

Autism friendly periods?

By Robyn Steward

Quick facts about periods

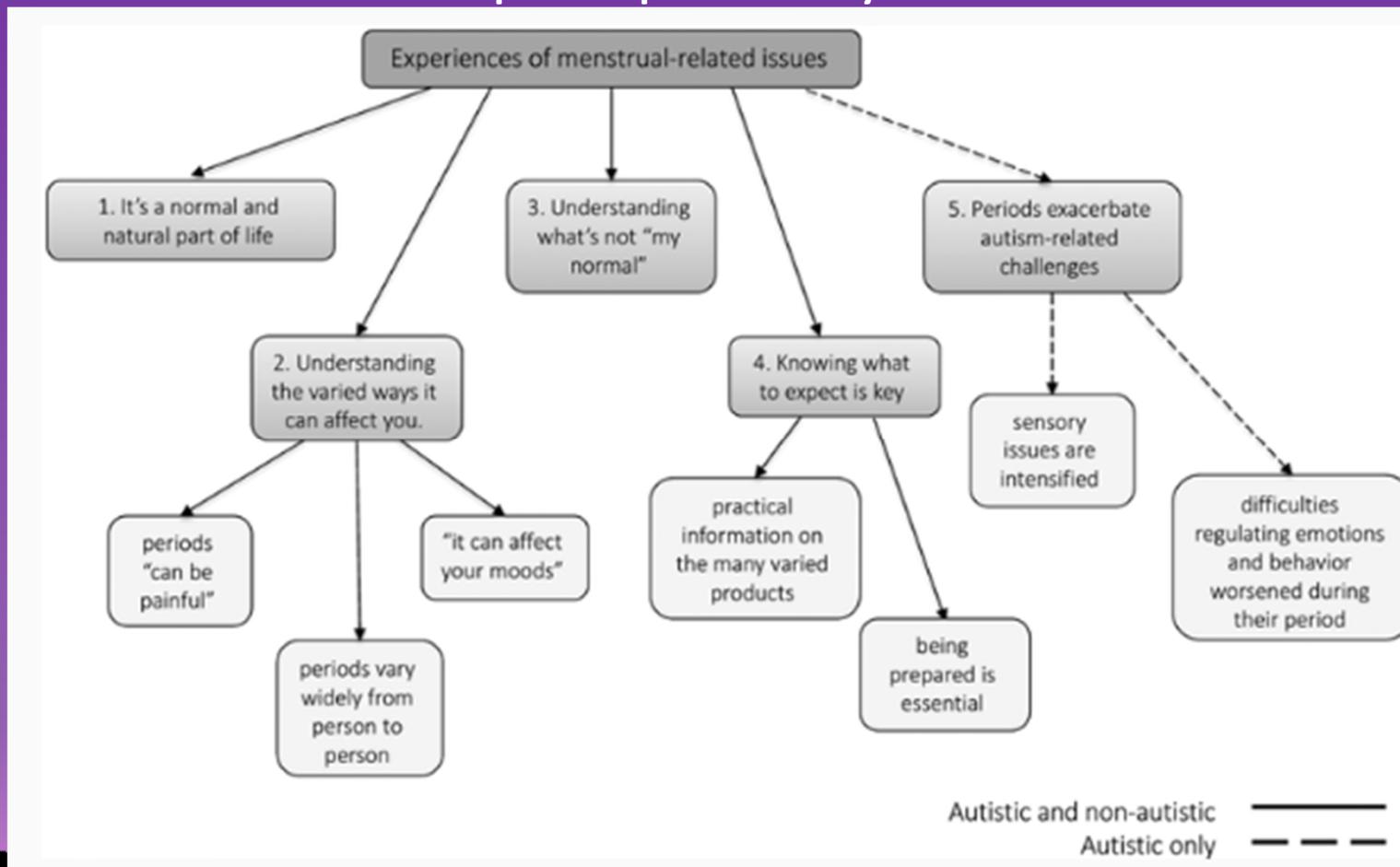


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The Autistic Spectrum from a person not just a textbook!

What other autistic people say



Be Literal

- ... correct medical terms I was told to put a tampon "up bum " by a friend who used the word "bum " in place of vagina ...
 - Research participant



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Consider sensory issues

- “Different types of protection especially cups! And that it's nothing to be ashamed of. And some practice using protection before the actual event. It scared me when it happened so lessening the anxiety around it all without making a massive deal. A period kit would be ideal for everyone. One that family can put together before the event. A survival guide.:
- Research participant



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Don't underestimate PMS

- Yes, pms, as an autistic person with alexithymia, mood/emotion changes are already difficult to verbalise/understand so not knowing why periods alter mood was difficult.-research participant
- ...I do think my sensory issues are heightened when I'm premenstrual and I can't cope with things that I normally can cope with when I'm not premenstrual. I'm anxious and irritable and depressed and much more likely up have panic attacks and not be able to function. It become much much more difficult to communicate to people about how I feel and why I feel like that which is hard to deal with especially when you are trying very hard to fit in and have relationships and be a responsible adult and be a woman.- research participant



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Menstrual cycle



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sensory



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Stuff that helps

- Cloth pads
- Period underwear
- Menstrual cups
- Trying stuff out



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Executive functioning



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Things that can help

- Where possible planning ahead
- Communicate information about periods in a straightforward literal way
- Providing communication which is least taxing to the person this could be symbols/photos or just small chunks of text
- Where possible do the stressful things when you don't have PMS
- Sensory audit of environment
- Organized environment

Emotion regulation



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What can help



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