Mother 17

Interviewer: OK so could you just start off by telling me a bit about yourself?

Participant: Um, I’m a 48 year old err full-time working wife of two girls erm I work in the health service. Is that enough?

Interviewer: What do you do in the health service?

Participant: I work in safe guarding so I work in safe guarding and me ntal capacity issues and those sorts of things

Interviewer: Smashing, that sounds like a great job. Erm so living at home, is it you, your husband and your two girls?

Participant: Yes my eldest is in-between home and university.

Interviewer: How old are your daughters?

My eldest is 20 coming up to 21 and my youngest is 15.

Interviewer: That's brilliant. What types of things do you do in your spare time?

As an individual I do things like gardening, I have an allotment, I go walking, I like socialising erm reading. As a family, we ike being out in the fresh air.

Interviewer: OK so we’re talking about your youngest daughter, could you start off by telling me a bit about when she first started her periods and what that was like erm and yeah just start from there if that’s OK?

Participant: Yeah she’s coming up to 16 now, she’ll be 16 in May. She didn’t actually start her periods until I suppose it would be about February last year so quite a late started but erm that’s probably similar to my eldest as well but both very, very slender, probably considered by some people to be underweight but slender active individuals who just started later you know and when she did start it was like a month and then nothing for quite a while which is not unusual but you have to have those convevrsations you know and, and it hasn’t really caused any concern or problem or, we’re quite open in terms of discussion and so on so she knew about what things to expect anyway, when you have an older sister I think you’ve got someone to talk these things through with if you don’t want to talk to your mum (laughs).

Interviewer: Definitely, so before she started her periods, did you have any chats with her to prepare her for all of the period-related things?

Participant: Yes, being from a nursing background myself, there’s never been erm coy or hidden about these sorts of things and we’ve always had conversations and always been very, very open anyway. I’ve been open about my own periods and so on and open with them so it’s never really been a necessary to have set littlke conversations about things, it’s always just been an open topic of knowledge you know in the normal conversations of family life.

Interviewer: And how about school, did she have sex ed at school?

Participant: Yeah, oh yes they do have those sorts of things and they have the usual sort of- when they were both younger, they have them in the primary school and they come home with the giggles and all the rest of it and the little leaflets and so on erm but I suppose in some ways, in terms of senior school, haven’t really had any need to have any further conversations about those kinds of things because they’re you know, she’s aware, she gets it, it’s not like she needs any additional advice or education on it.

Interviewer: Absolutely. How about thigns like accompanying symptoms with the periods so things like skin or mood, cramps…

Participant: Yeah, erm very little in the way of cramps. The usual adolescent acne but not a great deal. My two have been quite lucky in that they’ve only had a small amount really. Probably the main one for my youngest is you know just the moody, grumy stuff that comes periodically and the feeling, without lack luster and without energy sometimes but erm yeah, that could be for any number of things really. Coming up to exams as well as changes in adolescence so.. neither of them have been, they’ve been really lucky. Neither of them have been troubled with particularly heavy periods or pain or anything like that.

Interviewer: That’s good. So um, before she did start, did you talk to her about other things that might happen with her periods like that spots and moodiness and cramps…

Participant: Um, probably but I can’t remember having a you know, a set conversation. I think it’s more of an ongoing conversations that you have when you know… probably when it’s the time of the month but we have on-going conversations.

Interviewer: Does she talk to her sister?

Participant: Oh yes, I remember them having one particular conversation about the um, you know before your period starts sometimes you get quite a heavy discharge that’s white and it’s sort of like what’s all of that sort of thing so you know they had these quite funny conversations but it’s all about just being normal and not feeling uncomfortable to ask or say.

Interviewer: Since the start, how have they been?

Participant: Not greatly regular, I think they were still sort of… she had about 5 months and 6 months between the first one and not having one and then after that it’s just been um, not monthly but getting more regular now. In terms of knowing about that… Because she manages things privately, she’s almost 16, it’s you know you only know these things when you notice that the basket is full of odds and ends and sanitary protection.

Interviewer: Um, so since the break and she started having them more regularly, have they been the same or…

Participant: I don’t know, I wouldn’t know about how they’ve changed in that respect. Just because she manages herself privately now in that respect. I feel comfortable that if there was any concern, anything she needed to tell me about she would.

Interviewer: Um, so you mentioned about the moodiness, does that impact on her relationships with her sister or you and your husband at all?

Participant: Erm she, she’s got an excellent relationship with her sister. They seem to just be rather mad with each other erm but it’s perfectly normal to have the ups and downs or spats and fights and annoyance and so on but it never lasts very long and certainly if there’s ever any need to have a conversation that’s checking, not usually of her behaviour but sometimes her verbal, if there’s a conversation needed on that it’s, there can be an indignance about it but you know, things don’t last very long erm. She, it’s just you know all of us can get more stroppy can’t we.

Interviewer: OK so around that time as well does that ever make you feel more stressed out?

Particoipant: I think it always does if you’re having a bit of family stress and family tensions of course it does but not in that I would say it causes stress within a relationship, I think these are completely normal stresses rather than anything to be of concern.

Interviewer: Yeah and just wondering, when you are stressed out, do you have a good support network for you?

Participant: Erm not, not in that respect of my own, my, erm, I’m coming up to the menopause in terms of changes in my own periods and sometimes I can erm have a, those moments of hot flushes and very, very heavy periods and you know, you just keep it to yourself in that respect. He’ll (husband) probably say to me ‘don’t have a glass of wine this weekend because you know what it does when you have a glass of red wine’ and it does, red wine will give me, I can have a glass of it and be on my period and have an absolutely awful hangover. Other times you can have half a bottle and it’s absolutely fine.

Interviewer: So what type of things do you do to make yourself feel better?

Probably just go to bed early. I do like things like a bath and I go to bed early and erm it’s erm, when things are very heavy for me… I don’t want to go out either. You just want to snuggle down and go to bed early really.

Interviewer: Absolutely, going back a bit, with your daughter- she talks to you and her sister…

Participant: I don't think she talks to her dad about it, you know he… he’s a nurse as well so he does understand. Yeah, that shouldn’t really make a difference but it’s almost like stereotypes isn’t it, he’s not a brick layer (laughs), not that brick layers wouldn’t but you know what I mean. He’s in a house with three women-girls so he has to have some knowledge of these things.

Interviewer: Erm, what about things like Christmases or birthdays…

Not really no, they’ve always been fine, things like Christmases and birthdays are always fine.