



Poverty Shame

HOW LACK OF ACCESS TO WATER
AND SANITATION IMPACTS OUR
MINDS

MARGINS

Push Boundaries

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This booklet is launched in observance of World Water and Sanitation Day which takes place annually on 22 March. It is our hope that every person gains access to running water and sanitation because every person has the right to dignity. Many people in South Africa still lack access to running water and sanitation and this impacts them negatively. In this booklet we will look at the impact of poverty shame.

What is poverty shame? Poverty shame is feeling ashamed because you do not have access to water and sanitation. When you cannot use a toilet or running water to clean yourself, you lose your dignity. This has an impact on the mind. It causes stress and anxiety.





Lack of access to water and sanitation places us at risk of getting illnesses and prevents us from being sick in a safe environment. People have to make their way to public latrines in the middle of the night which places them at risk of violence, sexual assault, or ridicule by others. All of these things cause poverty shame.

Not having access to a toilet, running water, or a bathroom to take a shower causes feelings of inferiority. When we cannot take a wash regularly because of our circumstances, we feel bad about ourselves. We are not able to go into society with confidence and this impacts our chances of finding work, making friends, or participating in social life.





When we don't have water, we cannot wash our clothes, clean our dishes, or grow food.

This affects our daily lives. It causes frustration and we feel hopeless and helpless. We neglect ourselves because we have no other choice and society judges us. All of these things cause poverty shame and poverty shame causes us to isolate ourselves from society.

LET'S TALK!

- Do you have access to running water or a toilet?
- For those who do not have access, how does this impact your life?
- Have you experienced poverty shame?
- Share some of your personal experiences?





- Do you feel judged by society?
- How does it make you feel?
- Do you feel isolated?
- Do you understand that you don't have access because of social injustice?
- Do you understand that you should not feel shame for circumstances that are out of your control?
- What are some of the negative things that happen when you feel poverty shame?

- Do you understand why it is important not to feel poverty shame?
- How do you plan to overcome poverty shame?





What is your wish this International Water and Sanitation Day?

CONTACT ; MARGINS



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