

always

# Period Stigma Around the World Today

Despite increasing attention and advocacy, periods remain a taboo topic. Always, WASH United and Glocalities surveyed adults and young people from five countries to assess period stigma today.

## Periods are associated with negative feelings from an early age, despite being a normal bodily function.

When getting their first period, young people feel:<sup>1</sup>

**Scared** 41%  
**Confused** 38%  
**Embarrassed** 34%

**52%** 

of girls lose confidence at puberty<sup>2</sup> and starting their period marks the lowest point in confidence during their teenage years<sup>3</sup>.

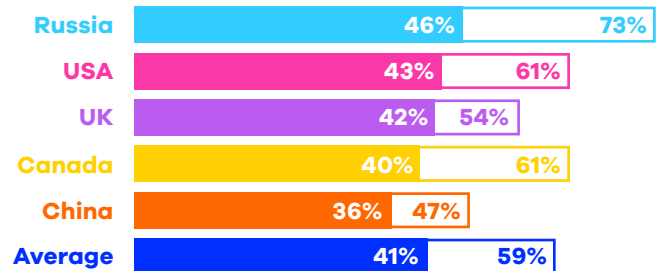


2 in 5 have felt ashamed or embarrassed by their own period.<sup>4</sup>



3 in 5 have tried to hide the fact they're on their period from those around them.<sup>4</sup>

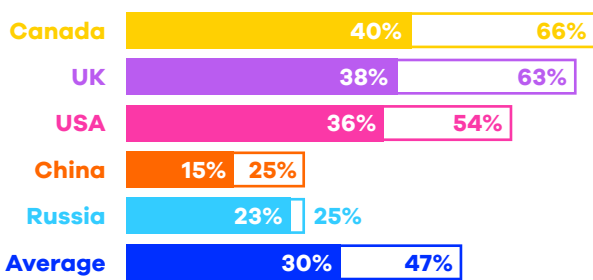
Of the countries surveyed, **negative feelings and period hiding** are most prevalent in Russia, where it is deemed least socially acceptable to talk about being on your period.<sup>4</sup>



● Felt ashamed/embarrassed about their period  
○ Tried to hide their period

## Period conversations are a challenge.

Less than half of adults say they support talking about periods<sup>5</sup> and far less *actually* do talk about them<sup>4</sup>.



● Talk openly about periods  
○ Support talking openly about periods

People **feel more comfortable talking about other sensitive topics** like sex, politics and family problems than they do about periods.<sup>4</sup>

% that feel comfortable talking about...

<b>Russia</b>	
Politics	61%
Family Problems	33%
Sex	31%
STDs	26%
<b>Periods</b>	18%

<b>Canada</b>	
Politics	49%
Sex	49%
<b>Periods</b>	46%
Family Problems	45%
STDs	45%

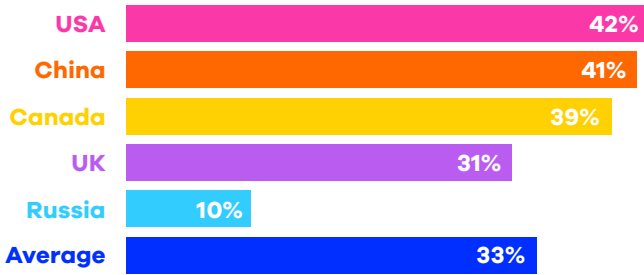
<b>UK</b>	
Politics	52%
Family Problems	47%
Sex	45%
<b>Periods</b>	42%
STDs	39%

<b>China</b>	
Politics	37%
Family Problems	31%
Sex	28%
<b>Periods</b>	10%
STDs	8%

<b>USA</b>	
Sex	49%
Politics	47%
Family Problems	44%
STDs	43%
<b>Periods</b>	41%

## When people talk about periods, it's often done in a negative way.

1 in 3 have referred to period blood as gross or disgusting, except for Russia, where the incidence is only 1 in 10.<sup>4</sup>



**1 in 3** 

men say they have felt disgusted when hearing women talk about their period.<sup>4</sup>

While nearly 1 in 4 believe **period jokes** are harmless fun, young people say they make them feel:<sup>1</sup>

**Self-conscious** 42%  
**Embarrassed** 35%  
**Less confident** 26%

## Period education is key, and moms and teachers are the most influential resources.<sup>1</sup> But not everyone is prepared to teach their kids about periods.<sup>4</sup>

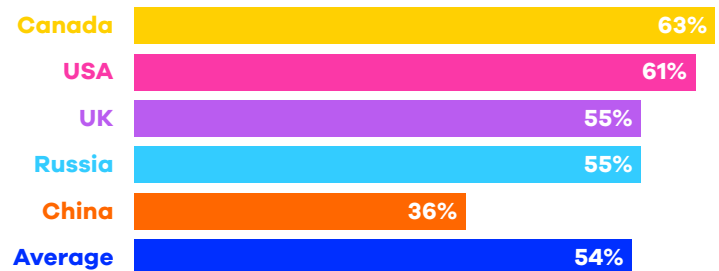
"Where do young people learn the most about periods?"

**Moms & School**

"What source of period and puberty information do young people trust the most?"

**Moms, Medical Professionals & Teachers**

54% of adults feel they have enough knowledge to talk to their children about puberty and periods.



**>%** The higher the % of society that talks openly about periods, the more prepared people feel to talk about periods with their children (correlation 0.4).

## You Can Help End Period Stigma!



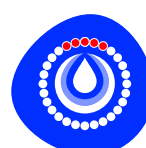
**GET EDUCATED** about periods.



**GET COMFORTABLE TALKING** about periods.



**ADVOCATE** for period friendly legislation (e.g. mandatory puberty education).



**SHOW YOUR SUPPORT** by joining the Menstruation Bracelet Action this #MHDay. Learn more [here](#).

For more information, please visit [always.com](https://always.com) or contact Charlotte Le Fluffy ([leftfluffy.c@pg.com](mailto:leftfluffy.c@pg.com)).



<sup>1</sup> SurveyMonkey, 2020. Quantitative survey of young people 13–21 yrs in Canada, UK, US. n=4,147.  
<sup>2</sup> Research Now, 2017. Quantitative survey of females 16–24 yrs in Brazil, Canada, China, France, Germany, Greece, Russia, Turkey, UK, US. n=9,289.  
<sup>3</sup> Research Now, 2014. Quantitative survey of females 16–24 yrs in US. n=1,300.  
<sup>4</sup> Glocalities, 2020. Quantitative survey of adults 18–70 yrs in Canada, China, Russia, UK, US. n=5,139.  
<sup>5</sup> Glocalities, 2019. Quantitative survey of adults 18–70 yrs, Global. n=30,057.  
For both Glocalities studies: Data is nationally representative with respect to age (18–70) by gender, region and education (low & mid-levels of education are combined for China only).