

Sanguine

shedding menstrual shame

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Sanguine  
shedding menstrual shame

6	TOPIC
12	RESEARCH
28	SOLUTION
60	CLOSING

# contents

topic

# The Menstruation Taboo

The topic of menstruation remains taboo in the United States even today. Around the time I was conducting research, Saturday Night Live released a skit that hadn't been used in their show about a new line of tampons, "Tampax Secrets," that hide tampons in other "less offensive" things like a dead rat, dog poop, and a copy of *Mein Kampf*. This goes to show that discretion and secrecy are still key when carrying menstrual products, discussing symptoms, and asking questions. The shame surrounding discussions on menstruations means that menstruators and non-menstruators alike are missing out on important information.

You can watch this video at [youtu.be/sgQQMOcyfBs](https://youtu.be/sgQQMOcyfBs).



“

The stigma around even talking about periods is still so much a part of our culture that it was (almost) a punchline on Saturday Night Live.

*Just Say It: Yes, I'm Menstruating*

# Female-Oriented Language

Trans, non-binary, and intersex kids exist, but they're being excluded from the discussion of menstruation by educational materials and products. A large variety of gender identities can menstruate, and you can't tell whether or not some menstruates just by looking at them.

## WHO MENSTRUATES?

**Cisgender women**, who are people assigned female at birth that also identify as female. This is what people usually think of when they think of menstruators.

**Transgender (or trans) men**, who are people assigned female at birth that identify as men.

**Non-binary or genderqueer people**, or those that don't identify within the male/female binary.

**Intersex people**, who are people born with sex characteristics that don't fit into the male/female binary.



For my thesis, I will create an **honest, inclusive,** and **educational** campaign about menstruation targeted toward kids and teens. The touchpoints will strive to reach all ages and genders in order to **reduce the social stigma surrounding menstruation** in the US.

# research

14	SECONDARY RESEARCH
16	PRIMARY RESEARCH
22	PERSONAS
24	USER JOURNEY
26	MOODBOARD

# Secondary Research

Disposable and cloth pads, menstrual cups and tampons are not the solution to the menstrual crisis. They manage the body, but they will not erase stigma. Eventually, [products] will let you down. Your flow will change; you'll leak and you'll be soaked in shame. Until we make menstruation neutral — something that doesn't challenge someone's respectability or likability — it doesn't matter what we provide people.

Chris Bobel, *New Book Busts Myths About Menstruation Spread By Public Health Groups*

The Rungus women from Borneo are pretty blasé about their periods. They don't say it's pure, they don't say it's polluting. It's just a bodily fluid that needs to be evacuated. They don't make a big deal of it.

Alma Gottlieb, *Some Cultures Treat Menstruation With Respect*

When Elynn Walter walks into a room of officials from global health organizations and governments, this is how she likes to get their attention: "I'll say, 'OK, everyone stand up and yell the word blood!' or say, 'Half of the people in the world have their period!'" It's her way of getting people talking about a topic that a lot of people, well, aren't comfortable talking about: menstrual hygiene.

Nurith Aizenman, *People Are Finally Talking About The Thing Nobody Wants To Talk About*

One simple but effective way of helping reduce the stigma is by talking openly about your period. There's no need for gratuitous or overly graphic period talk just to make people uncomfortable, but if you find that you're self-censoring when it comes to bringing up your period, try dropping it into normal conversation, the way that you'd tell someone that you have allergies or a cold.

Elizabeth Yuko, *Just Say It: Yes, I'm Menstruating*

So let's start talking about -- and treating -- periods as the natural, normal bodily function that they are. The more we can normalize menstruation, the closer we'll be to getting rid of the stigma, shame and financial burden of unnecessary sales taxes.

Elizabeth Yuko, *Just Say It: Yes, I'm Menstruating*

# Primary Research

## SURVEYS

I conducted three online surveys. The first was for menstruators, and asked questions about their menstruation education, experiences, emotions, and opinions. The second was for non-menstruators and asked similar questions. The third was a follow-up survey for anyone about what this wished they had learned about menstruation.

### THE TAKEAWAYS

There's a **lack of openness** about menstruation — in education, in packaging, and even in books. Most products and resources are also **gender-specific**.

Menstruation is **just something that happens**. Most people don't like it or wish they didn't have to deal with it, but it's just a body function like any other.

Did you learn about menstruation?

**95%** of menstruators did.

**68%** of non-menstruators did.

Parents, teachers, and books are the most common sources of information.

Do you remember your first period?

**91%** of menstruators do.

Should everyone learn about menstruation?

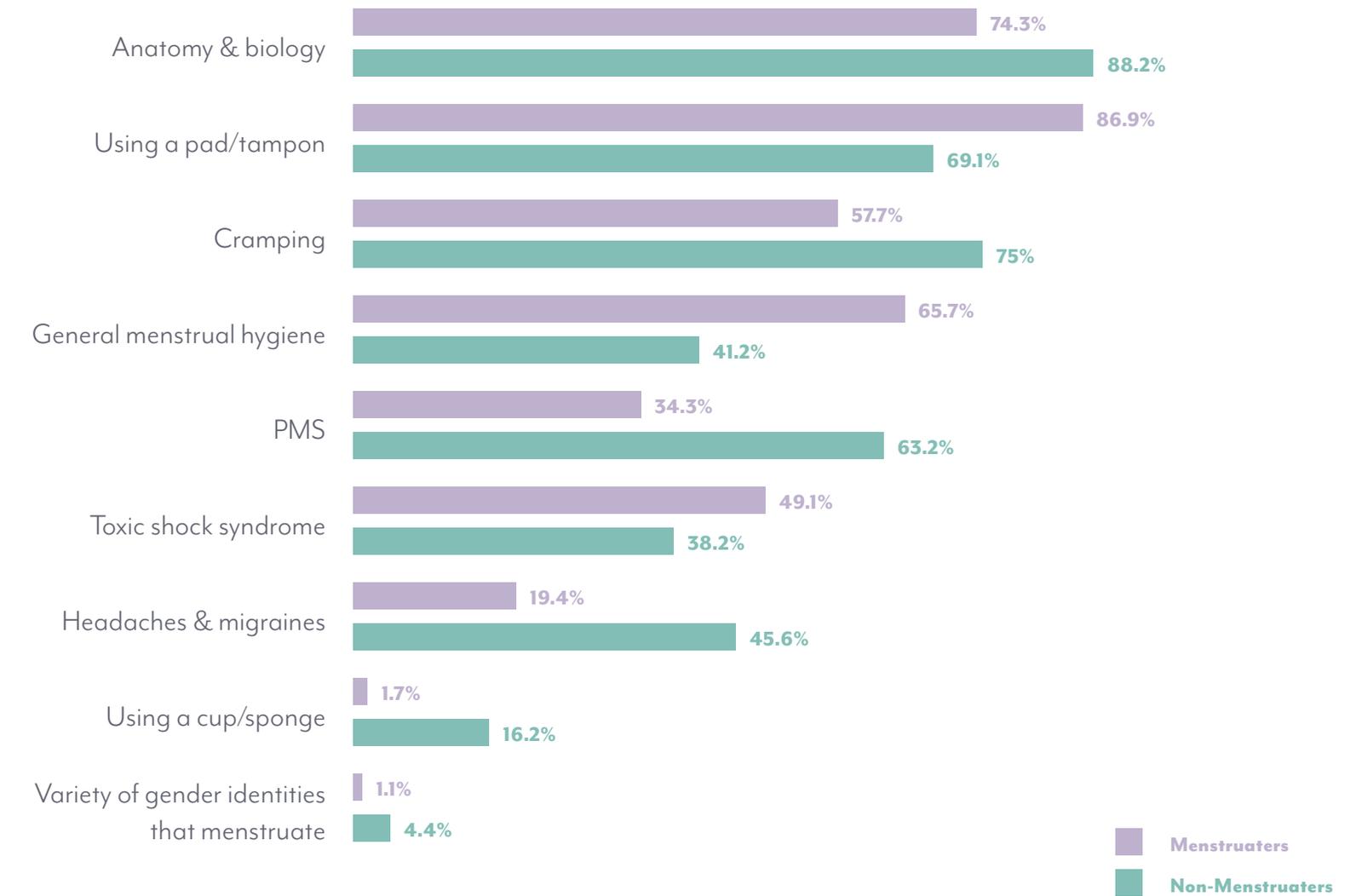
**91%** of non-menstruators think so.

Are you comfortable talking about periods?

**68%** of menstruators are.

**75%** of non-menstruators are.

If you learned about menstruation, which of the following did you learn about?



# PACKAGING AUDIT

I went to Kroger and examined the menstrual products aisle. I documented a variety of products — 24 products from 10 brands — and evaluated them on criteria including color, gendering, instructions, and period language.

## COLOR DISTRIBUTION



## LANGUAGE

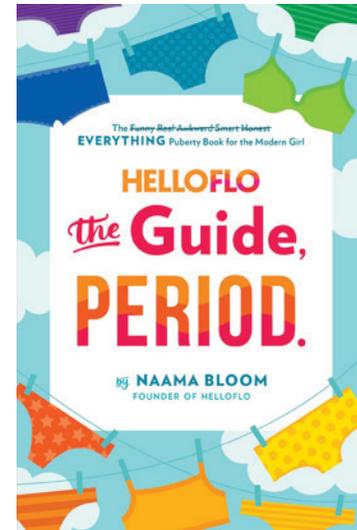
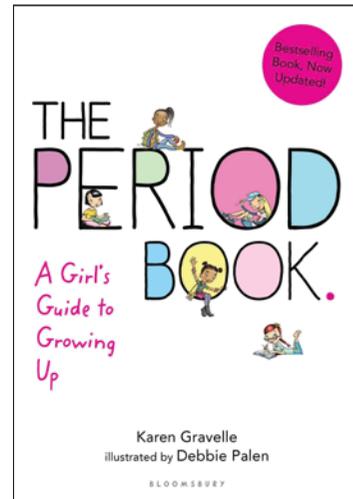
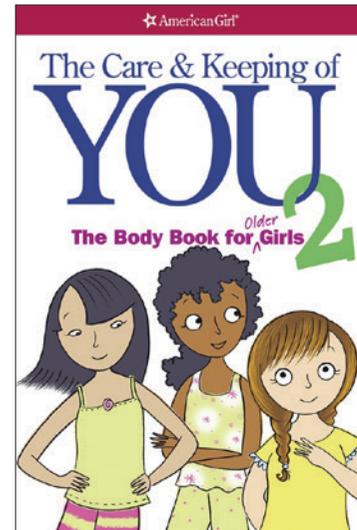
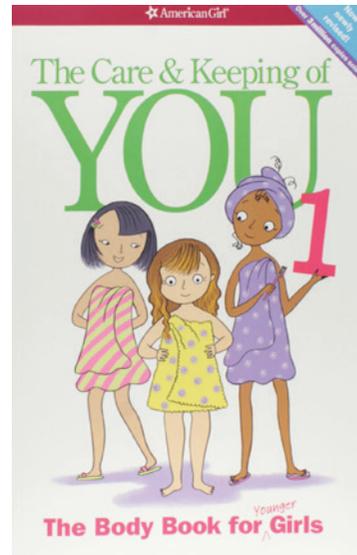
Out of 24 products’ packaging across 10 different brands...

- 10** use the word “period”
- 9** use the words “leak,” “fluid,” “liquid,” or “wetness”
- 3** use the words “quiet” or “discrete”
- 2** use the words “menstrual” or “menstruate”
- 2** use the word “vagina”
- 0** use the word “blood”

Type	Brand	Product	Colors	Gendering		Instructions				Period Language	Sizing & Absorbency	Materials Transparency	Associated Donation
				Language	Misc.	Graphics		Text					
						Use	Disposal	Use	Disposal				
pads	Always	Infinity Pads (regular)	●●			x	x				x		
	Always	Infinity Pads (overnight)	●●●			x	x				x		
	Always	Ultra Thin Pads (overnight)	●●			x	x				x		
	Always	Radiant Pads (regular)	●●●●		x	x	x						
	Always	Pure Pads (super)	●●●●○	x	x					x		x	x
	U by Kotex	Pads (regular)	●●●		x	x	x				x		
	U by Kotex	Pads (overnight)	●●●		x	x	x				x		
	U by Kotex	Ultra Thin Pads (regular)	●●●●	x		x	x				x		/
	Seventh Generation	Chlorine-Free Pads (regular)	●●●							x		x	x
	Kroger	Ultra Thin Pads (overnight)	●●	x					x	x		x	
liners	Always	Daily Liners (thin)	●●●		x	x	x						
	Always	Radiant Daily Liners	●●●		x	x	x			x			
	Seventh Generation	Chlorine-Free Liners	●●●							x		x	x
	Carefree	Liners (regular)	●●	x	x			x	x		x		
tampons	Tampax	Pearl Tampons (regular)	●●								x		
	Tampax	Pocket Pearl Tampons (super)	●●								x		
	Tampax	Radiant Tampons (regular)	●●●●	x	x						x		
	Tampax	Pocket Radiant Tampons (regular)	●●●●		x						x		
	Tampax	Pure Tampons (regular)	●●●●○	x	x					x	x	x	x
	U by Kotex	Sleek Tampons (regular)	●●●					x			x		
	Playtex	Sport Tampons (regular)	●●●		x						x		
	U.B.	Organic Tampons (super)	●●								x	x	
discs/cups	Softdisc	Menstrual Disc	●●●	x	x	x	x			x		x	
	Diva Cup	Menstrual Cup	●●	x	x	x				x	x	x	

# LITERATURE REVIEW

I read four books about puberty targeted towards young people — *Care and Keeping of You 1*, *Care and Keeping of You 2*, *The Period Book*, and *The Guide, Period*. I then evaluated them on language-based and topic-based criteria.



- Meets criteria
- Partially meets criteria
- Doesn't meet criteria

	Language				Topics								
	accessible (not scary)	honest (not sugar-coated)	gender-inclusive	speaks to all (doesn't use "you")	anatomy & biology	general hygiene & infections	using pads and/or tampons	using cups and/or sponges	PMS & hormones	cramping	headaches & migraines	toxic shock syndrome	gender identities
Care and Keeping of You	<span style="color: teal;">●</span>	<span style="color: orange;">●</span>	<span style="color: red;">●</span>	<span style="color: red;">●</span>	<span style="color: orange;">●</span>	<span style="color: teal;">●</span>	<span style="color: orange;">●</span>	<span style="color: red;">●</span>	<span style="color: teal;">●</span>	<span style="color: orange;">●</span>	<span style="color: red;">●</span>	<span style="color: red;">●</span>	<span style="color: red;">●</span>
Care and Keeping of You 2	<span style="color: teal;">●</span>	<span style="color: orange;">●</span>	<span style="color: red;">●</span>	<span style="color: red;">●</span>	<span style="color: teal;">●</span>	<span style="color: teal;">●</span>	<span style="color: teal;">●</span>	<span style="color: red;">●</span>	<span style="color: red;">●</span>	<span style="color: teal;">●</span>	<span style="color: red;">●</span>	<span style="color: teal;">●</span>	<span style="color: red;">●</span>
The Period Book	<span style="color: orange;">●</span>	<span style="color: orange;">●</span>	<span style="color: red;">●</span>	<span style="color: red;">●</span>	<span style="color: teal;">●</span>	<span style="color: teal;">●</span>	<span style="color: teal;">●</span>	<span style="color: red;">●</span>	<span style="color: teal;">●</span>	<span style="color: teal;">●</span>	<span style="color: red;">●</span>	<span style="color: teal;">●</span>	<span style="color: red;">●</span>
The Guide, Period	<span style="color: teal;">●</span>	<span style="color: teal;">●</span>	<span style="color: red;">●</span>	<span style="color: red;">●</span>	<span style="color: teal;">●</span>	<span style="color: orange;">●</span>	<span style="color: teal;">●</span>	<span style="color: teal;">●</span>	<span style="color: teal;">●</span>	<span style="color: teal;">●</span>	<span style="color: red;">●</span>	<span style="color: teal;">●</span>	<span style="color: red;">●</span>

# Personas



**BENJAMIN**  
THE PARENT

he/him | non-menstruator | 38 years old

## BENJAMIN WANTS TO...

- raise happy, healthy, and educated kids.
- be supportive of and useful to Harriet while they go through puberty.
- learn more about diversity and inclusion.

## BENJAMIN IS LIMITED BY...

- the fact that he's a working, single dad
- his busy schedule and lack of time.



**CLAIRE**  
THE TEACHER

she/her | menstruator | 30 years old

## CLAIRE WANTS TO...

- teach an accurate, inclusive curriculum.
- normalize talking about bodies.
- support and include all of her students.

## CLAIRE IS LIMITED BY...

- the school administration and budget.
- the materials that are available to teachers and schools.



**HARRIET**  
THE MENSTRUATER

they/them | menstruator | 12 years old

## HARRIET WANTS TO...

- learn about their body and puberty in a gender-neutral way.
- feel comfortable and validated when menstruating.
- be seen and understood by others.

## HARRIET IS LIMITED BY...

- their age and lack of freedom/agency.
- society, which doesn't always understand their gender identity.



**LEVI**  
THE NON-MENSTRUATER

he/him | non-menstruator | 9 years old

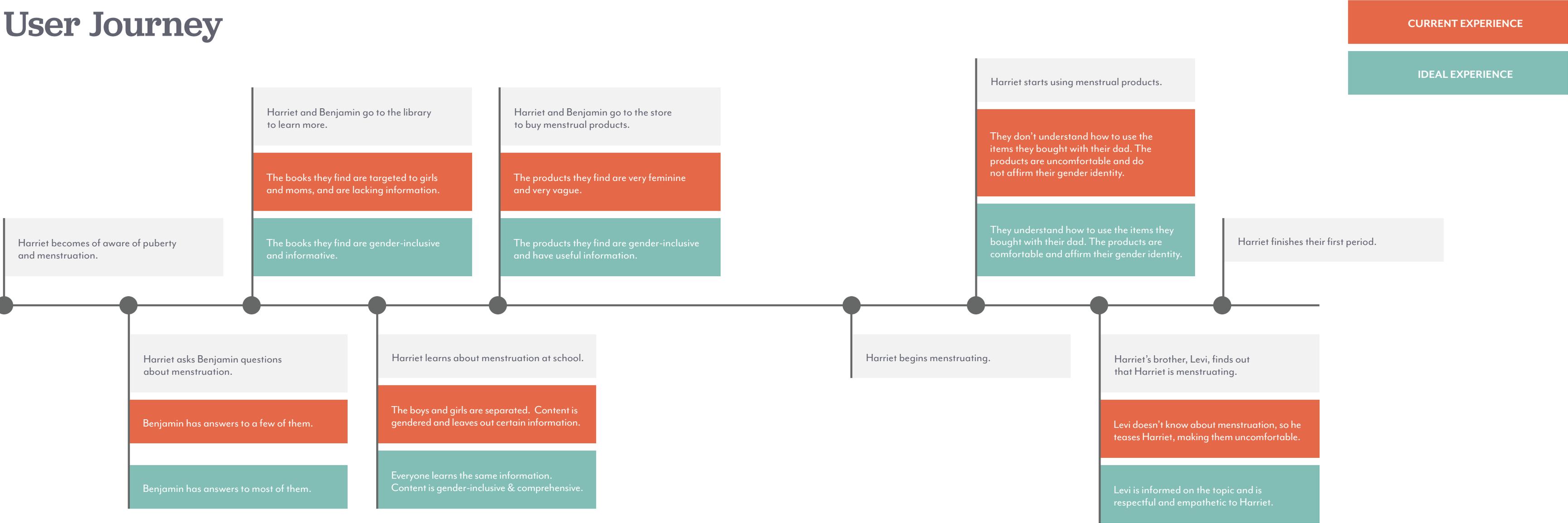
## LEVI WANTS TO...

- not feel weird or uncomfortable about puberty and body stuff.
- make sure Harriet is happy.

## LEVI IS LIMITED BY...

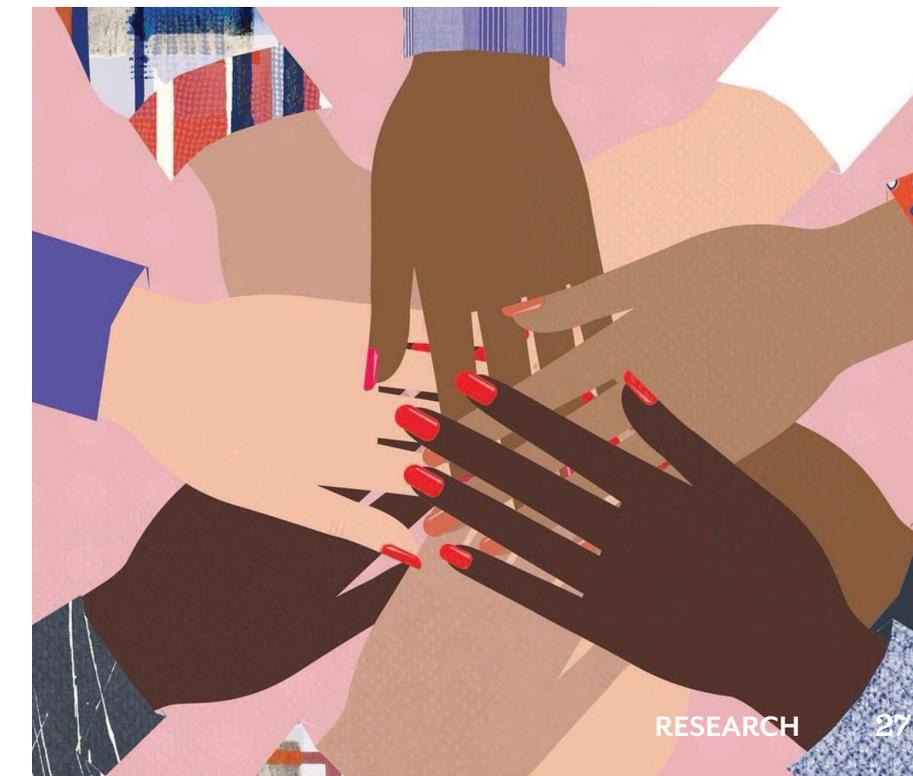
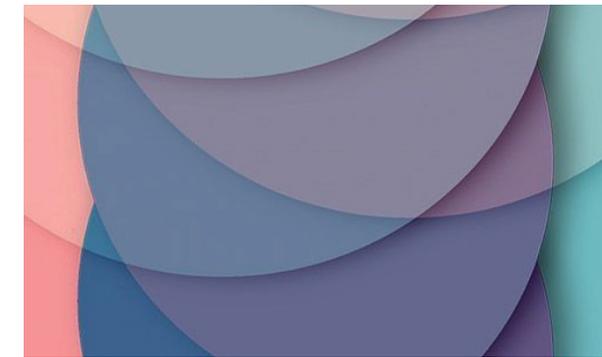
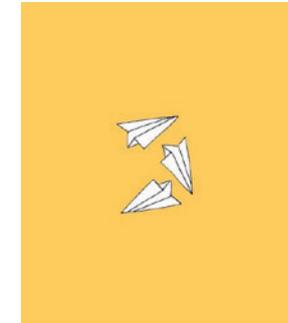
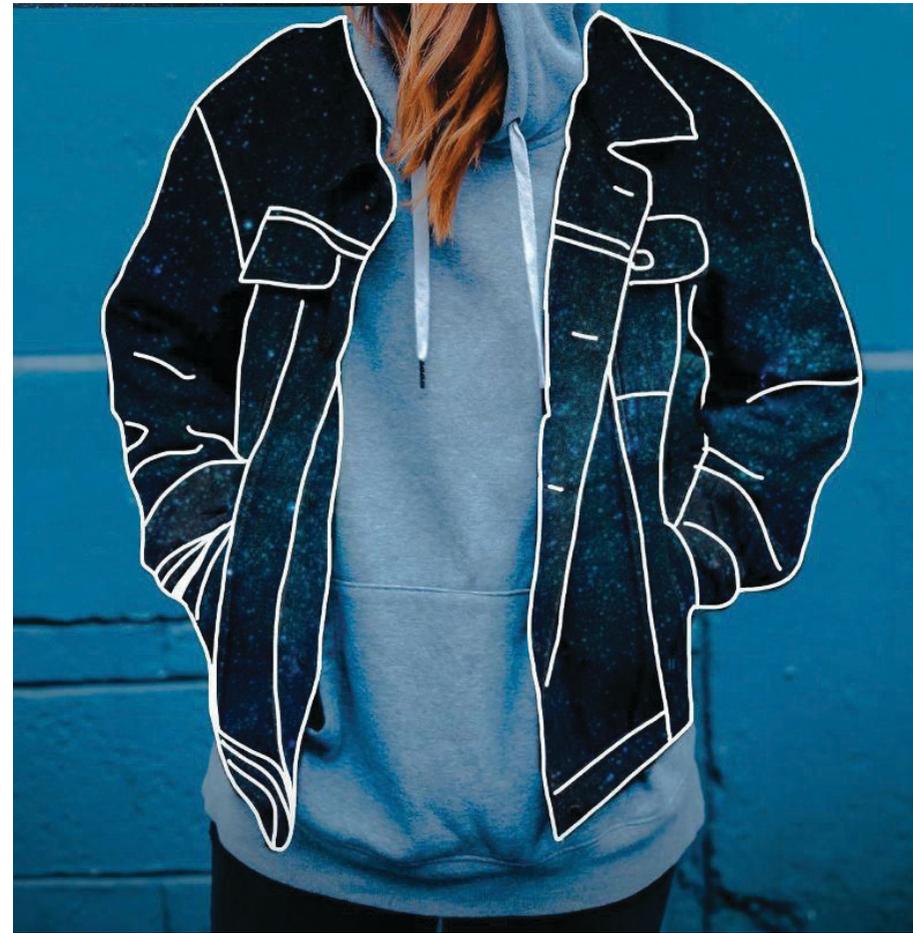
- his age and lack of freedom/agency.
- his lack of knowledge about menstruation and inclusion.

# User Journey



# Moodboard

Based on my research, I created a moodboard targeted toward adolescents and teenagers of all genders. I used images that spoke to inclusivity and activism as well as bright, warm colors.



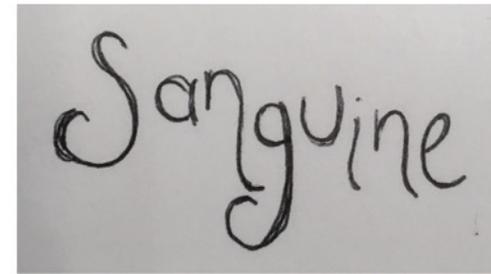
# solution

30	BRAND IDENTITY
36	POSTERS & STICKERS
40	BOOK
56	EXHIBITION BOARD
58	VIDEO

# Brand Identity

## MARK

I explored a variety of imagery before decided that a typographic mark would be the best option. I started by experimenting with thick serifs and slab serifs before moving toward more casual, child-friendly hand typography. I landed on the sketch to the right and then refined it into the final mark found on the opposite page.



## TYPOGRAPHY

Although I abandoned slab serif type for the brand mark, I kept it for the heading font. The thickness and ball serifs of Jubilat make it playful, but don't feel condescending. The body type is Mr Eaves, a clean, geometric sans serif that balances well with the character of both the slab serif and hand typography.

### Hello! We're Sanguine.

**sanguine (adjective)** — 1. optimistic or positive, especially in an apparently bad or difficult situation; 2. blood-red

We strive to **honestly** and **inclusively** educate kids and teens about **menstruation**. Together, we can all shed menstrual shame. Lorem ipsum dolor sit amet, consectetur adipiscing elit, sed diam nonummy nibh euismod tincidunt ut laoreet dolore magna aliquam erat volutpat. Ut wisi enim ad minim veniam, quis nostrud exercitation ullamcorper.

#### Heading

Jubilat (Medium)

Aa Bb Cc Dd Ee Ff Gg Hh Ii Jj Kk Ll Mm  
Nn Oo Pp Qq Rr Ss Tt Uu Vv Ww Xx Yy Zz  
1234567890

#### Body

Mr Eaves (Book)

Aa Bb Cc Dd Ee Ff Gg Hh Ii Jj Kk Ll Mm Nn Oo Pp Qq  
Rr Ss Tt Uu Vv Ww Xx Yy Zz  
1234567890

#### Emphasis 1

Mr Eaves (Bold)

Aa Bb Cc Dd Ee Ff Gg Hh Ii Jj Kk Ll Mm Nn Oo Pp  
Qq Rr Ss Tt Uu Vv Ww Xx Yy Zz  
1234567890

#### Emphasis 2

(Glossary Word)

Mr Eaves (Bold Italic)

*Aa Bb Cc Dd Ee Ff Gg Hh Ii Jj Kk Ll Mm Nn Oo Pp*  
*Qq Rr Ss Tt Uu Vv Ww Xx Yy Zz*  
*1234567890*

## COLOR

Sanguine uses a rainbow of color in order to be as inclusive as possible. Each color is a slightly muted tone of a bold color, which makes the application of these colors eye-catching without being overwhelming.

**buttercup**

#F8D8A7  
C2 M15 Y37 K0

**sky**

#BFE5E7  
C24 M0 Y9 K0

**shell**

#EFEAEB  
C5 M6 Y4 K0

**slate**

#61626D  
C64 M56 Y44 K18

**grapefruit**

#E56848  
C6 Y73 M77 K0

**shamrock**

#81BDB5  
C50 M9 Y31 K0

**lavender**

#BDB0CD  
C25 M29 Y5 K0

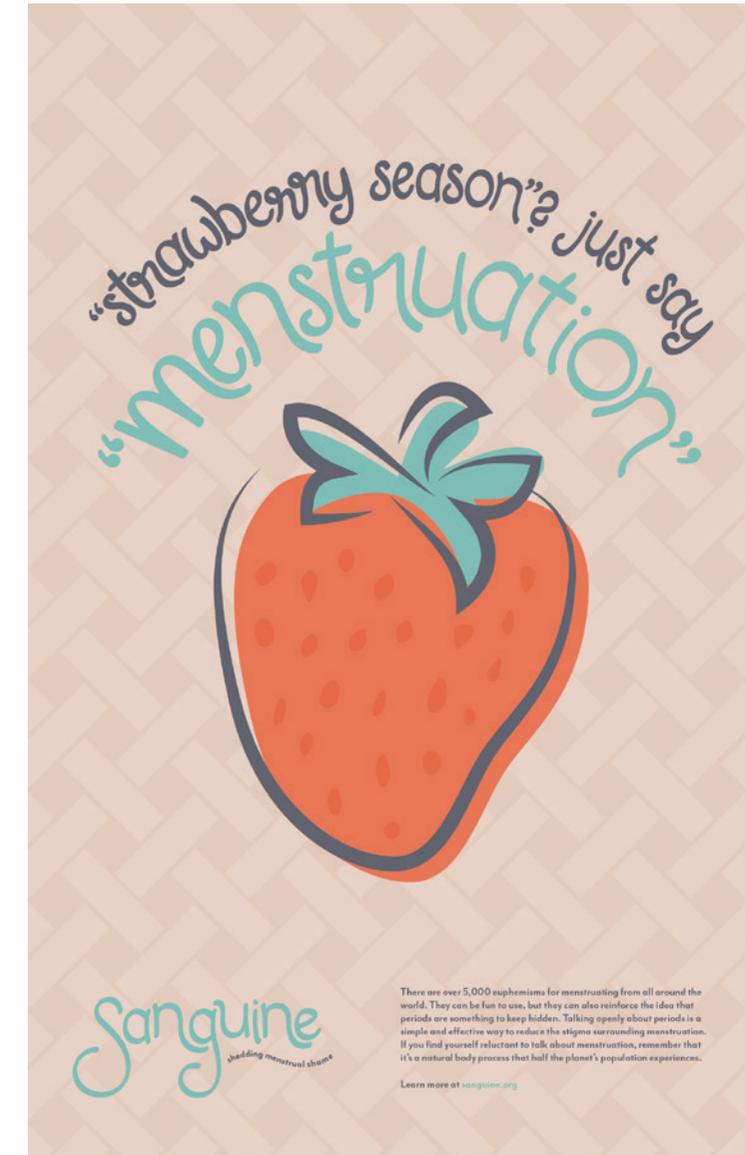
**sand**

#DABBAA  
C14 M26 Y30 K0

# Posters & Stickers

## FINAL

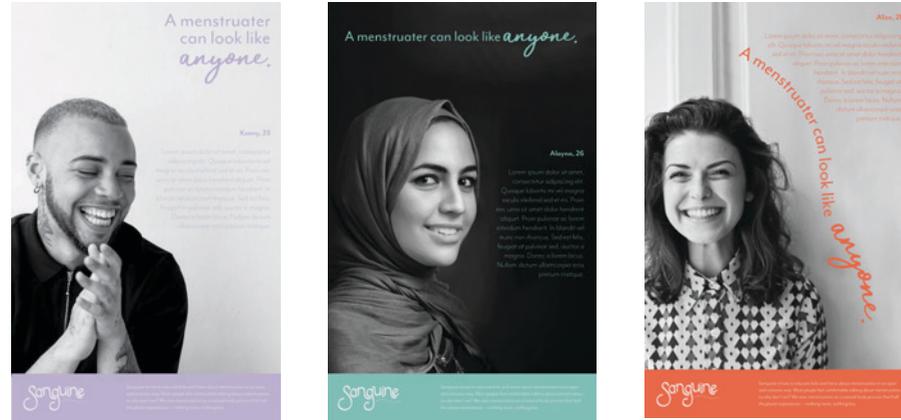
Sanguine's poster campaign, *Just Say Menstruation*, calls out how period euphemisms reinforce the idea that periods are something to keep hidden. These posters can be hung in schools, community centers, and more. The stickers supplement the poster campaign by giving people a way to carry their statement against menstrual shame with them.



## PROCESS

### Concept #1 : A Menstruator Can Look Like Anyone

My first poster concept focused on the idea that periods don't only happen to cisgender women. I wanted to emphasize diversity in gender, race, and body type. However, these photos show adults, and Sanguine is for kids.



### Concept #2 : Period Euphemisms

My second poster concept explored the wide variety of euphemisms that exist for talking about periods using photography. The photography I was using didn't feel right for the brand identity I was creating, though.

### Concept #3 : Period Euphemisms, Illustrated

My third poster concept also explored the wide variety of euphemisms that exist for talking about periods, but I used graphics and hand type. I decided that this look fit with Sanguine's brand, but that the emphasis was on euphemisms instead of speaking openly about periods. I added the "Just say menstruation" tagline, and my final posters emerged.

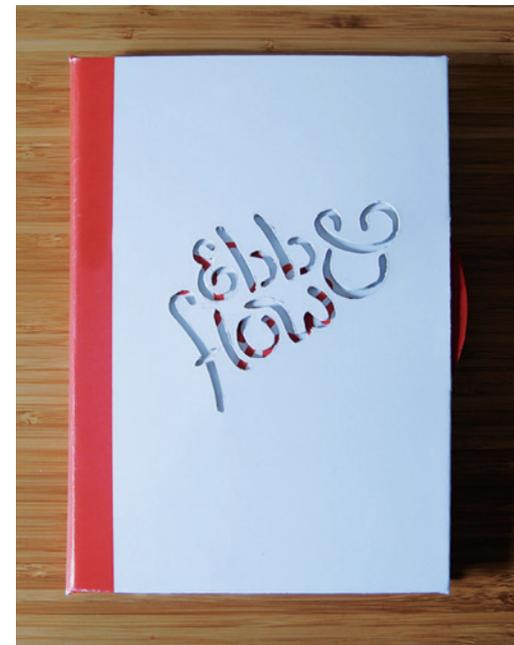
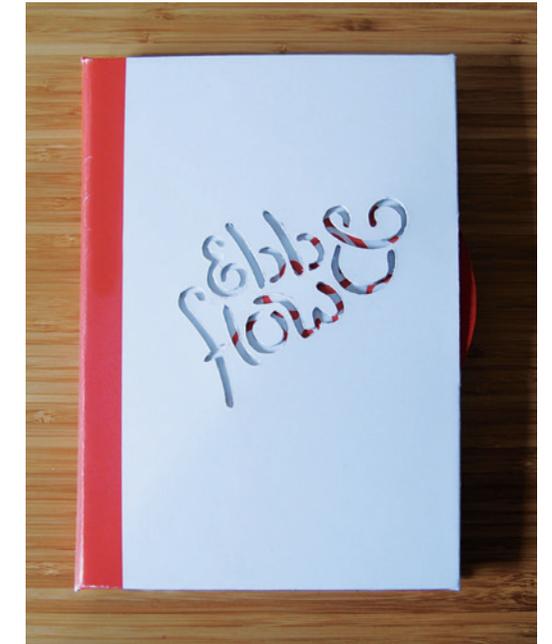


# Book

## FINAL

Sanguine's book on menstruation, *Ebb & Flow*, teaches young people about the basics of menstruation. The book does not assume the reader's gender and offers information for menstruators — including specific information for transgender menstruators — and non-menstruators. There are also several instances of interaction inside the book to encourage curiosity and engagement with the topic.

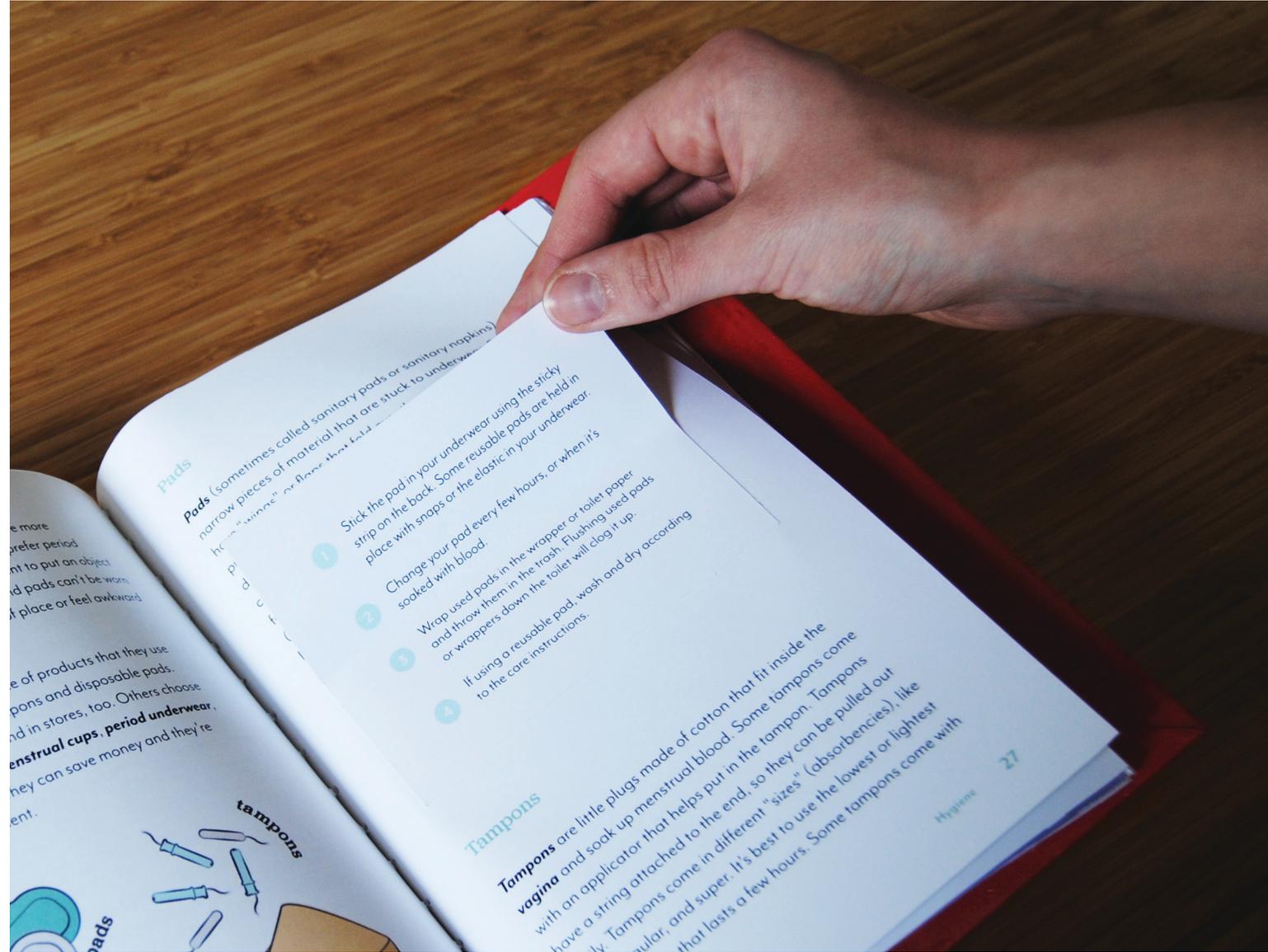
I hand bound this book as a proof of concept. It includes content from Planned Parenthood's website, as well as from the puberty books I used in my secondary research. I created the illustrations and hand typography that are used throughout. The book cover's interaction hides and then displays the book title (just as menstruation is kept a secret until it isn't), and there are also pull tabs, flaps, and foldouts throughout the book.











1

### What's a "normal" period? Do periods hurt? How do I use a tampon?

Some people are uncomfortable talking about menstruation, and some people don't know anything about it. The goal of this book is to both teach you about periods and help you feel more comfortable talking about them. The language used around menstruation can make it seem like only certain people can talk about periods, but that isn't true - whether or not you menstruate, this book is for you!



*the period book for everyone*

Sanguine

2



*the period book for everyone*

3

## Contents

01 A Note from Sanguine

02 What is Menstruation?

06 Who gets periods?

07 When do periods happen?

08 What's normal?

12 Side Effects

14 PMS

18 Cramps

20 PMDD

22 Hygiene

27 Pads

28 Tampons

29 Menstrual Cups

29 Menstrual Underwear

30 Empathy

34 Glossary & Index

4

### what is menstruation?

Half of the world menstruates, but the topic is still taboo in society today. What's more, most period products and education materials are heavily gendered. Using feminine-oriented language excludes **transgender, non-binary, and intersex** menstruators, and it also makes it seem like only certain people can talk about menstruation. At Sanguine, we think that everyone should be educated openly and honestly about menstruation, regardless of their gender. Together, we can all shed menstrual shame.

Happy reading!  
Sanguine



A Note from Sanguine 01

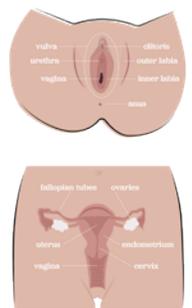
5

### what is menstruation?

6

**Menstruation**, or having a period, is when blood and tissue from the **uterus** comes out of the **vagina**, usually every month.

A **menstrual cycle** helps the body prepare for **pregnancy** every month. If there is no pregnancy, a period happens around the same time every month. Menstrual cycles are controlled by **hormones** like **estrogen** and **progesterone**. Here's what happens:



Some people believe that the uterus, cervix, and vagina have two **ovaries**, and each one holds a bunch of **egg cells**. The eggs are ready to be fertilized by a **sperm cell**. These hormones also make the lining of the uterus thick and spongy so that if an egg does get fertilized, it has a nice cushy place to land and start a pregnancy. This lining is made of tissue and blood, like almost everything else made in our bodies.

About halfway through a menstrual cycle, hormones tell one of the ovaries to release a mature egg - this is called **ovulation**. Most people don't feel it when they ovulate, but some ovulation symptoms are **bleeding, spotting**, or a little pain in the lower belly that only happens once a cycle.

Once the egg leaves the ovary, it travels through one of the **fallopian tubes** toward the uterus. If pregnancy doesn't happen, the body doesn't need the thick lining in the uterus. The lining breaks down, and the blood, mucus, and tissue flow out of the body through the vagina. That's a period!

04 What's Menstruation? 05

7

### Who gets periods?

Not everyone who gets a period identifies as a girl or woman. **Transgender men and genderqueer people** who have **uteruses, vaginas, fallopian tubes, and ovaries** also get periods.

Having a period can be a stressful experience for some transgender people because it's a reminder that their bodies don't match their **gender identity**. This discomfort and anxiety is sometimes called **gender dysphoria**. Other transgender people might not feel too bothered by their periods, or feel uncomfortable during some but not all of their periods. Any reaction is normal and okay!



06 What's Menstruation? 07

8

### When do periods happen?

Most people get their first period between ages 12 and 14, but some people get them earlier or later than that. There's no way to know exactly when it'll come for someone, but they may feel some **PMS** symptoms (more on this in the next section) a few days before it happens. If you don't get your period by the time you're 16, it's a good idea to visit a doctor or nurse.

A person's period may start and stop around the same time it did for other menstruators they're related to, like their mom, sisters, or twins.

**SKIPPED PERIODS**

A missed period is one of the first signs of **pregnancy**, but it doesn't always mean pregnancy. Sometimes a person skips a period for no reason at all, especially during the first few years of their period. Lots of other things can throw off a regular cycle and mess with the timing of a period. These include:

- Using hormonal birth control
- Changes in your **hormones**
- Being sick
- Taking certain medicines
- Eating less than usual
- Poor diet and nutrition
- Sudden weight gain or loss
- Having very little body fat, which can happen to athletes or people with eating disorders

**What's normal?**

**THE "NORMAL" RANGE**

A **menstrual cycle** lasts from the first day of a person's period to the first day of their next period. The average menstrual cycle is about 28-30 days, but it can be as short as 21 days or longer than 35 - it's different for everyone. The number of days in someone's cycle may also vary from month to month. When getting a period, it's normal to bleed anywhere from 2 to 7 days.

The average person has between 10-16 **menstruations** of **menstrual fluid** during each period. It can be thin or clumpy, and comes in colors from dark red to brown or pink.

Everyone's body is different, so their periods are different too - what's "normal" varies from person to person, and can change over their lifetime.

It's important to note that, because everyone's body is different, not every **vagina** looks like the one on page 5. All the parts that make up a vagina can be bigger or smaller, lighter or darker than the one in the diagram. That's perfectly normal and okay!



08 What's Menstruation? 09

9

### When to see a doctor

A menstruator should see their doctor if:

- Their period is so heavy that they have to change **menstrual pads** or **menstrual tampons** every hour.
- Their period lasts much longer than usual, or longer than 7 days.
- They're light-headed or dizzy, or their pulse is racing.
- They're 16 years old and still haven't gotten their period.
- They have severe pain before or during their period.
- They have unusual bleeding between periods.
- They suddenly feel sick or get a fever when using a tampon.
- Their periods or **PMS** lasts more than their normal days or symptoms.
- Their periods stop or suddenly become irregular.
- Their period comes more often than every 21 days or less often than every 45 days.
- They're very anxious or depressed around the time they get their period.

Examples of irregular periods include:

- Missing a period altogether
- A period coming early or late
- Different **PMS** symptoms than usual
- Heavier or lighter bleeding than usual
- Bleeding longer than usual
- Unpredictable timing of periods from month to month

Some people's periods are irregular, but it may just be the way their body naturally works, or it can be caused by a health problem. If many of your periods are irregular, unpredictable, or abnormal, talk with a doctor to make sure everything's okay. They may also talk to you about using a type of hormonal birth control to help make your period longer and/or more regular.



09 What's Menstruation? 10

10

### side effects

11

### PMS

**PMS** stands for **premenstrual syndrome** - the emotional and physical symptoms that some people feel right before and during their periods. PMS is caused by the hormonal changes that the body goes through during a **menstrual cycle**.

Some people get PMS every time they have their periods. Others only get PMS once in a while. Some people may have several PMS symptoms, and some people don't get PMS at all.

There are two main kinds of PMS symptoms: emotional symptoms and physical symptoms.

**Emotional symptoms of PMS include:**

- Feeling sad, depressed, tense, or anxious
- Mood swings
- Feeling more irritable or angry than normal
- Crying suddenly
- Not feeling very social or not wanting to be around people
- Feeling unable to concentrate
- Trouble falling asleep or staying asleep

**Physical symptoms of PMS include:**

- Abdominal tenderness or breast, joint, or muscle aches
- Headaches
- Craving certain foods or being more hungry than usual
- Fatigue

It's common to have some of these symptoms and not others. For example, someone might have bloating and sore breasts, but not mood swings or skin problems. It may also change from month to month, they could be tired and cranky one month but not the next, or have cramps one month but not the next. It's different for everyone!



14 Side Effects 15

12

**acne & tenderness**

**appetite & cravings**

**fatigue**

**headaches**

**skin**

16 Side Effects 17

13

### Cramps

Cramps are one of the symptoms of **PMS**. But there's a lot to know so they get their own section! Menstrual cramps can be really uncomfortable and painful, but they do happen for a reason. During a period, the **uterus contracts**, or squeezes. This makes the lining come off the walls of the uterus and leave the body. When the uterus contracts, it's helping the period blood flow out of the **vagina**.

Most people get cramps during their periods, or even just in their bellies. They usually feel like the flabbing pains in the lower belly. They can start some days before a period comes, and sometimes continue throughout the period. Cramps are usually worse during the first few days of a period, when the flow is the heaviest.

Menstrual cramps can be painful and annoying, but they're super common and there are lots of ways to treat them.



18 Side Effects 19

14

### PMDD

Symptoms of PMDD include:

- Depression, nervousness, and/or anxiety
- Panic attacks
- Feeling very tired and/or not being able to sleep
- Always feeling hungry, gaining weight, feeling out of control, depressed, or even suicidal. These symptoms go to so extreme that they get in the way of daily life, like work, school, or relationships. PMDD symptoms usually go away once a period starts, or a day or two after. If you think you're experiencing symptoms of PMDD, see a doctor as soon as possible.

There is no one PMDD treatment or PMDD medication that works for everyone. Your doctor or nurse will talk with you about your options, which may include:

- Available options include SSRI:**
  - Hormonal birth control
  - Over-the-counter pain medicine (like ibuprofen)
  - Diet changes and regular exercise
  - Stress management tools like meditation and other self-care

PMDD can be overwhelming, but you don't have to live it alone. Help from a counselor or therapist is a good start, and working with a doctor or nurse to manage your symptoms can make things easier. It may also be helpful to let a close friend or family member know how you're feeling.

If you're thinking about hurting yourself, call the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline (1-800-273-8255) or go to the emergency room, or call 911.

**How common is PMDD?**

It's not yet known what exactly causes PMDD, but scientists think it's connected to the hormonal changes that happen during a menstrual cycle and a chemical in the brain that affects mood called **serotonin**.

Most people who menstruate have some PMS symptoms, like cramps, **bleating**, breast tenderness, or mood changes before or during their period. Often times, PMS just takes a little extra self-care to manage. With PMDD, the symptoms are much worse, causing big problems in daily life. If you have any of the following symptoms, and they consistently happen to you in the week or two leading up to your period (or become a bit worse than), talk with your doctor about PMDD.



20 Side Effects 21

15

### hygiene

16

### Good hygiene is important, and it applies to more than just clean hands. Changing menstrual products often and keeping the public area clean can help prevent irritation or infection.

Here are some ways to keep the public area clean:

- Wash hands before and after using the toilet. Cotton balls or tissues can be used to wipe the toilet seat and flush.
- Use a clean paper towel to dry your hands.
- Use a clean pair of underwear at the start of every day and after every shower or bath.

Many people get **vaginal discharge**, which is totally normal. The discharge comes from the **vagina**, is usually clear or whitish, and has no strong smell. The vagina makes the discharge to keep itself clean. The amount can vary from day to day, and some menstruators find it more comfortable to wear a **menstrual pad** or **menstrual cup** during a period.



24 Hygiene 25

17

### Others feel like period underwear and pads are more comfortable than tampons or cups, or they prefer period underwear or pads because they don't want to put an object in their vagina. But period underwear and pads can't be worn in the vagina, and pads can move out of place or feel awkward during some activities.

Many people like the convenience of products that they use once and throw away, like tampons and disposable pads. These are usually easier to find in stores, too. Others choose reusable products like **menstrual cups, period underwear, or fabric pads**, because they can save money and they're better for the environment.

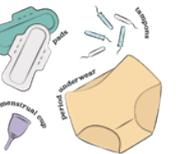
**Pads**

**Pads** (sometimes called sanitary pads or sanitary napkins) are narrow pieces of material that are stuck to underwear. Some have "wings" or flaps that hold over the sides of underwear to prevent getting leaks and stains. Some pads are made out of disposable materials, and others are made from fabric so they can be washed and reused. Pads come in different sizes - like full-length **bleeders**, regular, or thick for heavier bleeding ("max" or "super" pads). Each menstruator picks whichever kind best meets their needs in their situation.

**Using pads**

**Tampons**

**Tampons** are little plugs made of cotton that fit inside the **vagina** and soak up menstrual blood. Some tampons come with an applicator that helps put in the tampon. Tampons have a string attached to the end, so they can be pulled out easily. Tampons come in different "uses" (absorbencies), like light, regular, and super. It's best to use the lowest or lightest absorbency that lasts a few hours. Some tampons come with an applicator and some don't.



26 Hygiene 27

18

### There are different kinds of cups, and they all come with specific ways to insert them and get them out. Cups may look kind of big, but most people can't feel them once they're in.

**Using menstrual cups**

If a tampon is in a vagina for a long time it can cause an illness called **toxic shock syndrome (TSS)**. TSS is really rare, but very dangerous. If you're using a tampon and have a fever, sore throat, diarrhea, muscle aches, a sore throat, dizziness, faintness, or weakness, and a sunburn-type rash, take the tampon out and call your doctor right away. To help prevent TSS, use the lowest absorbency tampon you can and change your tampon every 4-8 hours or as often as needed.

**Using tampons**

**Menstrual Cups**

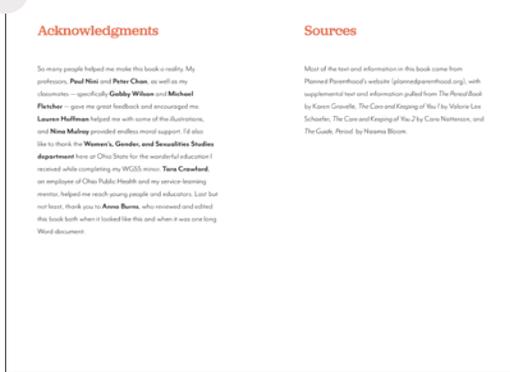
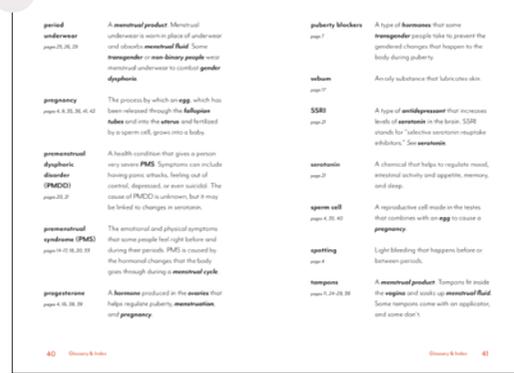
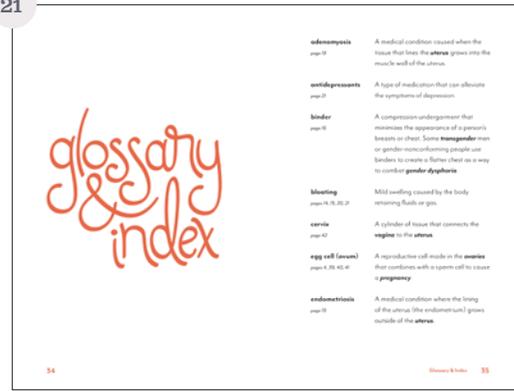
**Menstrual cups** are shaped like little bells or bowls, and they're made of rubber, silicone, or soft plastic. The cup is worn inside the **vagina** and it collects menstrual blood. Most cups are reusable. When they're full they are emptied, washed, and used again. Other cups are disposable and throw away after one use or one period cycle.

**Period Underwear**

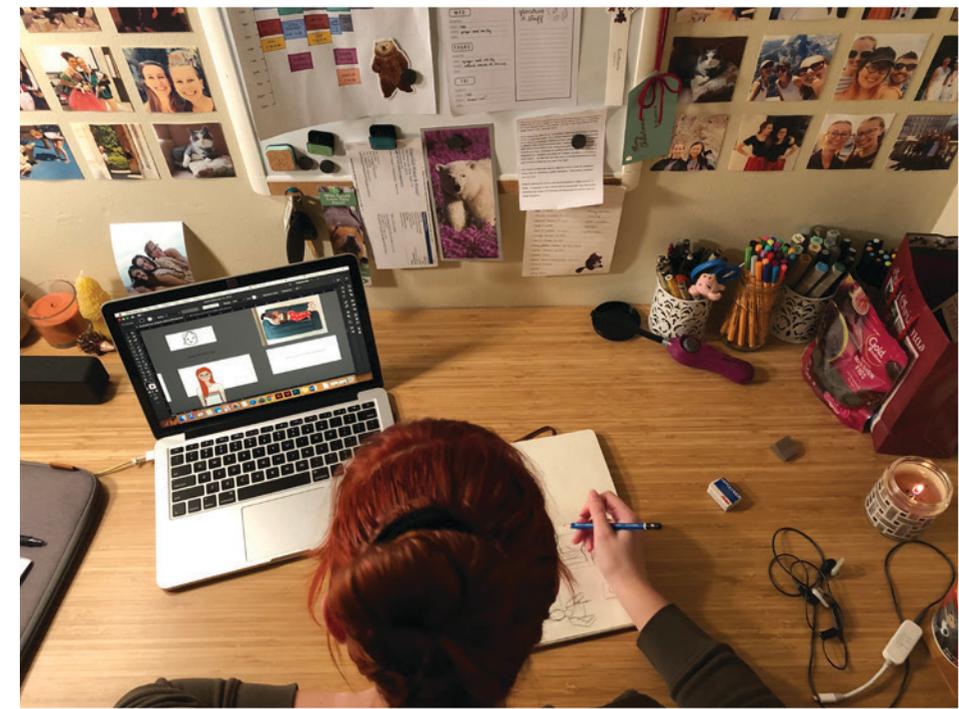
**Period underwear** is just like regular underwear, except it has extra layers of fabric that absorb menstrual blood during a period. There are different kinds of period underwear for light, medium, or heavy flow days. Period underwear can be worn on its own, or with a **tampon or menstrual cup**.

**Using period underwear**

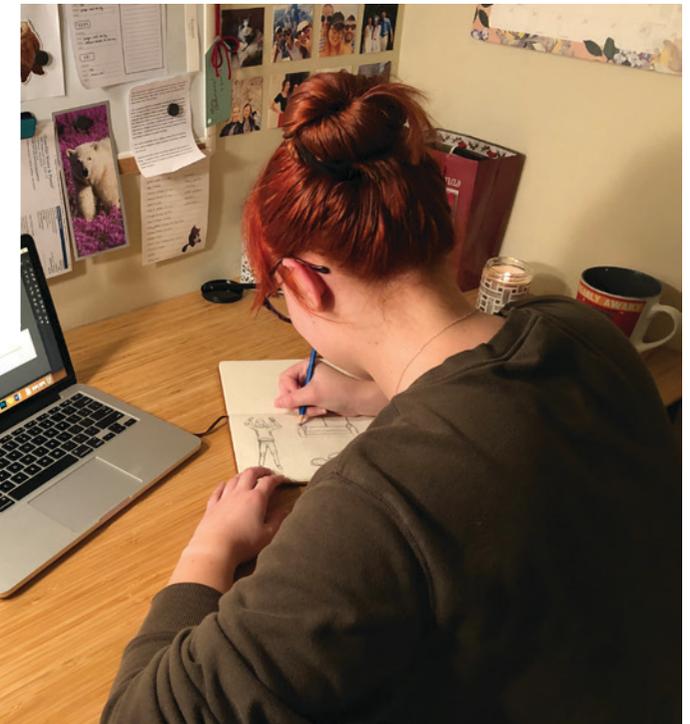
28 Hygiene 29



# PROCESS



After I gathered the content from books and websites, I began to illustrate the content. Most of the illustrations are of people, and because they reappear they turned into recurring characters.

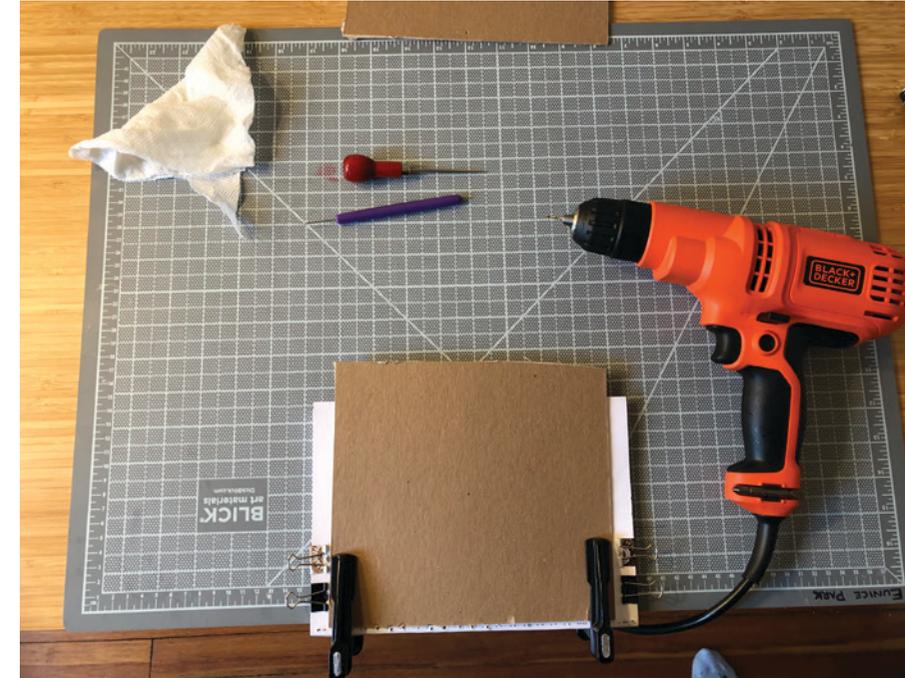


When I illustrate, I start by hand sketching. After I have that base to work from, I bring it into Illustrator to create smooth lines and curves. I also use reference images to supplement my hand sketching.



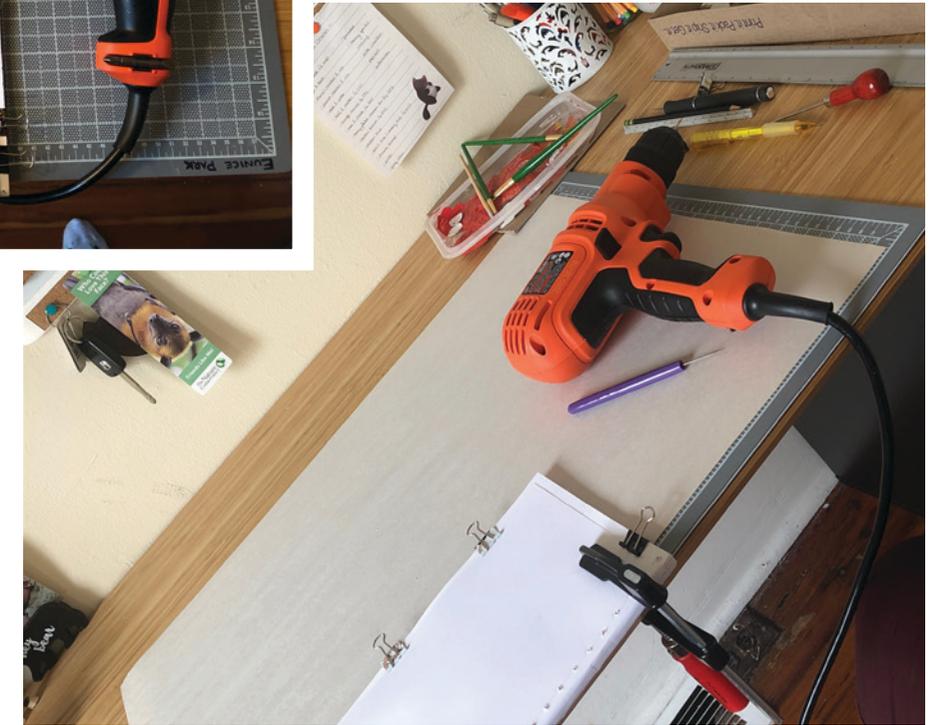
Once I finished the illustrations, I began to prototype the book and its interactions. I made a low fidelity mockup of the cover interaction using paper and a paper clip.

After I prototyped each of the interactions in the book, I printed all of component documents and started to create the first book. I used a Cricut machine to make the cover in order to get the most exact cuts



For this book, I didn't use a multi-signature pamphlet bind. Instead, I drilled straight through the block of paper and then bound it with bookmaking thread.

I went through the binding process twice; the first time to try out ideas and work out difficulties and the second time to improve my craft.



# Exhibition Board

This 3'x6' board, which was one of the departmental thesis requirements, summarizes my research, brand identity, brand applications, and design solution. I show examples of a poster, book spread, and sticker use. Because I created this poster before beginning work on my hand-bound version of Ebb & Flow, the book renders on the poster are not completely accurate to the final form of the book.

**Sanguine**  
shedding menstrual shame

Sanguine is a social campaign that strives to honestly and inclusively educate kids and teens of all genders about menstruation. Together, we can all shed menstrual shame!

**Why don't we talk about menstruation?**  
The topic of menstruation remains taboo in the United States even today. Important information is left **unaddressed**, and most menstrual resources are **heavily gendered**. Using feminine-oriented language excludes transgender, non-binary, and intersex people, and makes it seem like only certain people can talk about menstruation. In order to break the stigma surrounding menstruation, **we need to talk openly and honestly about it!**

**SAY WHAT?**  
Sanguine's poster campaign, *Just Say Menstruation*, calls out how **period euphemisms** reinforce the idea that periods are something to keep hidden. These posters can be hung in schools, community centers, and more.

**STICK TO IT**  
The stickers supplement the poster campaign by giving people a way to carry their **statement against menstrual shame** with them.

**OPEN UP**  
Sanguine's book on menstruation, *Ebb & Flow*, teaches young people about the **basics of menstruation**. The book does not assume the reader's gender and offers information for menstruators — including specific information for transgender menstruators — and non-menstruators. There are also several instances of **intersection** inside the book to encourage curiosity and engagement with the topic.

**SOCIAL IMPACT**  
**Maria Burns, AIGA, CSCA**  
Visual Communication Design

Sanguine is a social campaign that strives to honestly and inclusively educate kids and teens of all genders about menstruation. Together, we can all shed menstrual shame!

"shark week"? just say  
**menstruation**

**SAY WHAT?**  
Sanguine's poster campaign, *Just Say Menstruation*, calls out how **period euphemisms** reinforce the idea that periods are something to keep hidden. These posters can be hung in schools, community centers, and more.

**ebb & flow**  
the period book for everyone

**Clips** look like **period underwear** or **pads** but are more comfortable than tampons or cups, or they prefer **period underwear** or **pads** because they don't want to put an object in their vaginas. But **period underwear** and **pads** can be worn in the water, and **pads** can move out of place or feel awkward during some activities.

Many people like the convenience of products that they use once and throw away, like **tampons** and **disposable pads**. These are usually easier to find in stores, too. **Others** choose reusable protection, like **menstrual cups**, **period underwear**, or **fabric pads**, because they can save money and they're better for the environment.

**Pads**  
**Pads** (sometimes called **sanitary pads** or **sanitary napkins**) are narrow pieces of material that are stuck to underwear. Some have "wings" or flaps that fold over the sides of underwear to protect against leaks and stains. Some pads are made out of disposable materials, and others are made from fabric so they can be washed and reused. **Pads** come in different sizes — like **light** (blowing them), **regular**, or **thick** for heavier bleeding ("max" or "super" pads). Each menstruator picks whatever kind best meets their needs.

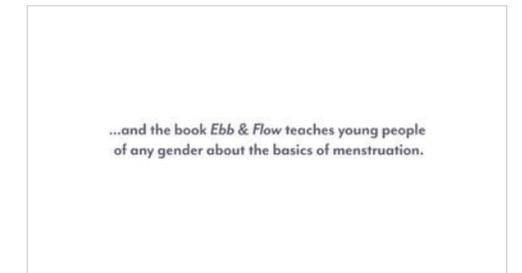
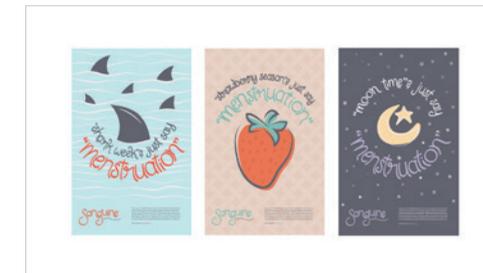
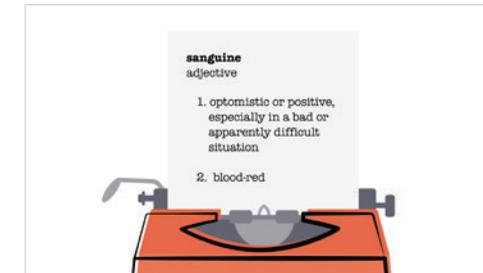
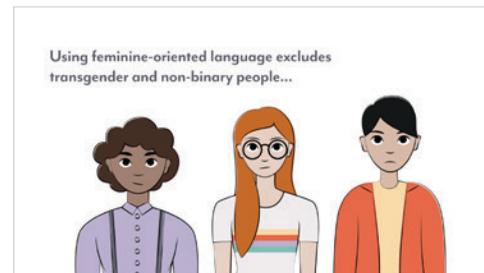
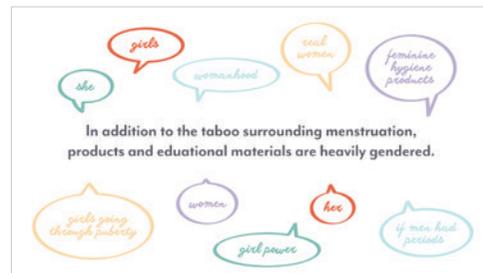
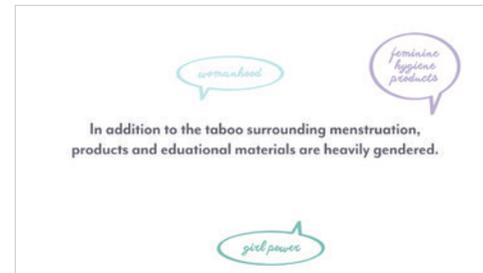
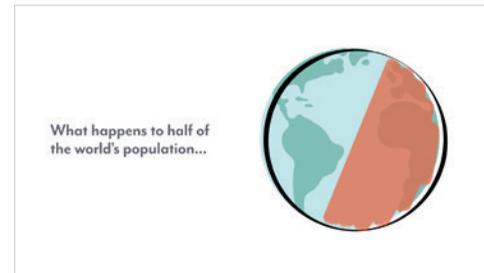
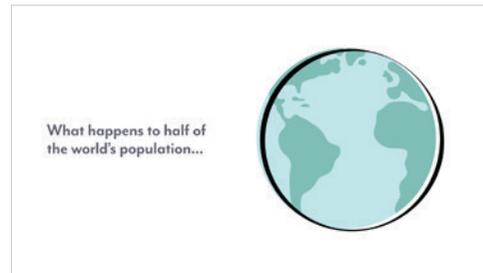
**tampons**  
**Tampons** are little plugs made of cotton that fit inside the vagina and catch up menstrual blood. Some tampons come with an applicator that helps put in the tampon. **Tampons**

**STICK TO IT**  
The stickers supplement the poster campaign by giving people a way to carry their **statement against menstrual shame** with them.

# Video

I was also required to make a video summarizing my thesis. In it, I animate the problem space of my project and then show and explain my design touchpoints.

You can watch the video on my website, [mariaeurns.com/sanguine](http://mariaeurns.com/sanguine).



# closing

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20 ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

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**ABOUT THE DESIGNER**  
**Maria Burns**

Maria grew up in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania before moving to Columbus, Ohio to pursue of Bachelor of Science in Design in Visual Communication Design at The Ohio State University. Maria has also completed minors in History of Art and Women's, Gender, and Sexuality Studies.

