

Menstruation in Northumberland County

ABOUT PERIOD PROMISE NORTHUMBERLAND

A local partnership of Northumberland United Way and Thrive Northumberland, Period Promise Northumberland aims to tackle period poverty in our community while collecting and distributing hygiene products to those in need locally.

Since the programs launch in 2020, Period Promise Northumberland has distributed over 30,000 menstrual hygiene products to individuals, families, and non-profits locally.

To learn more or to request product visit www.periodpromisenorthumberland.ca



ABOUT THE COMMUNITY SURVEY

Period poverty is a complex and multifaceted issue that affects the menstruation community around the world. It is an issue that is often overlooked but has a profound and lasting impact on the lives of those affected. From inadequate access to menstrual products to lack of education and awareness, period poverty has wide-reaching implications and causes immense hardship to those who experience it.

A community survey was launched on World Menstrual Hygiene Day, May 28, 2022 and ran until August 31, 2022. The objective was to gain a better understanding of period poverty in Northumberland County.

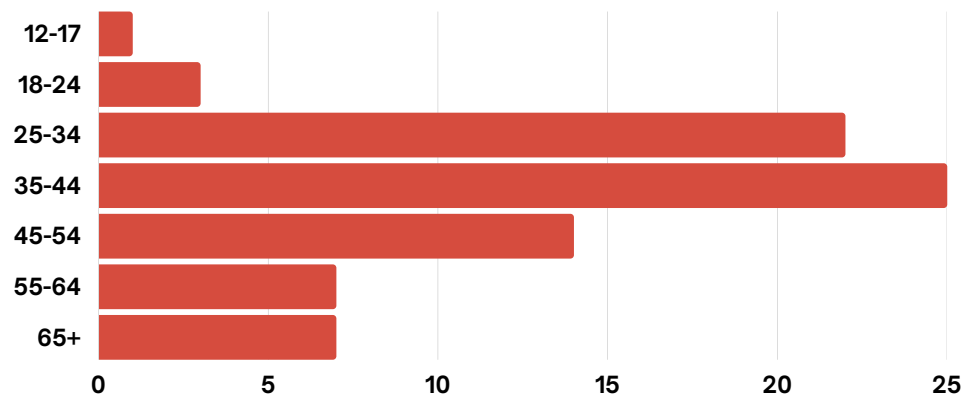
The survey results are based on 79 Northumberland County residents. The data will be used to inform our outreach and advocacy as we continue to end period poverty in our community.



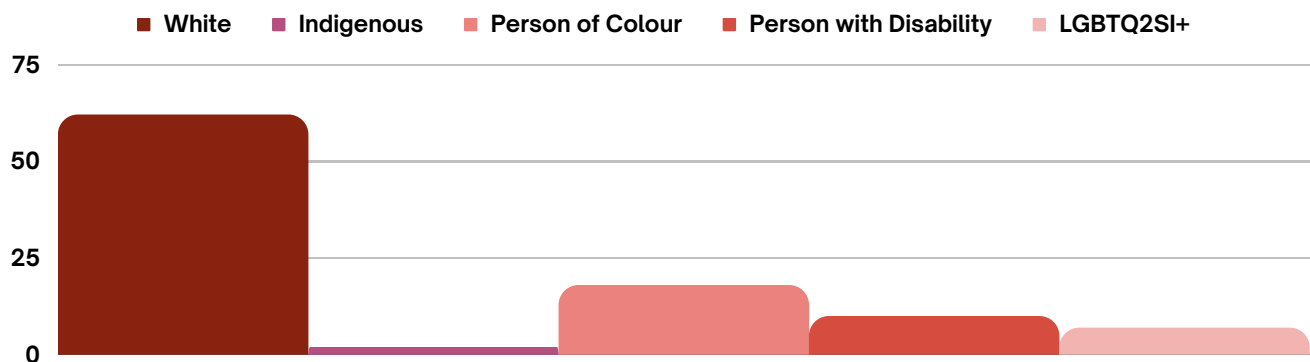
PARTICIPANT OVERVIEW

The survey participants consisted of 79 Northumberland County residents aged 12-65+. The majority of survey participants were aged 35-44. 48 out of 79 participants said they currently menstruate.

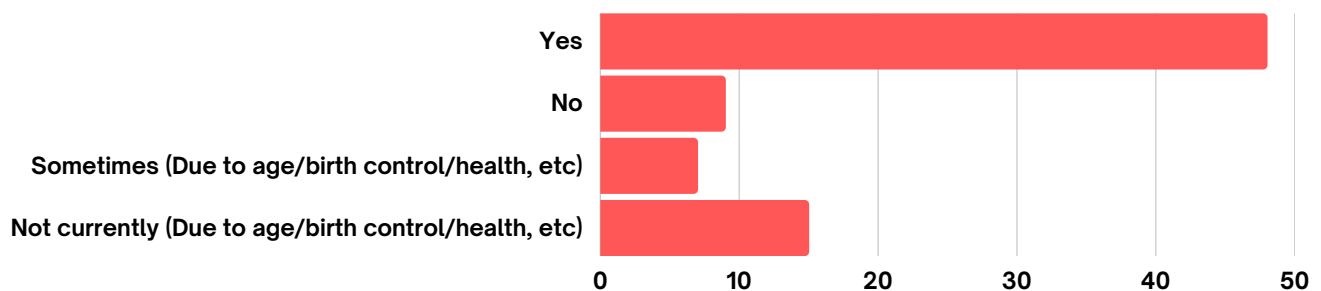
AGE



IDENTITY



DO YOU MENSTRUATE?

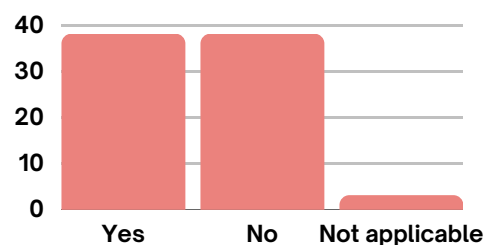


KEY THEME: ACCESSIBILITY & AFFORDABILITY

The survey asked participants to comment on the accessibility and affordability of menstrual hygiene products. 48% of participants said they had experienced an inability to access period products and 46.8% said they had experienced struggling to afford period products. Based on the results of this survey, accessibility and affordability appear to be a common issue in Northumberland County.

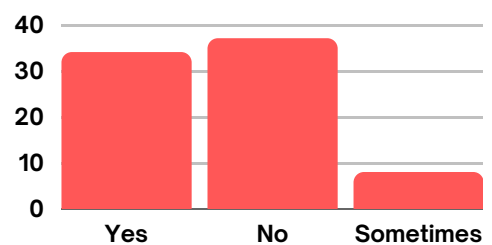
Have you ever not been able to access period products when you needed them?

Nearly half of the participants said they experienced an inability to access period products. While the other half of the participants said; they'd never experienced this issue.



Have you ever struggled to afford period products?

46.8% of participants said they have struggled to afford period products. While the other half of the participants said; they'd never experienced this issue, with 10% of participants saying affordability was only sometimes an issue.

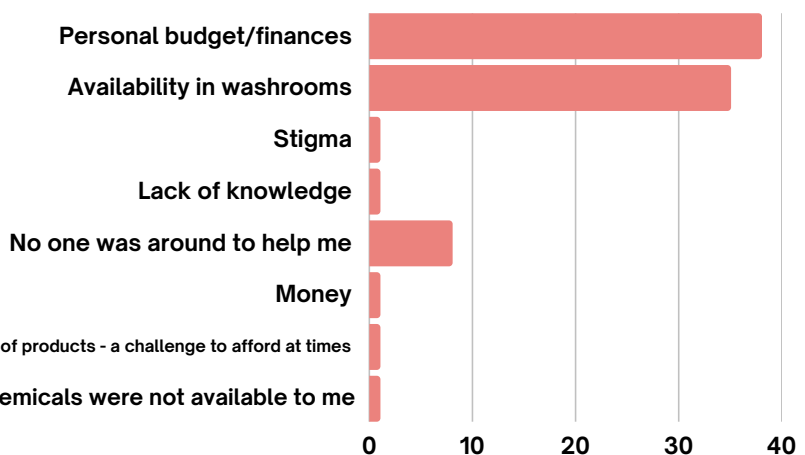


If yes, what barrier(s) prevented you from accessing them?



Heavy periods from a young age meant I needed a lot of products - a challenge to afford at times

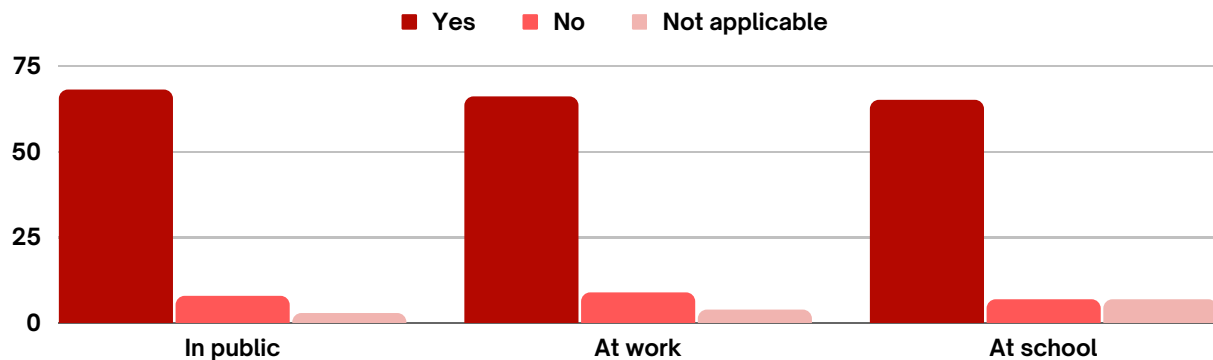
Products without fragrance and other chemicals were not available to me



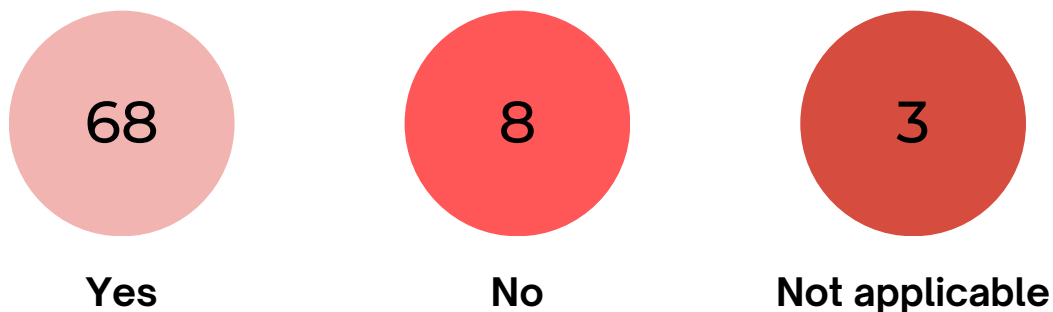
The primary barriers to accessing period products among participants are affordability and availability in public washrooms. The other main barrier preventing participants from accessing period products was not having someone around to help them. This could include not having a knowledgeable sales associate around to help inform their purchase, or even not having a friend/parent/guardian to help educate.

ACCESSIBILITY & AFFORDABILITY CONT'D

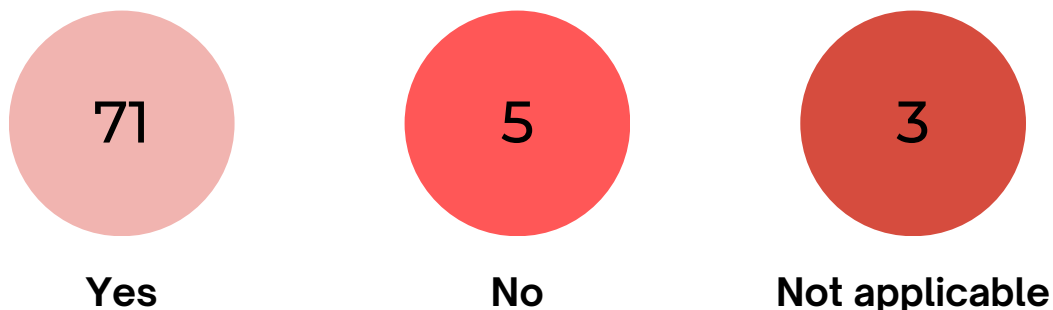
Have you ever gotten your period when you weren't prepared?



Have you ever bled through your underwear?



Have you ever used a substitute in place of a period product?
For example, toilet paper.

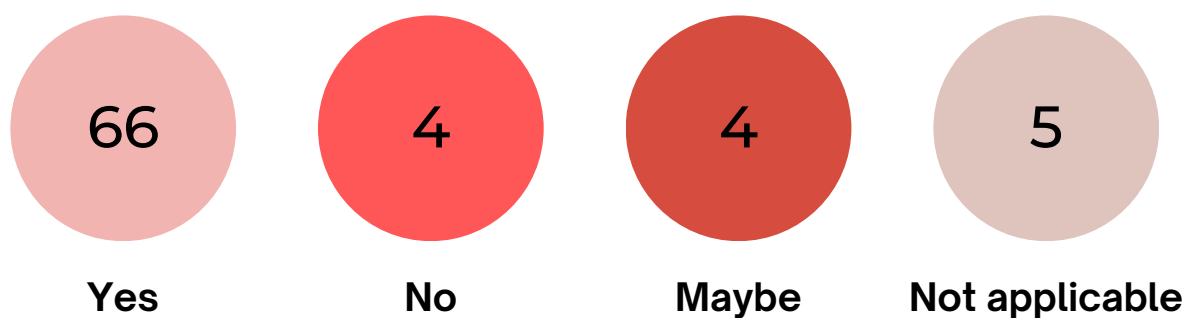


An average of 66 out of 79 participants said they'd experienced getting their period at a time when they were unprepared for it, including while in public, at work, or at school. 68 out of 79 participants had experienced bleeding through their underwear, with 71 out of 79 saying they had resorted to using a substitute like toilet paper when they did not have access to period products.

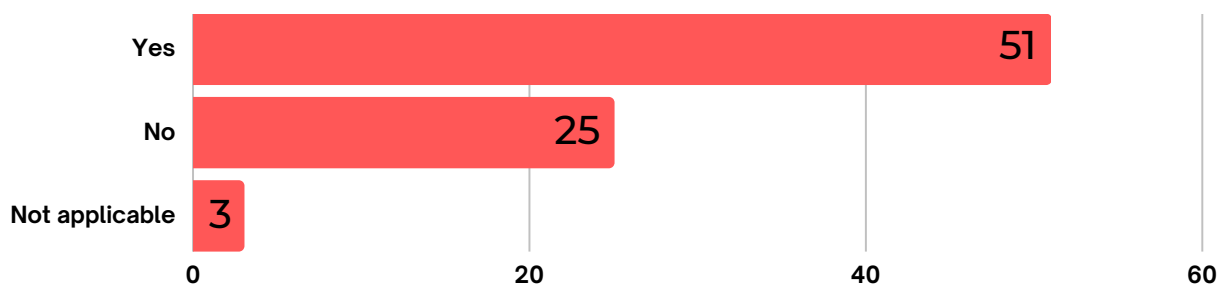
KEY THEME: STIGMA AND NORMALIZATION

The survey asked participants to comment on their experiences with stigma and normalization of menstruation and menstrual hygiene products. 83% of participants said they would feel comfortable using free period products that were available to them in public spaces, workplaces, and schools.

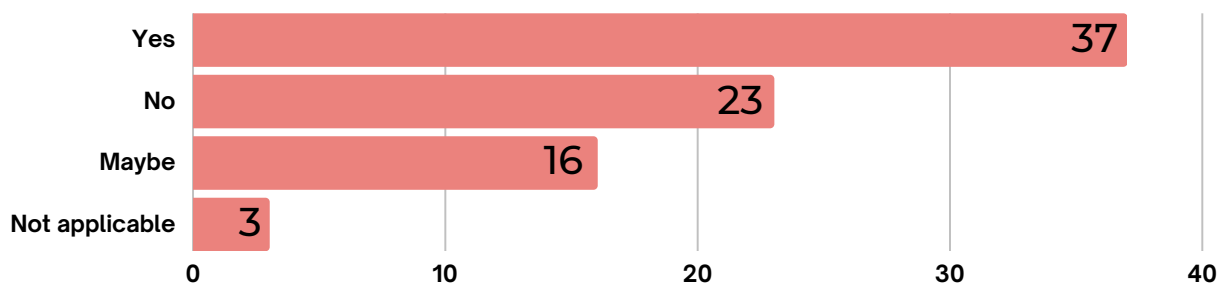
Would you feel comfortable using period products available for free in public/at work/at school?



Have you ever had to miss work/school/an opportunity because of your period?



Have you ever felt ashamed about your period?

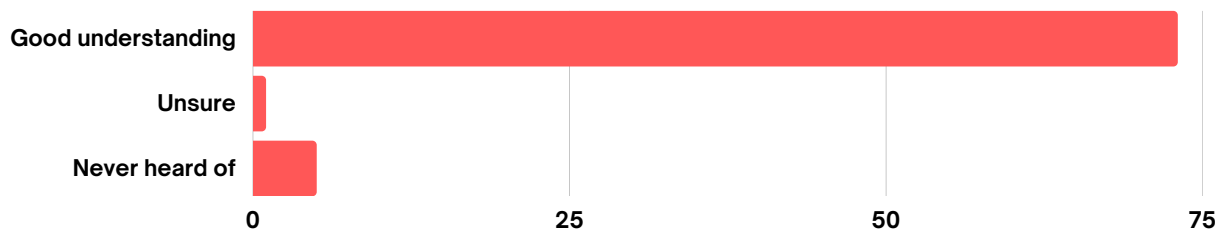


64% of participants said they have experienced having to miss work, school, or other opportunities due to their period. While 31% said they had never experienced this. 47% of participants said they have experienced feeling ashamed about their period, and 20% said they might have experienced this.

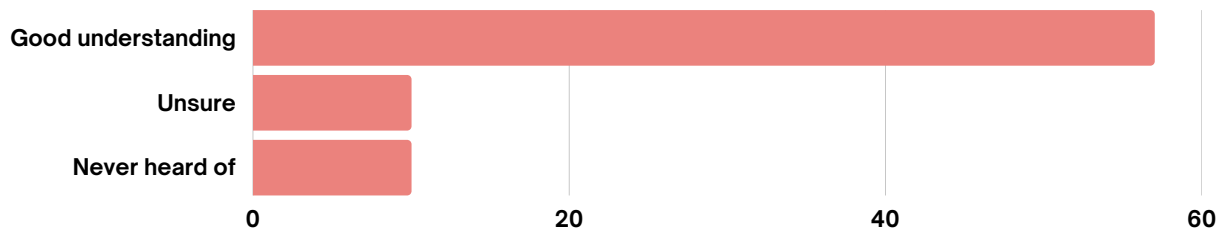
KEY THEME: PERIOD POVERTY & MENSTRUAL EQUITY

From the right to access tampons and pads to the freedom to take time off to manage menstrual cramps, menstrual equity is a growing movement that seeks to recognize the importance of menstrual health and to create an equitable society for people who menstruate. It works to ensure that people who have periods have the same opportunities as those who don't, and it's what period poverty is and how we can achieve menstrual equity in our community.

What, if any, is your understanding of the term 'period poverty'?



What, if any, is your understanding of the term 'menstrual equity'?



92% of participants had a good understanding of what period poverty is and the importance of making period products accessible and affordable.
6.3% had never heard of the term 'period poverty'.

72% of participants had a good understanding of what menstrual equity is.
15.8% of participants had either never heard of the term 'menstrual equity' or they did not know what it meant.



PERIOD POVERTY & MENSTRUAL EQUITY CONT'D

Have you ever seen free period products in a washroom?
If so, where?

School



17

Work



32

Library



11

Rec centre



15

Store



8

Public building



10

Pool



4

Train station/Airport



3

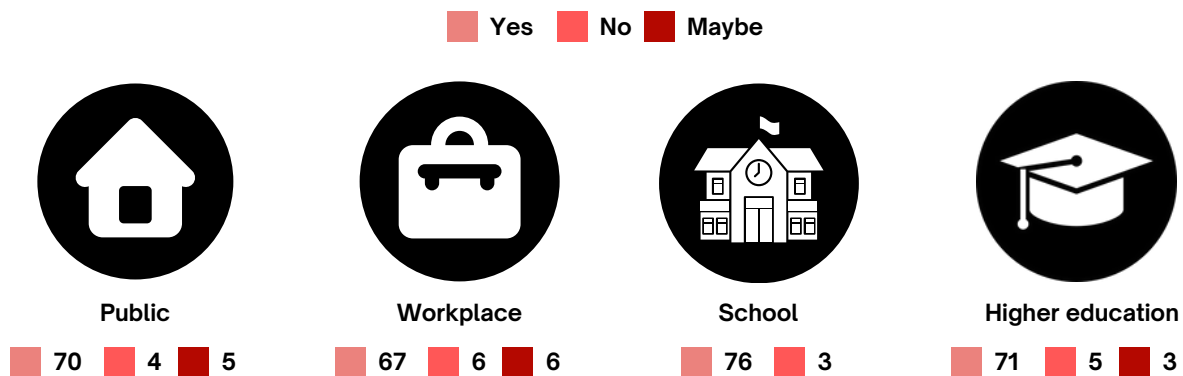
Have not seen this



7

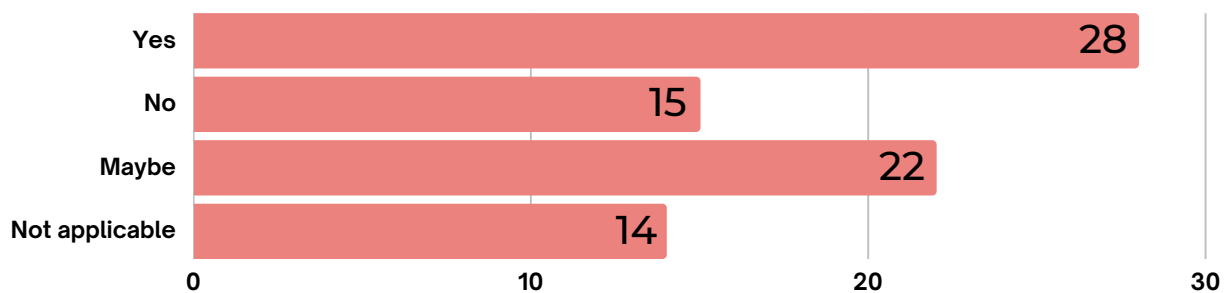
PERIOD POVERTY & MENSTRUAL EQUITY CONT'D

Do you think that these washroom locations should provide access to free period products?



Majority of participants agree that public washrooms such as municipal or government buildings, workplaces, and schools including colleges and universities should provide access to free period products.

Would you be more likely to frequent an establishment if they provided access to free period products?



35% of participants said they'd be more likely to frequent establishments that provided access to free period products, while 27% said they might be more likely.

Some participants also said that they would feel proud of establishments that provided access to free period products, noting that this would make them feel seen and valued. Participants also said they feel that establishments that provide access to free period products are helping to normalize menstruation and remove some of the secrecy and stigmas those who menstruate sometimes feel about their periods, saying these efforts would be reassuring to them.

CONCLUSION

KEY FINDINGS

92%

Of participants have a good understanding of what period poverty is.

72%

Of participants have a good understanding of what menstrual equity is.

47%

Of participants have experienced struggles with accessibility and affordability of period products.

Based on the results from this community survey, we can see that affordability and accessibility of period products remain prevalent for a large number of Northumberland County residents, 47% of participants saying they have experienced an inability to access or afford menstruation products at times when they were needed.

68 out of 79 participants had experienced bleeding through their underwear, with 71 out of 79 saying they had resorted to using a substitute like toilet paper when they did not have access to period products. This indicates an obvious need for free period products to be available in public, work, and school washrooms so that those who menstruate have access to the products when they need them.

64% of participants said they have experienced having to miss work, school, or other opportunities due to their period. This indicates just how important menstrual equity is so that those who have a period have access to the same opportunities as those without.

When participants were asked if they had ever seen free period products in a washroom, the most common answer was at a workplace, with 32 participants saying this. 17 people had seen free period products available at schools, and 15 people had seen them at recreation centres. There is a need for additional public spaces to provide access to free period products such as public buildings, pools, and train stations/airports.

To learn more visit:

- www.mynuw.org/period-promise-northumberland/
- www.mynuw.org
- www.thrivenorthumberland.com