

Amanda, 42

Counsellor turned advocate – from decades of menstrual struggles to championing natural, accessible support, **CANBERRA**

Amanda, 42, Canberra, is a registered counsellor and Australia's only counsellor specialising in premenstrual dysphoric disorder (PMDD)*.

Originally from Sydney, Amanda has spent years helping women take control of their menstrual health. But behind her professional expertise lies a very personal struggle.

For many years, Amanda endured debilitating period pain and other physical symptoms that disrupted her life. Despite multiple surgeries in search of an explanation, no clear cause was found. In February this year, she made the difficult decision to undergo a hysterectomy after her pain and PMDD symptoms became overwhelming. During the procedure, surgeons discovered extensive, previously undiagnosed endometriosis.**

"It was both devastating and enlightening," said Amanda.

"I'd been helping women find answers for years, but I couldn't get answers for myself."

Her experience with the medical system – and the broader lack of research and support for women's menstrual health – inspired her to dedicate her career to helping others navigate similar challenges.

Now, Amanda advocates for taking menstrual health seriously and exploring options supported by clinical evidence. Reflecting on her journey, she wishes she had known about newer non-hormonal options, such as *Hey Sister! Khapregesic*® – a plant-based product offering fast-acting, dual-action relief for period pain and premenstrual syndrome (PMS).³

This is Amanda's story.

Amanda first began experiencing severe period pain at just 11 years old. By age 17, she was experiencing PMDD episodes marked by intense mood changes, anxiety, and depression, without understanding why.

Despite the toll on her life, Amanda did not receive a formal diagnosis until her mid-thirties.

"I pushed for answers from eight different doctors. Each time I was dismissed – told the pain was normal or just hormones.

"It wasn't until I entered my symptoms into a medical diagnostic app that PMDD first came up," Amanda said.



"Eventually, I saw a specialist who confirmed the condition, and he was surprised it hadn't been identified earlier."

Amanda tried multiple treatments over the years, but nothing worked for her. Surgeries failed to detect endometriosis, and she was repeatedly prescribed painkillers and hormonal medications.

"I personally tried seven different types of birth control. They affected me badly because I'm sensitive to progesterone.

"For me, some caused severe mood changes. It was a difficult experience, and it took time to understand my own response," said Amanda.

After years of exhaustion and unsuccessful treatments, Amanda underwent a hysterectomy in February this year. It was during this procedure that extensive endometriosis, previously undiagnosed, was discovered.

"It's hard to explain the toll it takes – the pain, fatigue, and mental health struggles.

"In the week or so before my period, the cramps would wake me at night, and some days I couldn't even make it to work. At times, even sending a simple text felt impossible," Amanda said.

"The weeks you feel good are so amazing that you start questioning whether it was all in your head."

Amanda reflects on how stigma continues to prevent women from seeking answers.

"My patients have been dismissed by their families and their doctors. But there comes a point where desperation outweighs the stigma – you have to speak up.

"Now, it's all I talk about. I even keep a calendar tracking my patients' cycles," said Amanda.

Working with hundreds of women facing similar challenges, Amanda believes greater awareness and access to natural, evidence-based support are essential.

"I see so many women struggling with PMS and period pain, and I don't know a single one who hasn't been told it's just something they have to live with.

"Finding a natural product that may help support comfort can make a real difference. For women like me who are sensitive to hormones, mainstream options aren't always suitable," Amanda said.

While *Hey Sister! Khapregesic®* is not indicated for PMDD, Amanda appreciates that it is designed to support general physical comfort and wellbeing during menstruation.

"There need to be more options when it comes to managing PMS and period pain. Just because it's common doesn't mean women should be told to take painkillers and get on with it," said Amanda.

In her support groups, Amanda hears first-hand what women are trying and what helps them feel more comfortable.

"We're all looking for safe, natural options. The fact that *Hey Sister! Khapregesic®* is plant-based, hormone-free, and has research backing its ingredients makes it a product many women may be interested in trying," Amanda said.

To learn more about Hey Sister! Khapregesic® head here: www.heysister.com

To access the recent Khapregesic® clinical trial, click [here](#)

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Important information

- Hey Sister! Khapregesic® is an ARTG-listed medicine. *Khaya senegalensis* is the active ingredient in the Hey Sister! Khapregesic® range.
- Supported by a randomised, double-blind, placebo-controlled clinical trial published in the [International Journal of Women's Health](#) (July 2025), Khapregesic® demonstrated efficacy in alleviating mild-to-moderately-severe period pain and premenstrual syndrome (PMS) symptoms, including improvements in emotional wellbeing and reduced use of rescue medications.
- Traditionally used in Western herbal medicine to relieve mild menstrual symptoms such as period pain, bloating, and mood changes.
- Not approved for treatment of medical conditions like endometriosis, PCOS, adenomyosis, anxiety, or arthritis. If you have, or suspect you have any such conditions, speak to a qualified healthcare professional.
- This case study reflects one individual's experience; results may vary.
- Always read the label and follow the directions for use. If symptoms persist, talk to your health professional.

To coordinate an interview with Amanda, please contact:

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References

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2. Clinic M. Endometriosis 2025 [Available from: <https://www.mayoclinic.org/diseases-conditions/endometriosis/symptoms-causes/syc-20354656>].
3. Lopresti AL, et al. An Examination into the Safety and Efficacy of Khapregesic®, a *Khaya senegalensis* Preparation, on Women Experiencing Menstrual Pain and Menstrual Distress. *Int J Women's Health*. 2025;17:2025–2038.