

How to Table

With Reusable Menstrual Products

Tabling is one of the best ways to educate your peers about reusable menstrual products, because they are a way for group members to engage with a large number of peers casually and quickly, who might not have been reached otherwise. They also can be a good way to distribute products. First, you'll want to designate one or a few tabling leaders. These should be people who are already very knowledgeable about reusable products, though it is important to practice explanations, intentional language, and answering frequently asked questions. It will be their responsibility to train and encourage people who are less experienced.

Once you've reserved a time and location for the tabling session(s), start spreading the word! This can be through social media posts, email lists of other orgs, posters around campus or in bathrooms (don't forget about gender neutral and men's bathrooms), word of mouth, chalking, announcements at other org meetings, a school newspaper, a school calendar, or other methods specific to your campus. The tone and inclusiveness of the outreach will influence who feels comfortable to come up to the table. If it's too peppy, too feminine, or too environmentally focused, for example, many people will not feel welcome or interested. Also, be mindful of the timing and location of the tabling, to make sure that your event is as accessible as possible. As much as possible, make your tabling engagement flexible to people's comfort levels - offer ways to be very interactive, but make sure that folks who might not be comfortable with that have other options to learn, perhaps by watching a video on a laptop, or by taking an educational pamphlet.

You can take tabling in a lot of different directions! The more people that learn about reusable options, the better! But remember, the goal is to provide products, education, and resources to people who want them, not to convince people to buy something they don't want to use. Even if someone doesn't seem interested in trying one out, that's one more person on campus who knows what's out there!

What tone, approach, and reputation do you want your initiative to have? The way the table is set up and the tablers' body language are very influential. We recommend a display that is gender neutral, representative of all the benefits, and has plenty of samples and diagrams to interact with. Snacks, a bake sale, a raffle, or *useful* free giveaways (like pads and tampons, variety of condoms, lube, mini bars of soap, DIY menstrual cycle tracking bead bracelets, menstrual product coupons, reusable bags) always attract more attention!

Explaining

Tablers should pick up on how the student is feeling and how personalized they want information to be, and engage accordingly. Some people are not peppy about their periods!

Some people will be very hesitant or skeptical. It's a good rule of thumb to encourage people to ask you questions, instead of you asking them questions about their bodies or menstrual habits. It's best to phrase things generally like "This size cup is great for people with a lower cervix" instead of "Do you know how high your cervix is?" unless they ask for personal recommendations. Similarly, good intro questions might be "Have you heard about reusable menstrual products?" or "Would you like to learn about menstrual cups?" instead of something personal.

Offering Products

If someone is interested in what options you are offering, make sure to describe each one, and what makes them different. If you have certain products you recommend to beginners, mention that. Ideally, let them feel all the options in their hands, and compare them side by side. If they express interest in getting something, ask if they'd like any tips. Many people have no idea where to begin! You can ask what qualities they are looking for, and if there is anything they know won't work well for them. For example, if they want something that is easy to clean, or something that will be okay for a heavy flow, or if they don't want an internal product. Once you've narrowed it down to a suitable option that they feel good about, be sure to give them the rundown of how to use it, properly care for it, and any potential troubleshooting tips. (If there isn't anything that seems like a good fit for them, perhaps give them some suggestions that they could buy on their own from other brands.) Ask them if they have any other questions, and make sure they know who to contact if questions come up later. It's a great idea to create a google survey or Excel sheet to track people's contact info and what product they got, so you can follow up with them later about it.

Communicating the Value

Especially if you are able to give out the products for a very cheap price or free - it is so important to still communicate how valuable it is. This will encourage people to stick with it even through a difficult learning curve. If they feel like it is a freebie and has little value, it is a lot easier to just give up, lose it, or throw it away. Additionally, if you are giving them out for sliding scale, communicating the true value, the amount of money they will save in the long run, and the 10 years of use is vital, because it will ensure that people are really paying as much as they can contribute, which pays it forward to others. You can also tell people how much the initiative paid for each one, how much you need to raise to maintain the financial feasibility, or what the retail price would be if they bought it themselves.