right. The background features various floral motifs in shades of blue, green, and orange, creating a serene and naturalistic atmosphere.

“IF THERE WAS AN UNDERSTANDING OF THE BACKGROUND AND NOT, SIMPLY JUST 'BLEEDING' THEN IT WOULDN'T BE A HARD CONCEPT TO GRASP. IT IS SUCH A BIG WEEK OF INTERNAL CHANGES WITHIN OUR BODY, AND WE STILL FEEL THE EFFECTS AFTER OUR PERIOD HAS FINISHED. SPORTS TEAMS AND SCHOOLS COULD BE BETTER EDUCATED ON THE INTERNAL CHANGES AS WELL AS THE PHYSICAL STRAIN IT CAN BECOME FOR SOME WOMEN. HAVE DISCUSSIONS WITH THEIR TEAM PERSONALLY ON WHAT THEY EXPECT FROM THEM REGARDING CATERING TO THEM DURING THESE TIMES. INPUT MATTERS. HAVE EMERGENCY SUPPLIES FOR THE TEAM.”

UNPROMPTED AWARENESS IN THE MĀORI CULTURAL VIEW OF MENSTRUAL HEALTH WAS LOW, THOUGH ELICITED PRIDE AND POSITIVITY FOR THE FEW COGNISANT OF IT WHEN COMPARED TO OTHER CULTURAL VIEWS

4.1 CULTURAL SIGNIFICANCE & MENSTRUAL HEALTH

Cultural Awareness Levels

Only a few participants had a strong understanding of the role the Māori worldview or te ao Māori could play regarding menstrual health. Tikanaga Māori surrounding menstruation had deep-rooted, positive associations for those who did have knowledge of them, but only 3 people knew the meaning behind some of these practices.

For our participants, cultural connections to their menstrual health seemed to have materialised in perceptions and practices that had negative connotations or motivations for them (though many were nonplussed about these).

For example, participants spoke of practices that promote hiding the “problem”, reducing their participation in certain areas of life, and result in periods having been stigmatised. These practices were most commonly Western ideologies, Indian, and in some cases Pasifika.

Common tikanga or cultural customs mentioned:

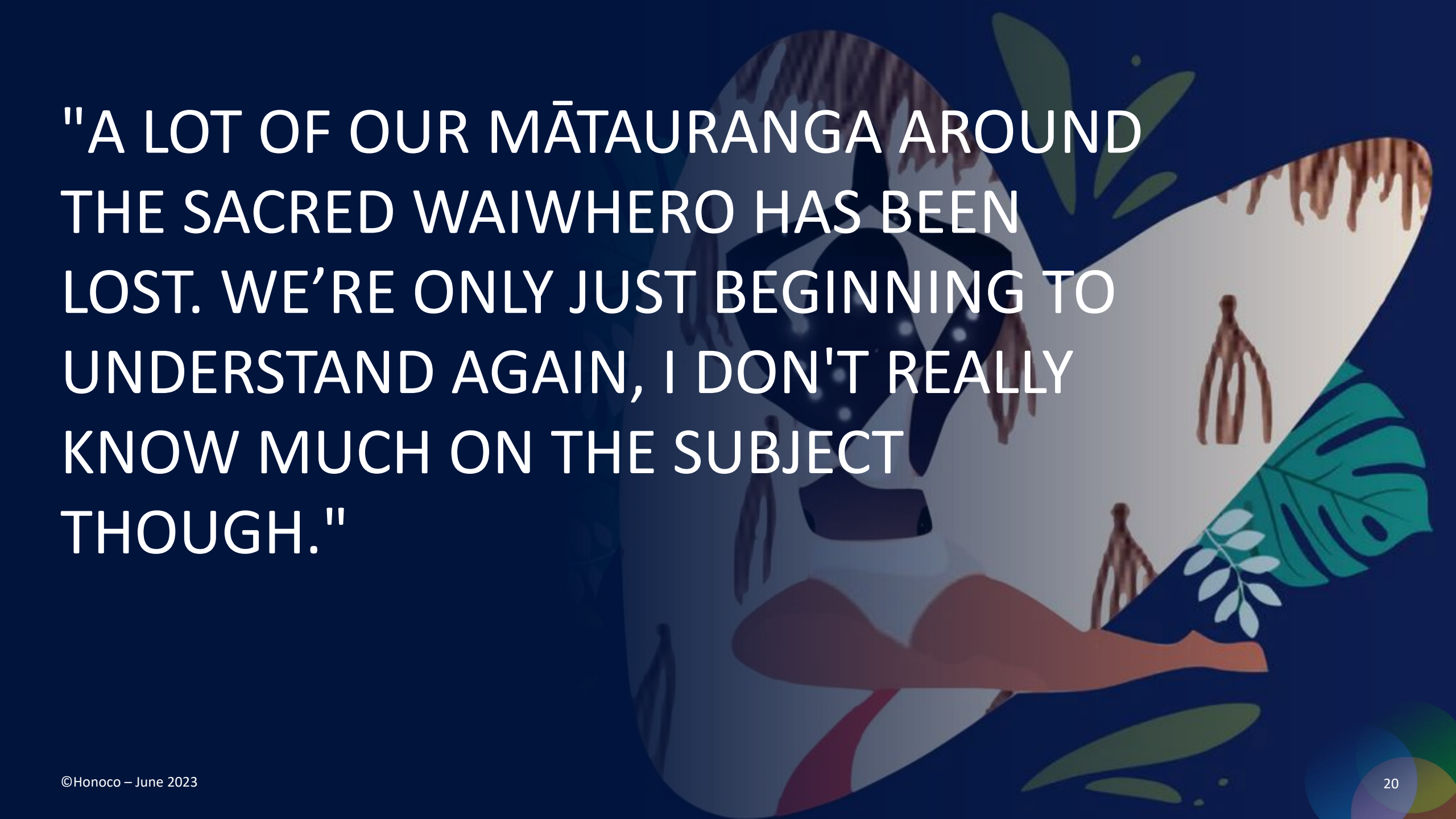
- Don't go swimming (Māori & Pasifika)
- Don't go into the wharenuī (Māori)
- Don't cut your hair (Māori)

"Don't go swimming in the sea because the sea is a food source, and you shouldn't be in there with your period because then you can't eat the food. Don't go into the wharenuī. Don't cut your hair. But I don't really know why of these [latter two] things it was just explained that you just don't do it, so I have just listened." Māori & Pasifika, Female, 25 years

- Don't pray/attend religious events facilities (Indian & Western Europe)
- Don't prepare food (due to perceived impurity- cultural belief rather than perception) (Indian)
- Never wash hair (Pasifika)
- Never wear open necked shirts (Pasifika)

"On my Tongan side, my mum and her sisters always taught us girls to never wash our hair during our cycle or wear open chested shirts. They told us if we did, we could get sick. There was no reasoning behind the custom, however, I still do not wash my hair or wear open chested t-shirts when I'm on my cycle lol." Pasifika, Female, 25 years





"A LOT OF OUR MĀTAURANGA AROUND
THE SACRED WAIWHERO HAS BEEN
LOST. WE'RE ONLY JUST BEGINNING TO
UNDERSTAND AGAIN, I DON'T REALLY
KNOW MUCH ON THE SUBJECT
THOUGH."

BETTER EDUCATION WAS IDENTIFIED AS A HOLISTIC SOLUTION TOWARDS TACKLING STIGMA, REMOVING BARRIERS AND ENGAGING ALL KIWIS AROUND THE TOPIC OF MENSTRUAL HEALTH

4.1 CULTURAL SIGNIFICANCE & MENSTRUAL HEALTH CONT

Education Gap

Regardless of demographic, exposure or experience it was clear education around menstrual health for everyone, tāne included.

For a majority, many of the correlated stigmas, self-esteem challenges and doubts around products stemmed from the lack of education or understanding. Participants self-identified that there seemed to be a gap in knowledge when it comes to cultural practices or sustainable products. A few participants were keen to see any available education approaches extended into communities or tertiary institutions, not just in high schools.

There was more mixed support around the role culture could/should play in this education approach. The western/colonised customs and norms were highlighted as having played a role in creating stigmas. Given periods do not discriminate, others wanted to not draw distinctions by cultural backgrounds. Participants may have been trying not to alienate their peer participants with their responses in this activity.

Low Uptake on New Products

Particularly among the Māori and Pasifika members of the community there was a reticence towards using new products in places - most of these decisions were not culturally driven with one exception:

“I do not consider using other products, [not] due to my cultural beliefs though, I just find some of them very absurd.”

Māori, Female, 24 years

“I’m not really interested in trying out new products because I care about my health a lot. So, I just stick to the one that works for me. I don’t think there’s any cultural reason that may prevent me though.”

Māori, Female, 23 years

“No nothing has ever prevented me to use products culturally just personally as I feel uncomfortable to use cups and things because of how to use it and the comfort of it. I don't like noticing that I am using something as it makes me self-conscious.” Māori, Female, 25 years

“I really want to learn more and try more products that I haven't used yet”. Māori & Pasifika, Female, 20 years

“When I was much younger there were definitely cultural restraints around the idea of even using tampons. However, I eventually rose to the idea of making my menstrual cycle about myself and what I'm comfortable with. The idea that it is my own experience [and I had to figure that out myself].”

Pasifika, Female, 25 years



PRIVATE
JOURNAL

N = 38

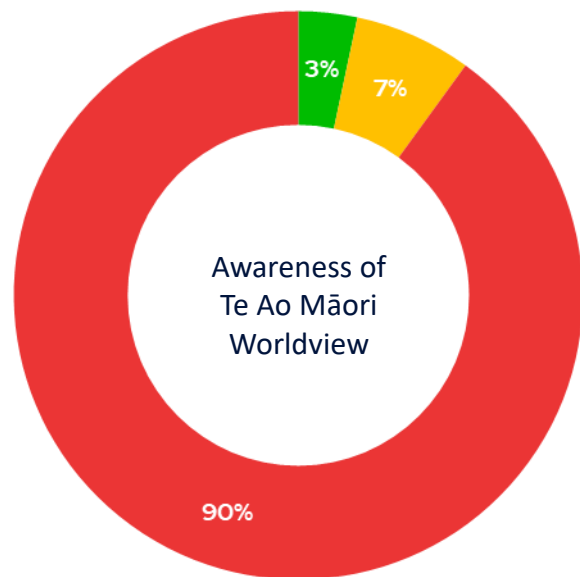
90% OF PARTICIPANTS HAD NO AWARENESS OR KNOWLEDGE OF THE TE AO MĀORI WORLDVIEW ON MENSTRUAL CYCLES PRIOR TO THIS STUDY

4.2 TE AO MĀORI WORDLVIEW PERSPECTIVE

Awareness of the te ao Māori approach is the challenge in the short term. However, the worldview was positively received in a unanimous fashion within this community.

Only 3% of respondents who answered had awareness of the approach. Once people had read the article, Te Awa Atua – The Divine River¹, there was universal positivity around the approach. There wasn't a single dissenting view.

10% of respondents claimed to have heard of AWWA prior and understood their Māori connection and one respondent suggested the brand Kotex followed a similar approach (though acknowledged this was not exactly the te ao Māori worldview).



- Heard and had knowledge
- Aware but no knowledge
- Never heard, no knowledge



PUBLIC BLOG

N = 30

AWWA

10% of participants stated an awareness of AWWA as a Māori menstrual health brand who followed a similar approach to te ao Māori worldview

kotex

3% of participants stated an awareness of Kotex as a menstrual health brand who followed a similar approach to te ao Māori worldview

¹ <https://awwaperiodcare.com/blogs/period-underwear-blog/the-divine-river>

THERE WAS A SPATE OF POSITIVITY TOWARDS THIS APPROACH ONCE PARTICIPANTS HAD WATCHED THE STIMULI AND LEARNED A BIT ABOUT THE TE AO MĀORI WORLDVIEW

4.2 TE AO MĀORI WORDLVIEW PERSPECTIVE

Some core themes raised in terms of what was positive from the te ao Māori worldview:

- Engagement with men and those that are non-menstruating on this topic was seen as positive and important. The consensus was that with more education, non-menstruating individuals may gain more empathic understanding.
- Connection to the earth/nature was warmly received and could be a strong gateway for highlighting environmental sustainability alongside promoting positive menstrual health practices (both physically and mentally).
- Embracing the pride and beauty of the process was seen as empowering, but it was referenced that this should not mean ignoring the challenges/pain/discomfort particularly around education for younger generations.

"Imagine if women weren't made to feel like they were weak, they're actually going through something powerful and amazing, and they were going to take some time for themselves. That's empowering."

Māori, Female, 23

"I knew more about what was tapu when you were on your period but not that worldview and [positivity]. This is extremely empowering, and I feel this is important for men to [be engaged with] this as well instead of stigmatising periods..." Māori/ & Pasifika, Female, 25 years

" I felt like I got some really great insight into the way the Māori culture views menstruation. I hadn't heard about any of this until today. I think the way the Māori culture embraces this topic is beautiful, and how they share this moment with the earth is something we should definitely consider. I find it really amazing the way the Māori culture is open with both the men and the women..."

NZ European, Female, 17 years



PUBLIC BLOG

N = 30

PARTICIPANT SHARED CASE STUDY

MENSTRUPEDIA RESOURCES & COMICS

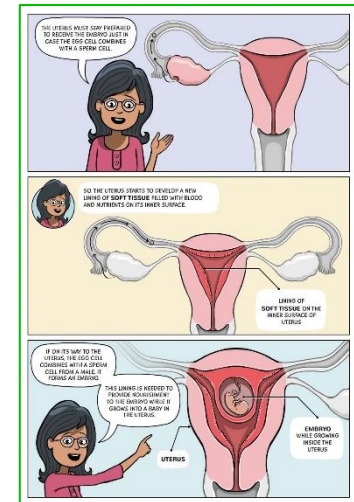
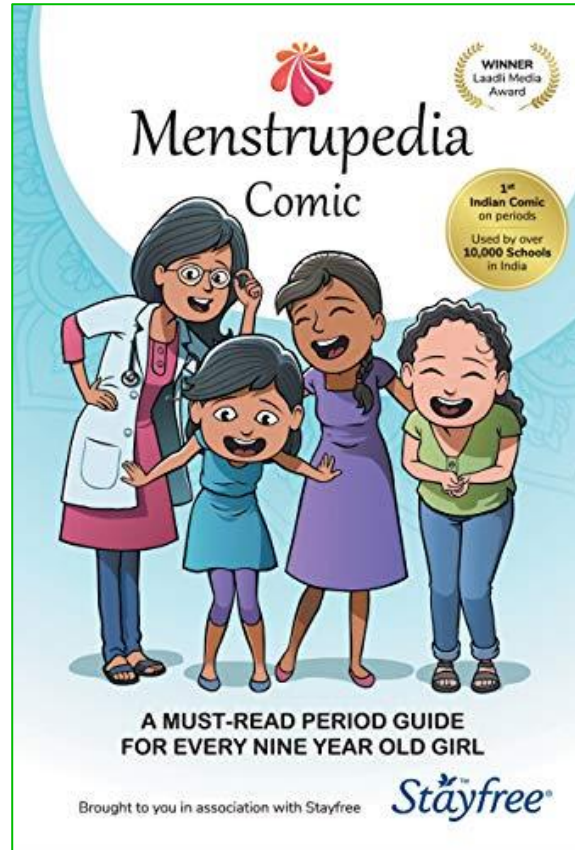
4.3 FAVOURITE MENSTRUAL HEALTH CAMPAIGNS

This activity asked participants to share any examples of campaigns or programmes they had seen previously that they felt effectively supported the period equity cause.

This participant, NZ European & Indian, Female, 25 years, referenced an award-winning campaign in India that included a range of education material for young women (and a separate set of content for young men) that destigmatised and educated readers through a comic series.

“I have seen some prominent voices and women who have been the face of menstrual health messaging in recent years. One such prominent voice is Aditi Gupta, who is the founder of Menstrupedia, a website and comic book that aims to educate young girls and women about menstruation. She has been recognized for her work in breaking the taboo around menstruation in India and promoting menstrual [health].”

This campaign found success through positioning content effectively for a young target audience through comics as well as creating bespoke ranges of information (such as separate resources geared to young males to help them build a better understanding), rather than relying on using a one-size-fits-all approach.



MASKED FORUM

N = 28

PARTICIPANT SHARED CASE STUDY

ALWAYS #LIKEAGIRL

4.3 FAVOURITE MENSTRUAL HEALTH CAMPAIGNS

This participant, Asian, Female, 16 years, referenced the *Always* campaign that has been running since 2014 to bust perceptions of societal limitations placed on young women.

“One campaign that has resonated positively with me is the “Like a Girl” campaign by Always, which challenges the negative connotations with doing something “like a girl.” The campaign features girls and women confidently, despite going through puberty/periods, and proudly showing what it means to do things “like a girl,” including running, throwing, and fighting and stuff.”

This campaign has been running for almost a decade across multiple markets. The feminine product brand proudly reflects on the fact that 94% of those aware of their campaign agreed it had encouraged girls to be more confident. A range of content has been created each year with this campaign with the recent iterations including “Girl Power” emojis made available on all mobile and social platforms for their target audience to use and spread the message and continuing tackling the social stigmas.



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N = 28

PARTICIPANT SHARED CASE STUDY

GLAD U CAME #FOP

4.3 FAVOURITE MENSTRUAL HEALTH CAMPAIGNS

This participant, Pasifika /Asian, Female, 17 years, had seen the PR agency *Glad U Came* promoting the cause and supporting how society interacts and supports women during their menstrual cycle.

“The Glad U Came agency campaigns are cool. They believe in giving period leave to its menstruating employees. 90% of the agency is made up of women and they all believe that period leaves are something that every working woman deserves.”

The ripple effects of menstrual cycles on the day-to-day life is explored throughout this study, and whilst it is clear everyone responds differently, some people can find there are impacts that affect their workplace or school activities. A campaign like this shows an organisation taking a leadership position in their country which is an important step to seeing such initiatives made available in a more widescale manner.



MASKED FORUM

N = 28

PARTICIPANT SHARED CASE STUDY

UNIVERSITY COLLEGE OF LONDON #PLASTICFREEPERIODS

4.3 FAVOURITE MENSTRUAL HEALTH CAMPAIGNS

This participant, Asian, Female, 18 years, share what work the University College of London had done not only in alleviating barriers for positive menstrual health for their community but also in promoting a more environmentally sustainable future.

“Project Period aims to make plastic-free menstruation products to create sustainable. I think it's good that they want to raise awareness of having more sustainable product because as of today I have not thought about how menstrual products we are using are sustainable or not because I have not [investigated] it before.”

From 2019 this tertiary institute made period products free to anyone who needs it, not just their own students. The campaign evolved to take on a further focus on making these products environmentally sustainable and using the University's resources. They created a platform to host forums and undertake research into working for a future where period poverty is minimalised as much as possible and menstrual health products are environmentally conscious.



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N = 28

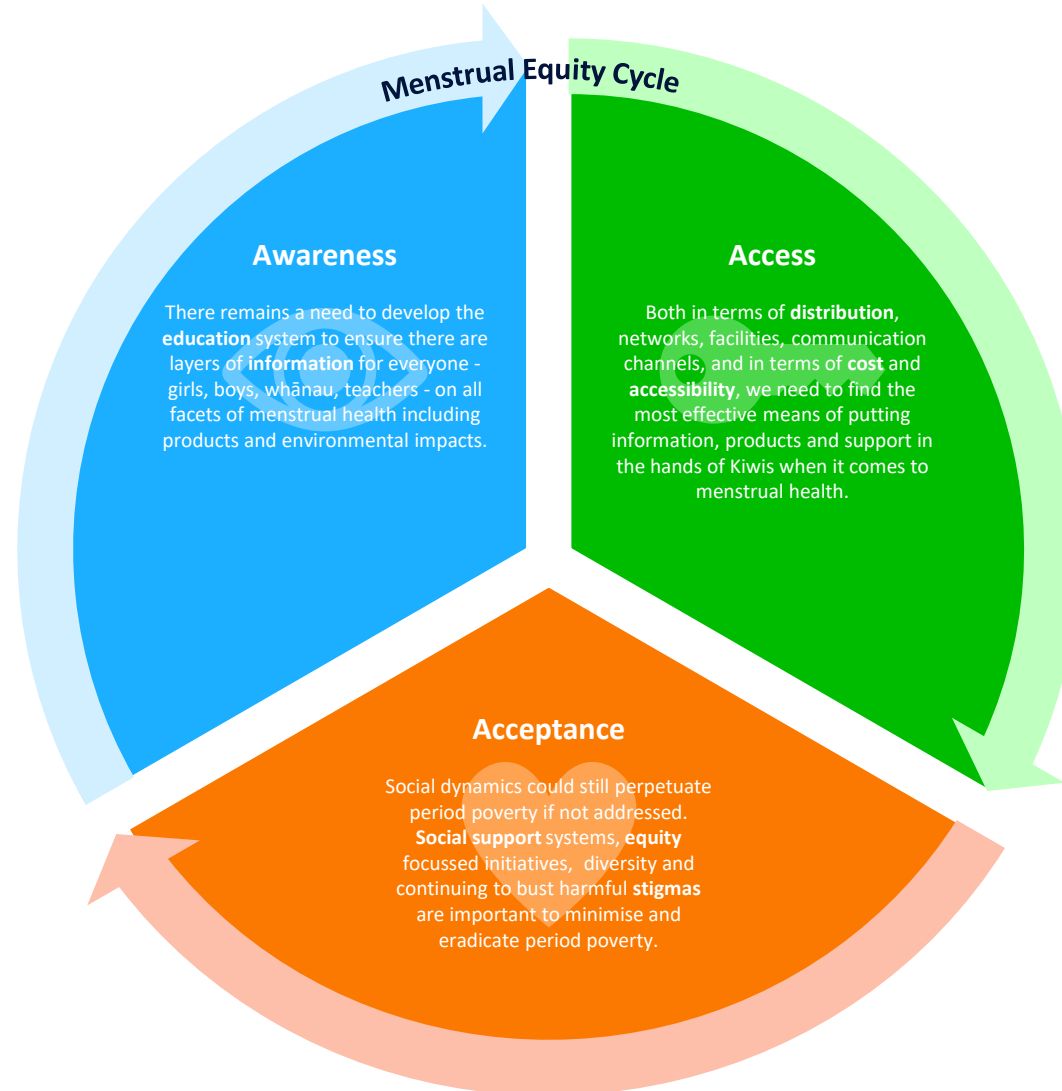
BARRIERS PERPETUATING PERIOD POVERTY COULD BE CATEGORISED UNDER AWARENESS, ACCESS AND ACCEPTANCE FACTORS

5.1 PERIOD POVERTY AWARENESS & DEFINITIONS

Analysis of the common themes raised as major impediments to positive menstrual health in New Zealand led us to the early outline of a model.

This model shows these barriers under categories of “Awareness”, “Access” and “Acceptance”. There is no silver bullet solution and no single-entry point as this is a cyclical model with support in any of the three areas begetting progress holistically.

There are roles to play within this structure at every level of society from individuals (parents, teachers, peers, advocates), micro-organisations (schools, workplaces) and macro entities (government, council and prominent or culturally significant New Zealand organisations).



PRIVATE JOURNAL

N = 35

COST WAS SEEN AS THE MOST IMPACTFUL FACTOR CAUSING BARRIERS TO KIWIS IN THE PURSUIT OF POSITIVE MENSTRUAL HEALTH

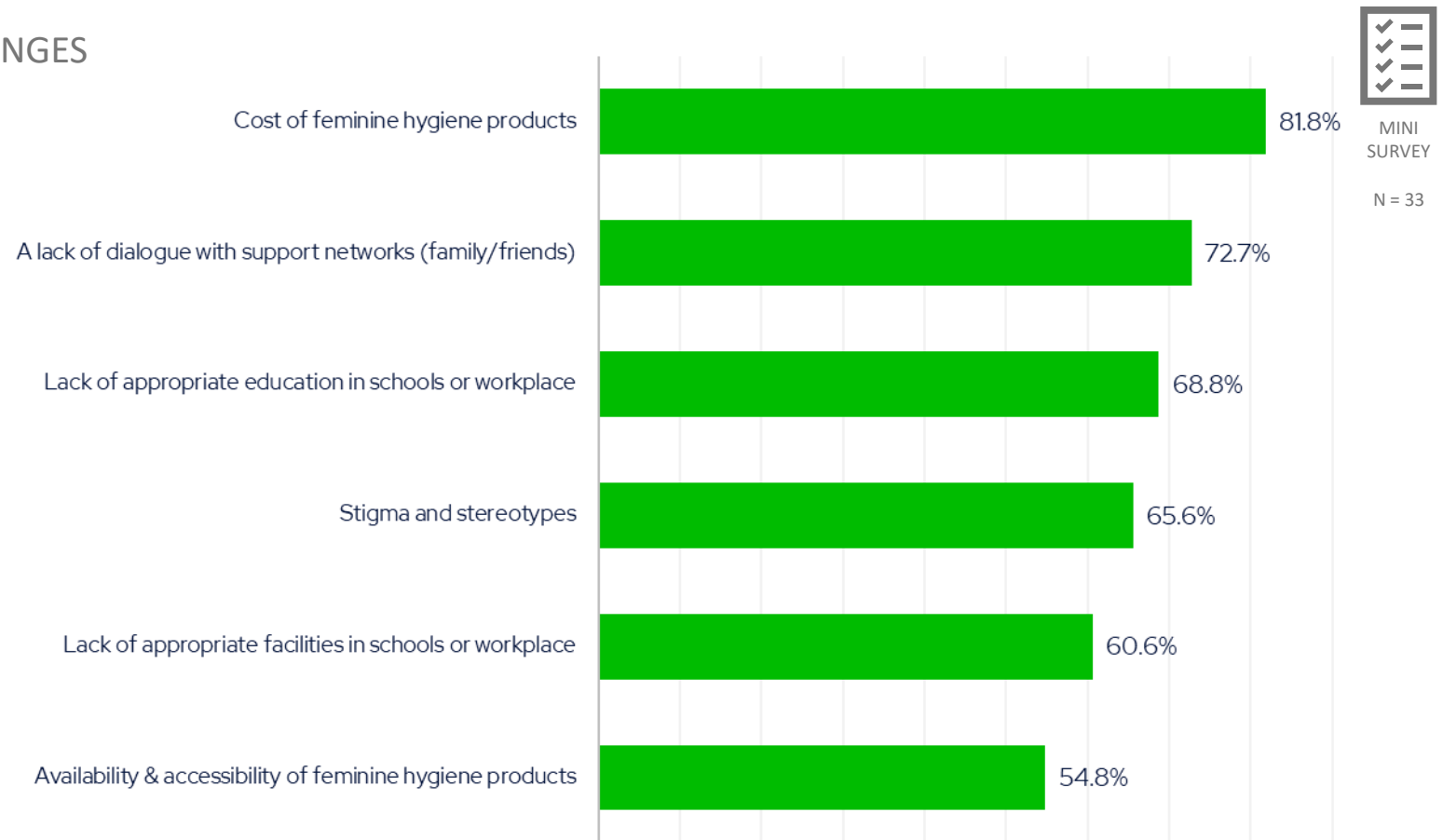
5.2 MENSTRUAL HEALTH BARRIERS & CHALLENGES

On a 5-point Likert scale the respondents were asked to consider how impactful a range of potential barriers were in preventing the pursuit of positive menstrual health in New Zealand. Scores of 4 (Some impact) and 5 (highly impactful) have been isolated and shown on the chart (right).

Cost¹ was the #1 barrier among these options with 81.8% of the 33 participants stating this had an impact. Which is consistent with the insights from activity 5.1.

On a more holistic level, a lack of social network support and lack of appropriate education are the #2 and #3 barriers.

Even the least impactful barrier was still sighted as impactful for over half of the participants. There is a myriad of challenges and barriers, on this topic, in the eyes of this community.



¹ We acknowledge that “cost” is an accessibility consideration. The graph presents the barriers as they were worded in the survey question, i.e., “cost of feminine hygiene products” could be selected by participants separately to “availability & accessibility of feminine hygiene products”.

AT MICRO AND MACRO LEVELS, THE COMMUNITY FELT CORPORATIONS HAD A ROLE THEY MUST PLAY RATHER THAN OPTING IN OR OUT OF SUPPORTING THE CAUSE

5.3 THE ROLE OF CORPORATIONS & MENSTRUAL HEALTH

Participants were asked to [watch this short video¹](#) and provide their thoughts on the role that corporations play in ending period inequality. The role of corporations seemed to fall under two categories in the mind of the community. One thing consistent in both cases was that there should be very little option; organisations and corporations need to support this cause.

The more commonly cited role for corporations was at a micro level and is applicable to all organisations such as schools, tertiary institutes, workplaces etc.

The second type of role is more of a macro level role and may not be applicable to all organisations. The Warehouse was mentioned in the video for this activity, and references were made about organisations such as the Warehouse being able to impact on a larger scale (due to size, economies of scale or cultural impact). Additionally, those in an endemic industry such as manufacturers of feminine hygiene products were identified as corporations who had an obligation to support the issue socially and not just for profit.

In each instance the full gambit of support could be provided by these entities from supporting awareness, access or building acceptance culturally though with an acknowledgement that on a micro level there would be limits in many instances due to the capacity of these organisations.

¹ <https://youtu.be/cl22xXedvXU>

"This has made me realise how important it is for corporations to actually provide products for staff members. At my work, we have a little bag in our bathroom which someone started putting products in. And it's just been the ongoing thing that if you use something, you replace it on another occasion. It's not monitored, or anything so there might be people who cannot simply afford to replace the items. Not being able to afford products is not something everyone will speak about. I think all corporations should provide products in bathrooms or in a place where it's easily accessible."

Other, Female, 43

"Corporations play a major role in reducing period poverty and inequality reducing the rate of stereotyping and stigmas amongst the younger ones . They play a role in providing, donating and making period products available for people. Honestly, these efforts go a long way in maintaining [health] during your period and reducing period poverty . They play a role in educating people on the need for pursuit of positive menstrual health and menstruation in general and exposing the young ones to how they can maintain [health] during their period."

Māori & Pasifika, Female, 20 years



PUBLIC BLOG

N = 29

STIGMA SURROUNDING MENSTRUATION IS STILL ACTIVE IN NEW ZEALAND WITH THE MOST COMMON ASSOCIATIONS BEING THOSE OF PEOPLE BEING IRRATIONAL, MOODY OR OVERLY EMOTIONAL

5.4 STIGMA & STEREOTYPE REACTIONS

After sharing a [video showcasing a Libra campaign](#)¹ spotlighting stigma surrounding menstrual health, the participants were asked for the opinions of the community.

Period stigma was certainly perceived to be active in New Zealand today. A range of stigma and stereotypes were highlighted within the community, with the most common associated to women being irrational, moody or overly emotional.

These stigmas and stereotypes were seen to be perpetuated by males. In some instances, participants suggested this is a failing in terms of education accessibility for men/boys.

Lastly, most of the group saw no issues with menstrual health content directed to young children. The only caveat that popped up was that content shouldn't be one size fits all. An ad for adults may not resonate as with children. Messages should be fit-for-purpose. There was a note around removing overt sexualised elements for younger children and focussing on the menstrual health content.

¹ <https://youtu.be/108gaP2rTas>

"The most damaging stigma by far is definitely the period is a women's thing. It is the process that gave birth to everyone that exists in this world today!"

Asian, Female, 16 years

"The lack of empathy boys & men have towards girls & women which I think relates to "harden up". There could be some real cool campaigns which show women & girls succeeding while bleeding in comparison to males, I think sharing a more empowering story is needed."

Māori & Pasifika, Female, 44 years

"My opinion on which is the most damaging stigma would have to be how when a person is menstruating, they are seen as moody, sensitive and likely to have an aggressive attitude. Due to social taboos and gender stereotypes, society allows this discrimination towards women to interfere with their day-to-day lives and exclude them"

Pasifika & Indian, Female, 17 years

"The most damaging stereotypes though are when people say that girls are moody, or you need to avoid them on that week. It's so unbelievably immature to say that in my opinion. Yes, there may be more hormones going through their body, but you should support them instead of further making them mad. When has calling someone moody or avoiding them ever helped?"

NZ European, Female, 17 years



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FORUM

N = 28

OVER 60% OF THE COMMUNITY DID NOT SEE THEIR MENSTRUAL CYCLE AS A MAJOR IMPEDIMENT ON THEIR USUAL DAY-TO-DAY ACTIVITIES OR ROUTINES

6.1 DAY-TO-DAY IMPACTS OF PERIODS

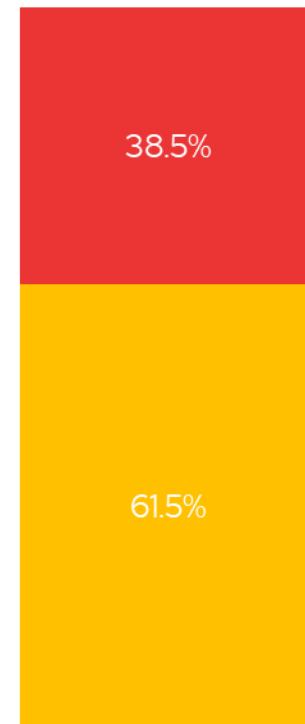
61.5% of the community stated their period was not majorly impactful on their day-to-day life and that it did not stop them from doing things. 38.5% said it was impactful. There is a skew towards women stating they aren't held back during their period.

However, even those that said they had no major impediment still cited some issues when they have their periods. Of those who were impacted or cited issues in general, some of the common themes were:

- Feeling lethargic/bloated/fatigued
- Stops exercise - swimming among that
- Early to bed
- Lower lows emotionally
- Religious/cultural activities (Indian)
- Sex life
- Not wanting to socialise
- Focus/motivation dips
- Discomfort and pain blocking comfort doing many activities
- Can't eat
- Vomiting

The first two days were mentioned as a focus area for a few people where the negative impact of their period was heightened.

■ Not majorly impactful ■ Highly impactful



Are you able to do all the things you normally do when you have your period?
Has your period ever stopped you from doing something you wanted to do or had a negative impact on any facet of your life (school, work, relationships etc.)?

"My life changes in the week leading up to my bleed and then the week of my period. As I've aged my period symptoms have got worse: cramps, aches, bloating. But regular exercise helps ease these symptoms. In my day 1 & 2 I don't usually do any exercise, I'm just to uncomfortable. I do recall in my early 20's having really bad PMT emotions where I cried a lot. I had just broken up with my girlfriend, so the emotions were really heightened"
Māori & Pasifika, Female, 44

"People, especially those having excessive period pains cannot do a lot of things during their period. I have a neighbour that cannot go to school when the pain comes. It's always a very devastating moment for her. Most times, I normally feel for her."
Other, Male, 26 years



PRIVATE JOURNAL

N = 31

82.1% OF THE COMMUNITY FELT THERE WERE PARTS OF SOCIETY DISPROPORTIONALLY IMPACTED BY PERIOD POVERTY -SOCIO-ECONOMIC CHALLENGES CITED AS LEADING CAUSE

6.2 PERIOD POVERTY IMPACT & INEQUITY

Here we provided a concise definition¹ of period poverty, i.e., “*Poor menstrual knowledge and access to sanitary products*”. The group were asked to reflect on that definition and if it impacted any one part of society more than others.

17.9% of those asked thought period poverty was pervasive and didn’t identify any one area of New Zealand society that was disproportionately impacted.

The majority felt there were parts of New Zealand more impacted than others, and this was for the most part cited as more poor socio-economic areas.

"It would be very beneficial for those affected if menstrual products are readily available in bathroom stalls for surprise periods or if individuals are running low on products. This takes away one of the inequalities and disadvantages for women that this affects. No one should be missing opportunities, events, school, etc. because of a normal bodily function that happens."

Pasifika, Female, 25 years

"Improving access to menstrual products through schools, community centres, and healthcare facilities, implementing policies to eliminate the GST on menstrual products, and increasing education and awareness about menstrual [health] can be done to improve many inequities."

Asian, Female, 16 years

"People who are on low incomes, who have minimal formal education, these populations would be challenged to stump up \$10 - 20 for period products are month, especially with living costs at the moment, gosh even people on moderate to high incomes are experiencing the economic push."

Māori & Pasifika, Female, 44 years

"There has been a recent increase in market share for re-usable period products such as menstrual cups, “period pants”, and washable pads. These present the benefit of reduced cost over the long term as the products simply need to be washed before being re-used. They also create less landfill waste reducing the indirect impact of pollution and climate destruction on health. However, there are some barriers with cost of some of these products, perceptions around ease of use and having to clean such products."

Māori & Pasifika, Female, 20 years



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N = 28

THE COMMUNITY SUPPORTED SCHOOL INITIATIVES TO TACKLE PERIOD POVERTY BUT WANTED TO SEE SIMILAR INITIATIVES ROLLED OUT FOR TERTIARY STUDENTS AND HOMELESS PEOPLE

6.2 PERIOD POVERTY IMPACT & SOLUTIONS

In activity 6.2, participants were asked to share any thoughts they had on solutions such as the Ministry of Education’s “free period products” initiative. The group didn’t suggest any major solutions besides supporting the initiatives coming from government and larger organisations. Removing barriers that hinder initiatives aimed at targeting period equity awareness, access and acceptance was also cited.

Rather than crowdsource solutions, the group shared some specific parts of society that they thought might be overlooked by current initiatives:

- Tertiary education institutes: students are often strapped for cash and what is available in schools should be extended to these organisations/facilities.
- Homeless people were mentioned several times. A section of society without a support network, access to facilities, products or information were majorly impacted through the eyes of most and need government support.
- Older women still on their period was an interesting suggestion. The reasoning being that they have not received the same level of societal acceptance or education growing up and are more likely to struggle silently than younger women.
- Community organisations such as the Community Advice Bureau were identified as places that could become homes to initiatives that could connect with those impacted who weren’t in a school or a workplace that offered support.
- The cost-of-living crisis was referenced in places as something that could pull more people into the definition of period poverty than maybe anyone realises (including those people themselves).



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N = 28

FINAL THOUGHTS:

"I HAVE ENJOYED LEARNING ABOUT THE MĀORI WORLDVIEW ON THE MENSTRUAL CYCLE. I AM KEEN TO LEARN MORE ABOUT THIS HOWEVER I DON'T FEEL THAT THERE IS ENOUGH PUBLIC KNOWLEDGE OUT THERE I WOULD SEE, LIKE ADS AND SOCIAL MEDIA. I WOULD BE KEEN TO LEARN MORE ABOUT TE AO MĀORI PERSPECTIVE ON THE DIFFERENT TOPICS, EVEN KNOWING WHERE THE RESOURCES ARE WOULD BE GREAT, SO I CAN DO SOME READING IN MY OWN TIME."

FINAL THOUGHTS:

"I HAVE NEVER REFLECTED THIS DEEPLY ABOUT MENSTRUAL PERIODS AND IT HAS BEEN AN ENJOYABLE EXPERIENCE TO BE A PART OF. BEING ABLE TO BE IN AN OPEN FORUM TO SPEAK, LEARN FROM OTHERS AND ALSO THE MATERIALS GIVEN. THE MOST MEMORABLE AND INNOVATING QUESTIONS WERE ALWAYS IN RELATION TO THE ADS. THEY WERE ABLE TO CHALLENGE ME IN WHAT I WAS THINKING AND MADE ME TRULY REFLECT ON HOW THEY MADE ME FEEL. MY FAVOURITE WAS READING ABOUT THE TE AO MĀORI WORLDVIEW ON MENSTRUAL CRAMPS. IT KIND OF BLEW MY MIND THAT THIS WAS A CUSTOM AND WOMEN ARE NOW EVEN ADOPTING THE CUSTOM OF BLEEDING OVER THE LAND. THIS HONESTLY RESONATED WITH ME AND I HOPE TO TRY THIS ONE DAY. I WOULD WANT TO TALK TO SOMEBODY ABOUT HOPEFULLY GETTING MORE INFORMATION AND EDUCATED ON IT FURTHER THOUGH."

FINAL THOUGHTS:

"I THINK THIS WAS A REALLY EYE-OPENING STUDY. I FEEL LIKE WHILE I DO MY BEST TO TRY NORMALISING MENSTRUATION IN MY LIFE, I STILL FEEL EMBARRASSED TALKING ABOUT PERIODS SOMETIMES. I THINK THIS STUDY AS WELL AS THE MEDIA SHARED IN THIS STUDY REALLY HELPED ME SEE PERIODS AS A MORE NORMAL THING. IT WAS REALLY GOOD HEARING ABOUT OTHER PEOPLE'S PERSPECTIVES AS WELL, IT MAKES YOU REALISE THAT THERE ARE SO MANY PEOPLE WHO HAVE SIMILAR EXPERIENCES WITH MENSTRUATION. I THINK THIS WAS A GREAT SPACE TO TALK ABOUT MENSTRUATION WITHOUT JUDGEMENT. I DON'T THINK I REALISED HOW MUCH WE TRY TO HIDE PERIODS IN REAL LIFE AND HOW WE TRY TO REPRESS CONVERSATIONS ABOUT THEM, WHEN WE SHOULDN'T BE ASHAMED OF THEM AT ALL."

SEGMENT ANALYSIS



MĀORI AND PASIFIKA IN-DEPTH ANALYSIS

Throughout the week many activities prompted strong alignment or consensus on topics. Paired with the fact that over one quarter of the community represented the YAMP segment, many of the earlier insights will prove valuable in understanding Māori and Pasifika perspectives.

However, we have also isolated some of the key insights throughout the week focusing on these two priority groups where they showed a significant difference of opinion or there was a notable perspective held by one or both demographic profiles.



MĀORI & PASIFIKA DEEPER ANALYSIS

Māori product preferences

Māori participants showed a diverse range of preferences towards period products with pads (5), tampons (4), cup (3) and period underwear (1) all represented. The community at large skewed heavily towards pads (23 out of 27), so this was a variance in product preference (though at a smaller sample). The use of cups and period underwear wasn't commonplace across the group, so there *may* be less restraint among Māori towards these products. This could be worth exploring further at the youth symposium.

Pasifika product preferences

Pasifika participants *all* used pads and there seemed to be a potential cultural skew behind this. Again, this sample wouldn't allow us to extrapolate this insight out across this community but is a notable trend nonetheless and should it bear out across the community at large would mean any initiatives would need to be cognisant of this strong preference.

“Samoan and Tongan culture (that I have been raised to believe) is not to use any other period product other than pads”.

Environmental sustainability was seen as important by both cohorts, but no more than observed across the community. As important as it may be there was a sense that this was secondary to cost and access when impacting immediate consideration.

Cultural Cache

There is a great interest, if lack of meaningful knowledge, about the more positive cultural views around menstrual health among these two cohorts.

Only one person in the community had meaningful knowledge of the te ao Māori worldview. Whilst this person is Māori, the broad takeaway from this exercise is there is not a meaningful awareness of this worldview. However, once apparent, there was widespread interest and, for Māori and Pasifika in particular, this seemed a source of pride. Especially when compared to colonial driven perspectives that have shaped our current landscape on this matter.

Anecdotally, from this project, the dominant cultural perspectives held for all participants, Māori and Pasifika included, was more likely to manifest in customs that were negative, and preventative of women being involved in elements of society. For Māori and Pasifika there was some commonality with customs such as not swimming and not cutting/washing hair apparent.

Another interesting insight in this context was the fact that customs were still followed indubitably for many. Pasifika members highlighted that they still adhered to customs even when they couldn't justify them or themselves felt they were unnecessary on the surface.

Any campaign or initiative centred on the Māori cultural perspective on menstruation would resonate with this target group. However, focussing on a synergy with the earth and engagement with tāne would resonate with everyone we hosted in this research project. These tenets would help challenge universal barriers and stigmas all New Zealand women face not just Māori or Pasifika.

INSIGHT SUMMARY



KEY INSIGHTS SUMMARY

- There is a clear need and appetite for young girls AND boys to be educated around menstruation to reduce stigma and improve support/understanding in boys and men.
- Periods are a barrier to sport participation for girls, whilst not always outright preventing participation they are extremely disruptive and require planning around or amending exercise plans entirely. Physical symptoms like cramps and pain management were a key barrier mentioned. Some participants spoke of heart-breaking experiences of missing out on important competitions due to being on their period. These moments can be formative for young girls.
- The view of many is there is a need for greater support from clubs, teams and schools when it comes to menstrual health and sport. There is a need for better communication and openness to reduce stigma and allow for consideration, kindness and empathy. Rest/leave/adjustments during their period, education for key stakeholders and the provision of period products and pain medication were all solutions mentioned that are not currently commonplace.
- Sustainability of products is important, but cost is the most prominent barrier to using some of the more expensive products like cups and period underwear.
- The most evident part of culture regarding menstrual health is in negative perceptions and practices. These were not isolated to any single culture and there were examples of Indian, Catholic, Māori and Pasifika customs that were restrictive or preventative for women.
- There was low-to-no awareness of terms like Īkura or the Te Ao Māori worldview. Though there was a positive consensus for the message and power of the Te Ao Māori worldview and a sense that there is a place for this today with many of the community seeking more information on the matter after being exposed to this approach.
- Cost and socio-economic circumstance were the most common themes characterising period poverty and the parts of society that might be disproportionately impacted.
- Corporations have a huge role to play in tackling issues surrounding menstrual health equity. At a micro level, every business, school and organisation should support their people; whilst at a macro level government and endemic/large scale entities (due to size, economies of scale or cultural significance) leadership needs to be shown to make meaningful change. The Warehouse low-cost examples and The Ministry of Education school provision initiative were seen as hugely positive, though only a step on the journey.
- A variety of stigmas still exist in New Zealand today with the most common experiences relating to women being irrational, moody or overly emotional. Stigmas were seen to be perpetuated by men due to a lack of understanding or education.

THANKS

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