



PERSONAL CARE PRODUCTS DISCUSSION

This guidance covers menstrual and feminine hygiene products, as well as incontinence products for companions of any gender.

Purpose

This document provides guidance for members on how to appropriately and respectfully discuss **personal care products**, including menstrual and feminine hygiene products and incontinence products, with companions. These conversations are inherently personal and may be affected by stigma, cultural norms, medical factors, disability, age, pregnancy, postpartum recovery, menopause, continence needs, or past experiences. All interactions must prioritise dignity, privacy, and consent.

Core Principles

All discussions related to personal care needs must follow these principles:

1. **Respect and Dignity**

Personal care needs are private. Conversations must never shame, embarrass, or imply fault, neglect, or inadequacy.

2. **Privacy and Confidentiality**

Discussions must take place in a private setting and never in front of others. Information shared should remain confidential and only be disclosed in line with safeguarding or organizational policy.

3. **Non-Assumptive Approach**

Do not assume needs based on age, appearance, gender, health, disability, or circumstance. Menstrual, feminine hygiene, and continence needs vary widely.

4. **Autonomy and Consent**

Support should always be offered, never imposed. Companions have full autonomy to accept or decline assistance.

When It Is Appropriate to Raise the Topic

A conversation about menstrual, feminine hygiene, or incontinence products may be appropriate when:

- The companion directly requests support or supplies.

- You are in a designated support or caregiving role and wellbeing is affected.
- There is a clear health or comfort concern that falls within your responsibility to address.

If these conditions are not met, do not initiate the discussion.

How to Begin the Conversation

Use language that is neutral, supportive, and non-intrusive. Keep the focus on access and comfort, not on the individual's body or behavior.

Appropriate examples include:

- “I wanted to check whether you have access to the personal care items you need.”
- “If you ever need menstrual, feminine hygiene, or incontinence products, please know they’re available.”
- “Would it be helpful to talk about access to personal care supplies?”

Allow the companion to guide the level of detail. Do not ask personal or medical questions unless strictly necessary and appropriate.

Language and Terminology

- Use neutral terms such as **“personal care products,” “menstrual products,” “feminine hygiene products,”** or **“incontinence products.”**
 - Avoid slang, euphemisms, or explicit language.
 - Mirror the terminology the companion uses, if they choose to be specific.
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Cultural and Personal Sensitivity

Be mindful that:

- Menstruation, feminine hygiene, and continence needs may be culturally sensitive or difficult to discuss.
- Experiences may be affected by menstruation, pregnancy, postpartum recovery, menopause, disability, age, surgery, illness, medication, or other medical conditions.
- Some companions may feel more comfortable speaking with a trusted designated person or someone of their choosing.

Where possible, offer options for who provides support.

What to Avoid

- Public or group discussions
 - Humour, casual remarks, or minimisation
 - Expressing discomfort, surprise, or judgment
 - Pressuring a companion to accept products or disclose information
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Providing Support

If assistance is accepted:

- Clearly explain what products or support are available.
 - Offer choices and respect preferences.
 - Allow the companion to maintain control and privacy.
 - Provide products discreetly, for example in a bag or private handover, and avoid drawing attention to the support being provided.
 - Follow all safeguarding, reporting, and organizational procedures.
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If You Are Unsure How to Proceed

If there is uncertainty about appropriateness or boundaries:

- Pause the discussion.
 - Seek guidance from your Conference President or safeguarding lead.
 - Prioritise the companion's comfort and dignity over immediate resolution.
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Closing Reminder

Conversations about menstrual, feminine hygiene, and incontinence products should always be handled with care, discretion, and respect. When approached thoughtfully, they support wellbeing, comfort, and trust. When handled poorly, they can cause embarrassment or harm. Members are expected to act with sensitivity at all times.