



Supporting Students with PMDD: A Guide for School and Educators

Clinical Review Statement

This resource has been developed by The PMDD Project and reviewed by our Clinical Advisory Board for clinical accuracy and alignment with current evidence and guidelines.

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Reviewed by:

The PMDD Project Clinical Advisory Board

This guide is designed to help schools support students with Premenstrual Dysphoric Disorder (PMDD), following UK legal guidelines.

It aims to equip teachers, management, and support staff with strategies to promote an inclusive, understanding environment that accommodates the unique needs of students experiencing PMDD.

Understanding PMDD

What is PMDD?

PMDD is a severe mood disorder linked to the menstrual cycle.

Symptoms include *intense emotional and physical changes*, such as *mood swings, fatigue, and difficulty concentrating*.

Impact on learning

Students with PMDD may experience challenges with attendance, focus, and mood regulation.

This can impact their academic performance and social relationships.

Recognising the confusion for young students

Navigating new experiences

For young students who have only recently begun menstruating, experiencing PMDD can be especially confusing, as talking about periods is often still considered taboo.

Support through education

Educating students, staff, and families on PMDD and menstrual health is essential for breaking down these barriers. This education helps ensure students' needs are met and that they don't feel isolated in their experiences.

Workshops on menstrual health:

The PMDD Project offer workshops on menstrual education, including PMDD, to help schools raise awareness, promote empathy, and ensure students, staff, and families have access to the knowledge and resources they need.

It's important to note that students may mask their PMDD, so it may not always be visible, or easy to see.

Legal obligations and reasonable adjustments

Equality Act 2010

Under UK law, PMDD may be considered a disability if it significantly affects daily activities.

Schools are required to make reasonable adjustments to support affected students.

Reasonable adjustments

Adjustments could include flexible deadlines, access to support resources, or modified attendance requirements during severe symptoms.

Keep communication open to tailor adjustments based on individual needs.

Classroom strategies for teachers

Flexible expectations

Allow students the option for extensions on assignments or modified participation when symptoms are intense.

If possible, reduce high-stress activities, like presentations, during this time.

Comfortable environment

Provide access to quiet spaces or allow students to take breaks if they feel overwhelmed.

Sensory-friendly areas can help students manage stress.

Understanding and empathy

Promote an inclusive classroom where students feel comfortable discussing their needs.

Normalising mental health discussions can reduce stigma.

Developing a supportive school culture

Staff training	Designated support staff
Educate teachers and staff on PMDD, mental health, and menstrual health to build a culture of empathy and understanding.	Ensure students with PMDD have access to a trained staff member they can turn to for support, like a school nurse or counsellor.
Confidentiality and communication	
Respect student privacy, sharing health information only on a need-to-know basis.	
Maintain clear communication channels with a student and, where appropriate, their family.	

Working with parents and external support (where appropriate)

Parent communication	External resources
Work with parents or guardians to understand any specific needs or coping strategies the student may have.	Encourage students and families to connect with external PMDD support networks or healthcare providers as needed.

Access to school-based support services

Counselling services	Academic adjustments
If available, encourage students to use school counselling services for additional support.	Offer options like remote learning or recorded lessons if PMDD symptoms affect attendance or concentration.

Implementing a PMDD awareness programme

Educational workshops

Host workshops or assemblies on menstrual health, mental health, and PMDD.

Peer support groups

Consider establishing peer support groups or mentorship programs where students can connect with others facing similar challenges.

The PMDD Project will offer menstrual education workshops designed to break the stigma, enhance understanding, and help all students feel supported.

By implementing these steps and making use of resources such as workshops from The PMDD Project, schools can better support students with PMDD.

You'll be creating a learning environment that respects and accommodates their needs while breaking down taboos around menstrual health.

Other helpful resources

Student Minds – Student mental health support

<https://www.studentminds.org.uk/>

Charlie Waller Trust – Mental health support for young people

<https://charliewaller.org/>

Childline – Mental health support for young people

www.childline.org.uk/

Kooth – Mental health support for young people

www.kooth.com/

CAMHS – Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services

[More info here](#)

Need urgent support?

We know that managing PMDD can be incredibly difficult, and at times, the emotional weight can feel overwhelming. If you are experiencing severe distress, suicidal thoughts, or feel you are in crisis, please know that you are not alone and that support is available. You deserve to be heard and kept safe.

If you are in immediate danger:

Please call 999 or go to your nearest Accident and Emergency (A&E) department immediately.

Samaritans: Call 116 123 for free, 24/7 confidential support, or visit www.samaritans.org.

Shout: Text 'SHOUT' to 85258 for free, confidential, 24/7 text support.

Please note: This resource is intended for information and peer support; it is not a substitute for professional mental health care or crisis intervention. Please reach out to your GP, local mental health services, or the resources above if you need urgent help.

