



Premenstrual dysphoric disorder PMDD

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[Lisa Higgins](#) 21 Mar 2024

Guiding individuals through a journey of self-discovery and empowerment in relation to their menstrual cycles.

As a Menstruality coach my primary focus is on guiding individuals through a journey of self-discovery and empowerment in relation to their menstrual cycles. At the heart of my work is the belief that the menstrual cycle is not just a biological process but a profound aspect of our emotional growth and evolution as women.

A former PMDD sufferer for just under a decade, I discovered Menstruality in 2019 when I was looking for an alternative to antidepressants (of which I had taken for 8 years) to treat PMDD. Educating myself about my cycle in this way and making the appropriate changes to my life was enough to put my own PMDD symptoms into remission.

Astounded by my own results, I trained with the Red School on their Menstruality Leadership Programme in 2020 and now work with women and people assigned female at birth to help connect the physical, emotional, and spiritual aspects of the menstrual cycle, working towards a more positive and harmonious relationship with this natural rhythm. Through a process of online learning and 1:1 support, patients learn how to navigate their cycles and reduce symptoms, understand their own inner architecture and make practical, long-lasting changes to their lives.

In my clinical practice I have seen women find relief from severe PMS or PMDD by practicing menstrual cycle awareness. The figures estimate 25 per cent of menstruating women have moderate or severe PMS, with 5-8 per cent of all menstruating women diagnosed with PMDD. Symptoms begin in the luteal phase of the menstrual cycle and can vary from patient to patient but include mood changes, anxiety, self-harm and suicidal thoughts. Usually, these symptoms subside once menstruation starts.

I have witnessed first-hand the positive transformation that occurs when women learn how to use menstrual maps and inner season charts to make lifestyle changes that sync with their cyclical nature. We do this by recognising that it is not just about treating the luteal phase where PMS and PMDD symptoms typically present but looking at each phase separately and as a whole. For example, how a woman spends her menstruation can have a knock-on effect to the rest of the cycle; notably detrimental if there has been no physical rest or emotional release for her during this time.

This aim of achieving balance throughout the whole menstrual cycle is aligned with traditional Chinese medicine principles. Menstruality was developed by Alexandra Pope and Sjanie Hugo Wurlitzer and has helped hundreds of thousands of women across the world ease their menstrual suffering. It is easy to grasp, accessible and the missing piece of the puzzle for menstrual mental health.

I believe the reason Menstruality is so powerful for treating PMDD is because it goes deeper into the roots of the premenstrual phase of the menstrual cycle. It is part of a woman's monthly experience that's been shrouded in shame and mocked by society (in similar vein to menopause) for centuries. Yes, this phase can have huge challenges and devastating symptoms but it is also a powerful, useful and vital part of a menstruating woman's experience. There is more to this than sensitivity. A woman at her wildest is communicating powerfully and it is time we listen.

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Lisa Higgins

PMS and PMDD Practitioner

As a menstrual health coach trained by Red School in 2020, I specialise in teaching women how to alleviate PMS and PMDD symptoms through menstrual cycle awareness, working online and with organisations via social prescribing. I believe it is critical to integrate holistic menstrual health education into nursing and healthcare practices to enhance patient care and wellbeing.



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