



Body Literacy for LGBTQ+ Menstruators


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Summary

- Defining Body Literacy
 - Biomarkers that can be tracked through menstrual cycle charting
 - Advantages to menstruators of monitoring their menstrual and ovarian cycles
 - Unique needs of menstruators in the LGBTQ+ community
- 



Cycle Charting

- Fertility Awareness Methods
 - Natural Family Planning Methods
 - Calendar / Rhythm Methods
 - Apps
- 



Body Literacy

“Body literacy is acquired by learning to observe, chart and interpret our menstrual cycle events. This life skill helps us understand how our sexual, reproductive and general health and well-being are connected to our menstrual cycles. Body literacy supports, if not compels, our fully informed participation in health-care decision making.”¹


- Laura Wershler

1. <http://www.menstruationresearch.org/2012/06/28/bodyliteracy-a-hashtag-a-title-a-meme/>



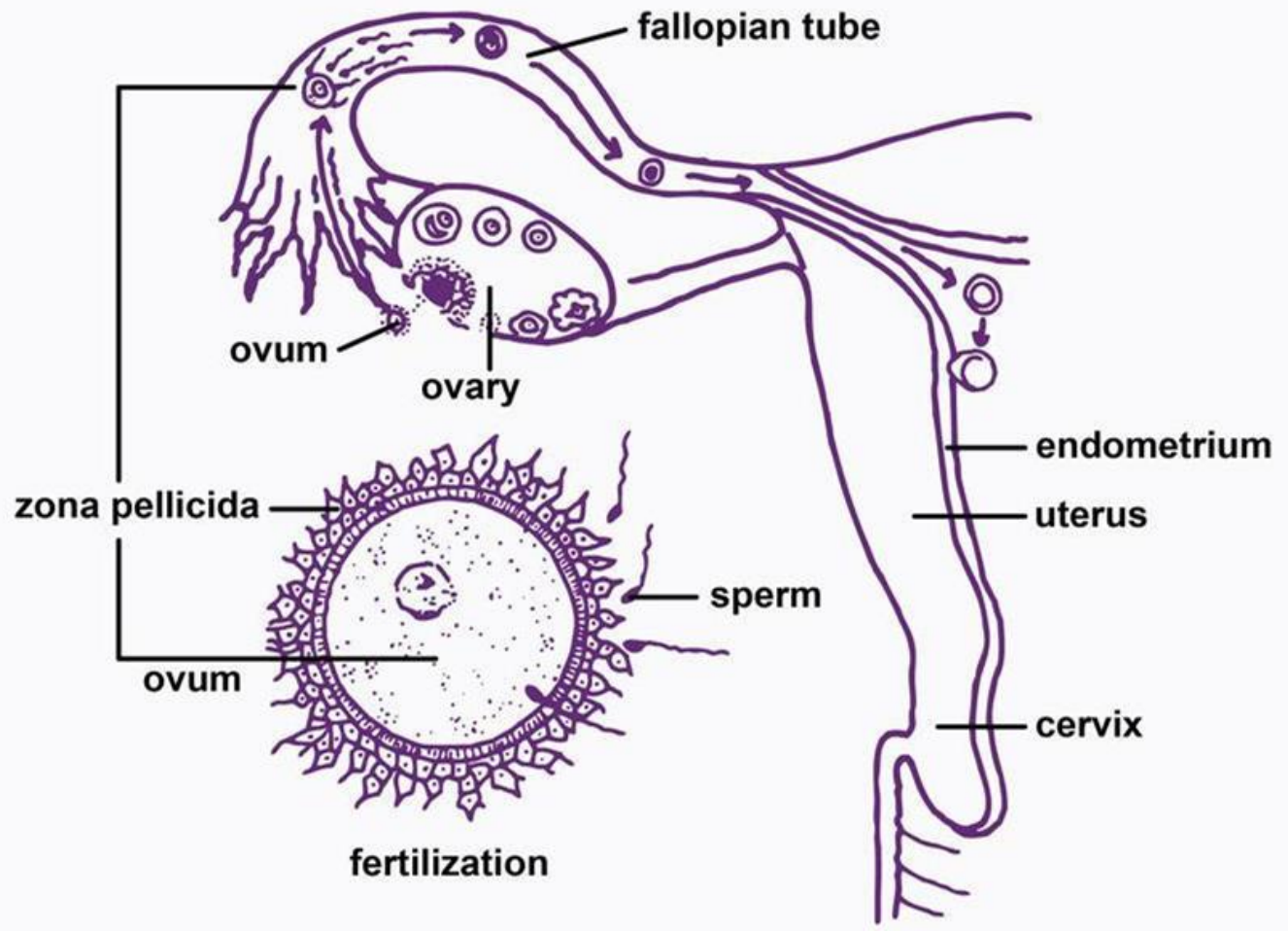


Biomarkers of fertility

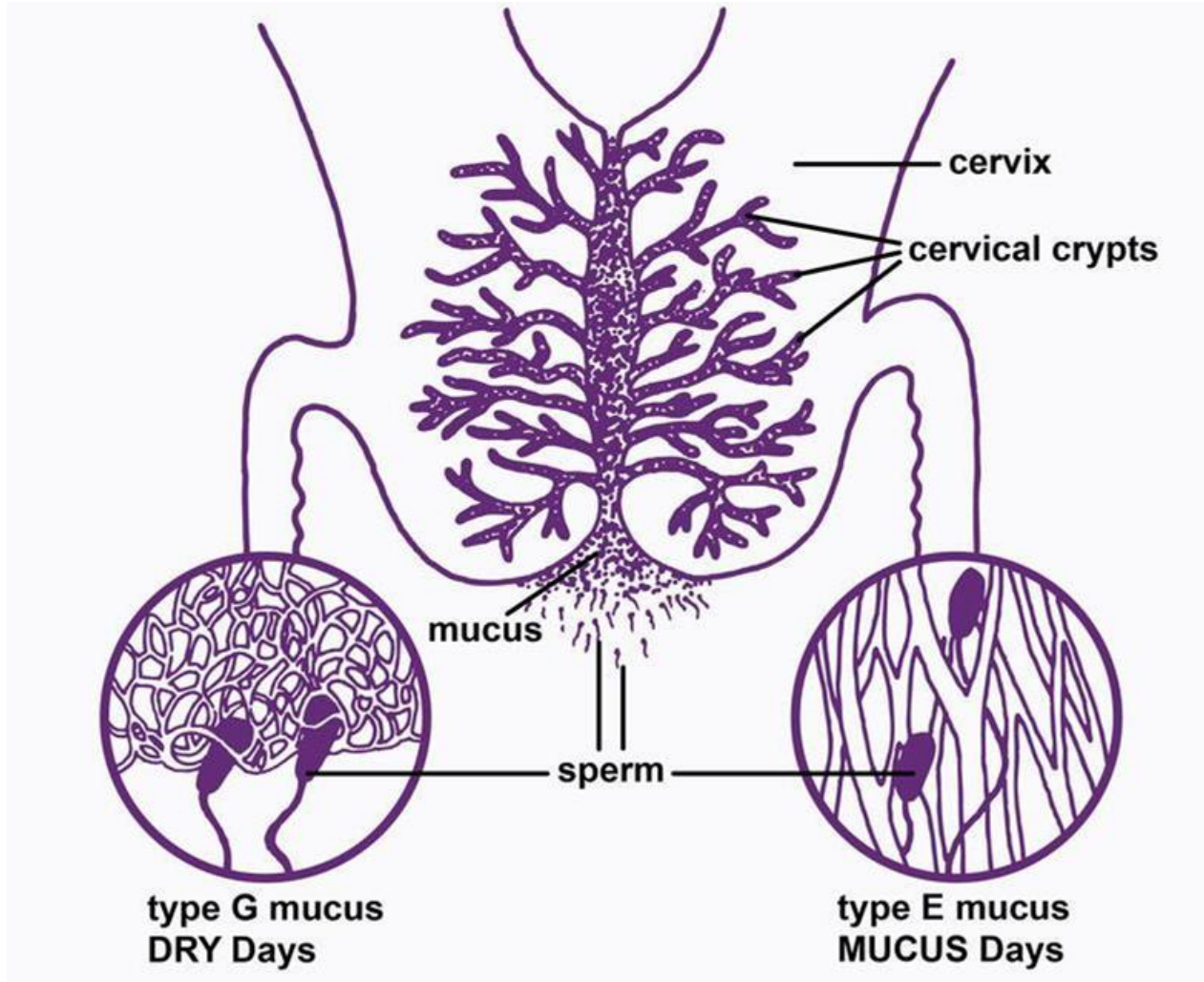
- Cervical mucus
 - Basal body temperature
 - Cervical changes
 - Ovulatory sensations
 - Premenstrual symptoms
 - Menstrual symptoms
- 

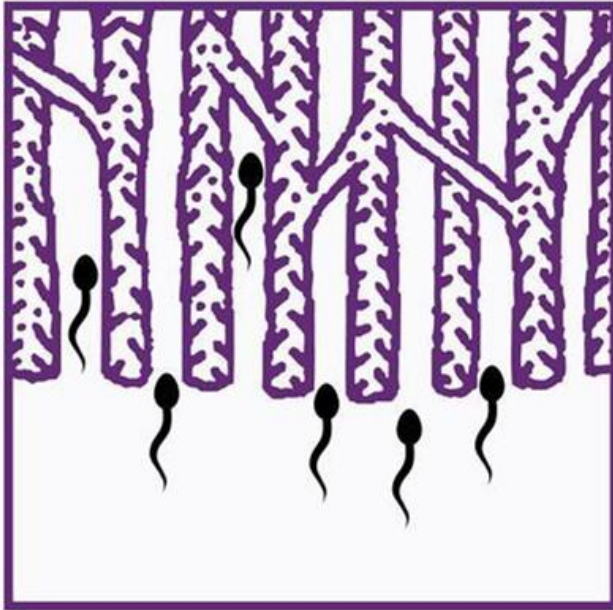


The Biology of Cycle Charting

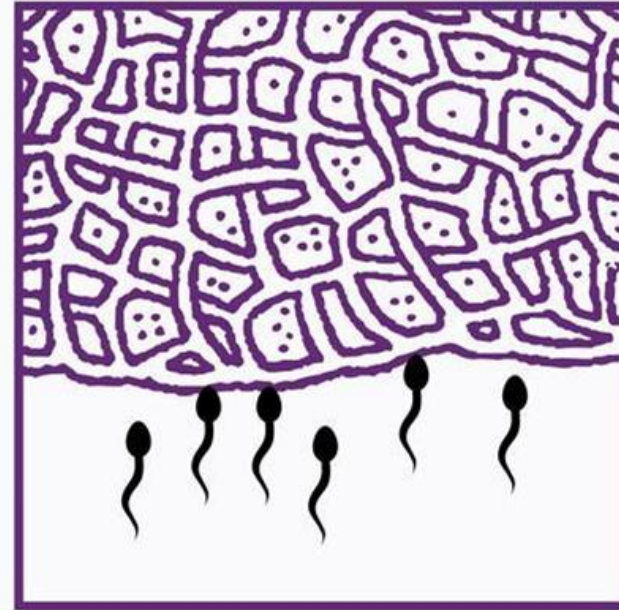


Nature's Gate





Sperm with mucus



Sperm without mucus

Sperm need mucus to survive.

Sperm without mucus die within minutes.

Sperm with mucus lives 3-5 days.

Peak Mucus

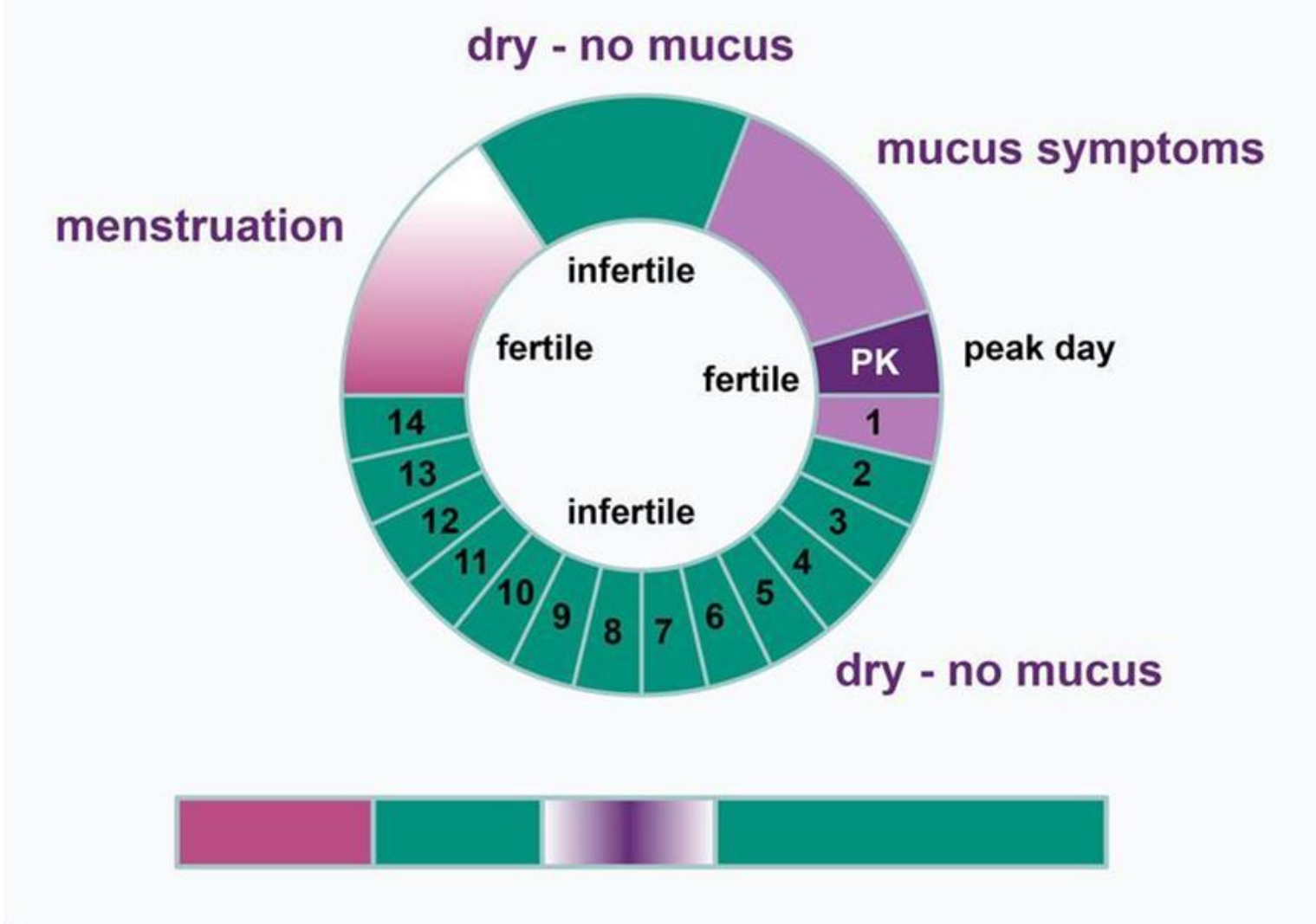
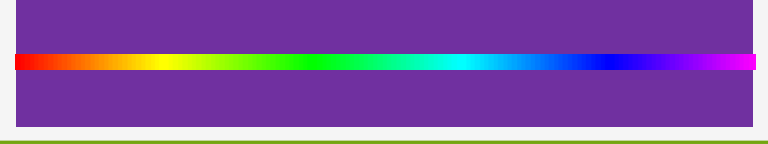
sensation of lubrication, (finger test $\frac{1}{2}$ to $\frac{3}{4}$ inch crystal clear mucus)



Non-Peak Mucus


(dry or smooth sensation, finger-test $\frac{1}{4}$ inch or less sticky, pasty, cloudy mucus)








Myths and Facts

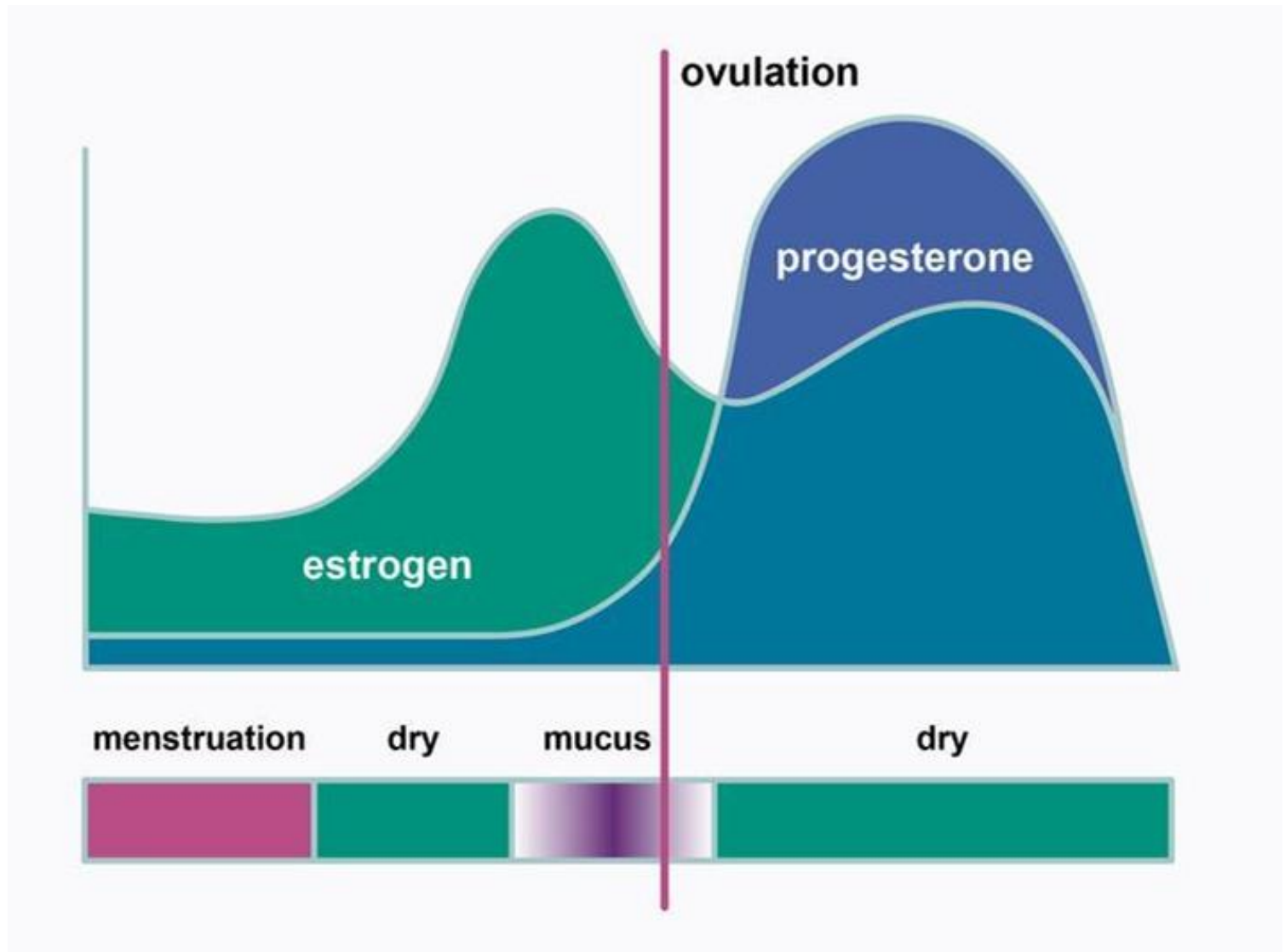
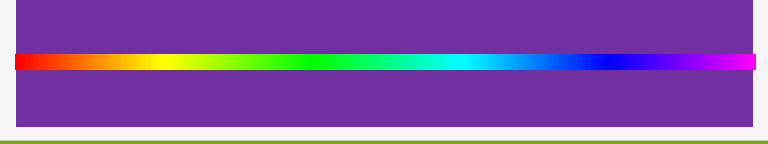
- Ovulation occurs...
 - The egg lives only...
 - Sperm can survive for...
 - The fertile window is...
- 



Myths and Facts

- Ovulation occurs on only one day per cycle
 - The egg lives only 12-24 hours if not fertilized
 - Sperm can survive for 3-5 days in the cervical crypts only if cervical mucus is present
 - The fertile window is about 6-9 days per cycle.
- 








Advantages of cycle charting




Cycle charting allows you to:

- Identify the fertile window
 - Recognize the hormonal shifts of the menstrual cycle
 - Make lifestyle decisions based on this information
- 




Drug-free, reliable birth control

- Avoid synthetic hormones
 - Avoid intercourse or use barrier methods during the fertile window
 - Detect early signs of implantation and pregnancy
- 




Plan for pregnancy

- Identify ovulation for optimal timing of intercourse or insemination
 - Pinpoint timing of conception
 - Identify fertility issues
 - Limit medical interventions
- 




Challenge menstrual taboos

- Misogyny
 - Ignorance
 - Menstrual shaming
 - Destigmatize the cycle
- 




Preventive health care

- Know what's normal for you
 - Detect infection or irregularities
 - The cycle chart as a diagnostic tool (STIs, cervical inflammation, endometriosis, PCOS, thyroid dysfunction, etc.)
 - Self-advocacy within the medical system
- 




The 5th Vital Sign

- Regular menstruation and ovulation are signs of health
 - Cycles are about more than fertility
 - Bone density, mental health, cardiovascular health
 - Healthy old age
- 




Emotional literacy

- Moods fluctuate with the menstrual cycle
 - Energy fluctuates with the menstrual cycle
 - Premenstrual superpowers
 - Adjust your expectations
- 




Empowered sexuality

- Communication with your partners
 - Awareness of cyclical libido fluctuations
 - More authentic sexual expression
- 




Athletic performance

- Hormones affect stamina, appetite, and muscle laxity
 - Avoid injury
 - Synchronize peak performance with hormone cycles
 - Vocal chords
- 




Lifestyle design

- Under what conditions do you thrive?
 - Assess food, stress, relationships
 - See the impact of your work and other lifestyle choices
- 




Monitor a gender transition

- Track symptoms from HRT
 - Be aware of cyclical dysphoria
 - Sort out what dose is optimal for your body
- 



For trans women

- Chart hormonal fluctuations in the body
 - Examples: Headaches, bloating, mood changes, muscle cramps, libido
 - Monitor your dose of HRT to see what makes you feel optimal
- 



**Unique needs
of LGBTQ+
menstruators**




Challenges

- The “body literacy gap”
 - Cis hetero normativity
 - Gendered language around the menstrual cycle or body parts
- 

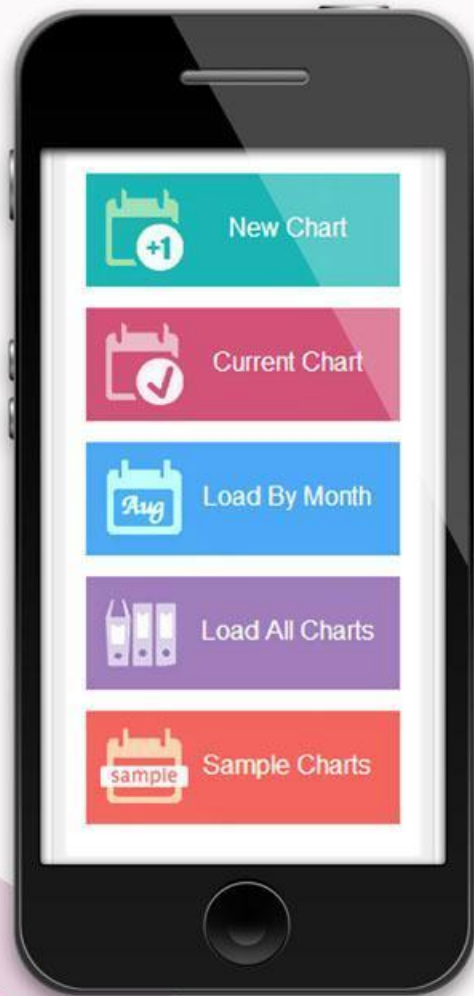


Challenges

- Receiving appropriately sensitive care from health professionals
 - Respect for preferred names, pronouns, and gender presentation
 - Having to educate care providers
 - Intersectional nature of marginalization affects access to care
- 



Justisse Method Charting App



Available for PC, smartphones and tablets.



Convenient way to chart from anywhere at anytime.



The only charting app based on the Justisse Method.



www.justisse-charting-app.com



Justisse Healthworks *for Women*

Fertility Awareness Education, Natural Birth Control
& Holistic Reproductive Health



References

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