Participant 17

Duration: 35.55

Mum of dysmenorrheic girl.

Interviewer: OK could you start off by telling me about yourself?

Participant: Yes I’m (name), I’m 52, I will be I’m 51 (laughs) erm I, you want to know about work and things like that, is that the kind of thing you want to know about?

Interviewer: Yeah

Participant: I’m married I’ve got 2 children, 2 girls, 11 and 14, erm lived in (location), came to (location) in 97, worked in hotel management, errr for since 1990, lived in (location) err worked in (location) before that for about 4 years in hotels erm and now I’m in (location) working as a teaching assistant and mum.

Interviewer: OK thank you so who, who lives at home with you?

Participant: Erm my husband and my 2 daughters, one daughter’s 11 and my other daughter’s 14.

Interviewer: OK and how about things you do in your spare time?

Participant: A lot of my time is spent transporting children around various events and clubs and things that they do um, we like doing, we do a lot of things as a family erm, we like going on holiday we like erm going ouot to eat erm I like socialising with friends when I can, erm so through work I’ve met quite a lot of new people now down here and it’s great- I like going to the theatre erm especially ballet um so that’s kind of what we do. Is that alright?

Interviewer: Yeah of course. OK so if it’s OK, are we talking about your eldest daughter?

Participant: Yes

Interviewer: OK so could we talk a bit about your daughters period so when did they start and how did she tell you, that type of thing.

Participant: OK um, they started in, November 2013 I think it was, um and she realised herself one morning I just remember getting the ‘mum!’ and I thought oh OK and that was it really and err I remember that day, we were, we were prepared beforehand and I had, I think because, I had started my periods quite late as a child but I knew that (daughter) took after, she, she was more like my husbands side of the family so I had asked my sister in law, really I thought (daughter) might follow more in her footsteps rather than mine and erm I think (sister-in-law) said she was about 13 or so when she started so I thought (daughter) would possibly be a bit more like her, she was developing earlier and so anyway that day I remember, so it was a Friday and err I just remember she was quite upset about it obviously, I think it’s quite a scary thing when it happens for the first time so she stayed off school but we’d talked about it beforehand. She’d had information at school about it and also my sister has also got a daughter the same age as (daughter) so we had talked about it quite a lot and we had bought, (sister) had bought this book all about changes to your body and it’s quite child friendly and that sort of thing so I bought one for (daughter) and just said ‘just have a look at it if you want to’ so she kind of knew what to expect and I think a few of her friends had started so I think they discuss that type of thing sometimes so it wasn’t altogether oh gosh what’s happening but I think when it happens it’s quite scary so um.

Interviewer: Even if you’re prepared..

Participant: No matter how much you’re prepared I think it’s still quite scary. Anyway so that first day she stayed off school and I think she sat on the coach all day (laughs) and didn’t move.

Interviewer: Did she, did she get any sort of period related pain or other symptoms?

Participant: I think, she don’t have any other symptoms as far as I’m aware erm I think she had the pain, she, I seem to remember she had this, and again that’s something that you can’t really explain to a child until it actually happens so of course that was new to her and so, and I think just the whole experience of it just scared her and as I say, she sat on the coach and I remember coming back from school and the next day I remember again, and I think you have to be quite firm and I know it’s really scary and I felt so sorry for her cause you do, you don’t want to see your child in pain and you don’t want her to be going through something that she’s frightened about but on the other hand I had to kind of say you know this is gonna happen and you’ve kind of gotta get used to it so I think on, I think it was the next day, I was taking my other daughter to ballet, I said oh come on come out, we’ll go have a coffee somewhere and, and so she walked around a bit and kind of got used to the fact that this was gonna happen so, and then really after that she kind of the next few days were fine and then I think the next time she didn't have one 4 weeks later, I think it was possibly a couple of months before she had another one and I remember her being upset again but I remember saying and I think it was a school day and I think it’s also- school toilets are horrible and she just the thought of having to do that kind dof thing at school and change and that, but I think I was quite firm and I said you know, you’re not ill you need to, you’ve got to really try and she was ‘but I don’t want to’ and I remember saying to her when she came home from school and said ‘I’m really glad you made me go to school mum cause I understand now’ and I remember her saying that to me erm and from then on really she’s, she’s kind of managed it herself erm you know so….

Interviewer: So it’s just those first couple of times…

Participant: It was the first couple of times that yes. Erm and you know but I think after that it was kind of knew what to expect and, and in fact I don’t always know when she’s got it now you know, but yeah so it’s she, she’s really not been too bad since then. Although she has told me you know that there has been times in the night where she’s woken up and that’s it cause when I was her age and I had them, I was terrible, you know the pain so you know I was kind of half expecting that with (daughter), I mean I remember waking in the night and being in agony and the same through the day but I think she, she seems to manage alright, she does her ballet and PE and things so, so yeah.

Interviewer: OK so do you know if she experiences cramps or discomfort every, with every time she’s on her period?

Participant: I think she does yeah, I think she does yeah, she doesn’t talk, she doesn’t really tell me every time she’s having a period I mean I usually know, she would tell me it’s not that she doesn’t want to but she just gets on with it really but um, but yes I think she does um but she, there have been times where, in fact I think it was eve just last time that it was really quite bad but she’d also been off school that week not well and I wasn’t sure whether the not being well and then her period coming was all kind of linked in to it um but she did have, she was in quite a bit of pain but no so that she was crying you know or doubled up in pain erm but she did say that, that’s, that’s just how it goes, she knows that, she knows that, that pain is what it is but I think sometimes it’s worse but it’s not at the extent to which she has to tell me because she feels ill with it you know, I mean there was one day where she said oh last night I woke in the night and I felt quite sick and you know and then I realised what it was because it… but that’s as much really as…. So yeah she kind of gets on, I don’t know if this is being really helpful to you (laughs)

Interviewer: No, it is, it is, um and how about her dad, does she talk to her dad about it?

Participant: Um, I don’t think so but I think she would if she had to you know, it was funny because the first time that she had it and we heard her calling, (husband) actually, it was first thing in the morning, (husband) said as soon as she shouted through why she was calling you and he didn’t know because he wasn’t with her but he said I could just tell from the way she was calling you, that might be what it is um so, I don’t know that she would, she possibly wouldn’t discuss, intimately, you know but she would talk about it I think you know she’s quite open with it you know and they talk about things after school and that sort of thing but she’s more likely to talk to me if she would, if she had any problems with it, she would talk to me I would think.

Interviewer: OK and how about her sister or friends or anyone like that? Does she talk to anyone else about it?

Participant: I think she probably does erm I’m sure she does because yes, because she’s told me things you know, ‘when we did such and such’ you know and ‘mum wasn’t there at the time and she found it really hard cause it was her grandma’ and that so yeah she, she has so yeah I think they do talk about it, I think it is and as I say, when she started, I have a feeling that one or two of her friends had already started so I think that possibly helped (daughter) in the fact that she could talk to her own age group about it and friends and they could discuss it in a way that they wanted to rather than.. but um, me and (daughter), we have quite a good relationship in the fact that she could, she can talk to me about it, I feel she can, I hope she can um and (younger daughter) well, she’s 11 and I’ve got a feeling that she might be more like me, might be later in starting erm but I think, I would imagine that they would talk together about it, I think (younger daughter) when it comes to the point, will talk to (daughter) erm and obviously she’s been, she’s had talks at school and whatever and err so it’s, I think she’s aware of what's, what’s coming and (younger daughter) knew that we were coming here today to talk about this so it’s not kind of a taboo subject that she wouldn’t talk about, I think she would, she would understand.

Interviewer: Erm, can I just ask, generally how is her health, does she have any unrelated medical conditions?

Participant: Yeah, she’s healthy, yeah, yeah.

Interviewer: OK so you mentioned that, when she wasn’t feeling well, it was particularly bad, have you noticed any other times when it might be worse or better?

Participant: Erm, possibly not, I mean that’s really, she doesn’t, I mean sometimes you have the, the moods and the strops and whatever but you kind of put it down to her being a teenager, I don’t tend to put it down to a what times it is in the month but I think because she manages it quite well herself, erm it, I, I wouldn’t say that it really does affect us in the fact that, you know if she was ill with it where she really couldn't get out of bed or she couldn’t go to school then obviously I would know more about it erm but I, you know I just think she kind of gets on with it and , and it doesn’t really affect us, no not really, maybe it does and we didn’t, we don’t realise it, that’s why these (makes noise) but I don’t think so, I, I think it, she kind of has, hasn’t got it too bad and when she is ill she’s not a very good patient you see so when she’s not well you do know about it and I think that time, the last time erm I think it was worse than she’s had it and maybe it will get worse I don’t know, I said that to her, you know it won’t always be just a bit of cramp, you might find that you know there’ll be times when it’s worse than others erm, so and she keep, she kind of keeps it under control I mean I’ve said to her that if she wants to take paracetamol it usually helps, then to do that obviously being careful and she’s pretty sensible (daughter), I can trust her to kind of look after herself in that way in that situation, she’ll take it to school and you know if you really need to take some paracetamol so that’s fine, that…

Interviewer: OK has she ever been to the doctors about anything period-related?

Participant: No, not period related but we went through, we did go through a stage where actually she started in November 2013 and then it was about the December, January time and she was feeling not well quite often but just a kind of, when I think about it, when I look back on it I thought perhaps it was a hormonal thing, erm there were mornings when she’d get up and say ‘I feel really dizzy’ and it wasn’t necessarily her period time erm and this, and because she’s such a healthy child she’s never, she’s never really off school so this was unusual for her to be erm, there were, there were days when she’d get up and say I really, I don’t feel well. She’d still go to school and then I’d be called, be called to pick her up from school but then again she wasn’t really ill but just didn’t feel quite right so then I did take her to the doctor around the January time because this was happening on a few occasions and I thought I’d get her checked out, maybe she’s anaemic or something to do with the fact she’d started her period and maybe it was the hormonal changes and that kind of thing so I did and it was fine erm and I don’t know whether psychologically by going to the doctor it helped her because after that she was alright, she doctor checked her out and I think did some blood tests as well but anyway she’s fine erm so that’s the only time that, I’ve never had to take her because she’s had, you know she’s been in so much pain she couldn’t cope with it so I’ve never had to do anything like that but that would be possibly one time where it might have been linked to it but I wasn’t sure no, the doctor thought it might be to do with that, the fact that you know her body was changing but it was more that she just didn’t feel well and the sort of feeling dizzy and faint and whatever so…

Interviewer: Yeah, OK erm, so have you, does she or do you know the cause of period-related pains and does she…. Is she aware of why she gets them and all about that? You said she’s quite open and her friends have had it as well…. And erm so yeah is she sort of aware of that?

Participant: Hmmm, mmm, yeah I think so, I, I, you mean why she gets the pain?

Interviewer: Yeah

Participant: Erm, I haven’t, I suppose I haven’t really discussed that, I suppose because she hasn’t really had it badly you know, it’s not something that I’ve really had to discuss in great depth erm and I try to think back now, I probably have spoken and when she was having the talk at school, as I say we had the little book and we went to the bit of the book that discussed periods and talked about that sort of thing but erm I suppose that’s about it really, I don’t talk about it on a regular basis as to why she gets the pain and…

Interviewer: OK because it’s not severe…

Participant: Because it’s not really severe so that um she’s being sick or she’s got headaches or anything like that so um, so yeah she just kind of knows that she gets these cramp pains and that’s what it’s related to um so.

Interviewer: OK um so erm, you mentioned it hasn’t really affected, it’s not affected her school attendance since that first time when she didn’t really want to go to school erm since then have there been any instances where she’s said she didn’t want to go to school because of it?

Participant: Erm, she’s never said to me, she hasn’t really said that you know erm I mean she does do quite a lot of sport, well she does netball and she does ballet and I was quite surprised actually at how she was quite happy to go to ballet erm I suppose the only time she got upset was when we were on holiday last year and halfway through the holiday it started and that was, that was a pain but anyway no, I don’t think, she’s nevr said that she’s been in enough pain with that to not go to school. Erm, I don’t know whether she knows that I’m quite, I would probably say just get on with it (daughter), you’ve got to go, you can’t let this rule your life, which I probably said to her in the beginning, I wasn’t quite, I wasn’t, you know I said to her you kind of have to just go with it and, obviously if she was in a lot of pain I would know and she would tell me I think if she really felt that she was bad enough not to go to school so um, no I don’t think there’s ever been times when she’s, she maybe has felt like that but knows that she could probably just get on with it, she’s kind of like that (daughter), she’s quite sort of a, oh no I’m not being very helpful am I should I be saying yes? (laughs)

Interviewer: No, no, no, please don’t think that.

Participant: Is it OK?

Interviewer: Yes, yes, so did it impact on her, have you noticed it impacts on her life in any other way? Like socially, whether she’ll go on sleepovers or out with her friends or anything like that?

Participant: Um…. Not really (laughs)…

Interviewer: OK, that’s fine, that’s fine

Participant: Is that alright?

Interviewer: Yes

Participant: No, she’s as I say she, she manages it well herself and as I say the things that I thought it would impact would be her sporting activities and things that you know, you’ve got exercise and all that kind of thing but she seems to be OK in doing that and you know we, we’ve been away, we’ve stayed, we go down to my mums a lot so um, you know she’s had to deal with it when we’re down there and I don’t think it would stop her from going, when I was a child it would have done and I remember going and staying at a friend’s house and being really worried about it and you know um but I don’t think it would, I don’t think it would matter too much to (daughter), I think she would just get on with it and just go yeah uhuh um, it might be if she was in a situation where she had to go somewhere and they had to go swimming, that’s when I think, or, or, but I, I think she would probably, I think she would probably tell me you know if she was um, if she was supposed to be going somewhere for any length of time, she’d say oh I’ll have my period in the time that I go and she does, we, again err when we went on holiday last year, she’d been expecting it, I think 2 years ago it came on the holiday and the last year we were going away and her period I think when we were going had come a week early and she was over the moon cause she thought well if it comes a week early next time, it will be finished by the time we go on holiday so that was all quite a big thing, she was over the moon that this wasn’t going to spoil her holiday because she can’t swim when she, when she’s on her period, she’s not using tampons or anything at the moment and that’s something that we’ve talked about, she’s not really, she doesn’t want to, I remember again when I was younger, when I started I thought wow this is amazing wow I can do so much more now erm but I’ve talked quite at length obviously about whether she wanted to go swimming and have a bit more freedom but no. I think that’s something she has spoken to her friends about erm and for some reason she just doesn’t like the thought of using them which I think if she did may, may, I dunno she doesn’t seem to be too bothered about it at the moment so I’m not going to push that so no I think, I think she would just, if she was going anywhere, she would probably tell me, not so much an over night sleepover but as I say if she was going away for a school trip or somewhere it would be a length of time, she would probably, she would probably just say it as a passing comment, oh can’t believe I’m gonna have my period when I’m… you know that sort of thing rather than it being a bit of oh no, what am I gonna do, it’s not really like that I don’t think erm so yes, aha, yeah so more that it’s gonna be an inconvenience than, than actually her being worried about it.

Interviewer: Yes

Participant: Erm so yes

Interviewer: OK, OK and how about erm how she copes, how, how do you feel she copes with pain and things like that? You said she gets on with it….

Participant: She does, she doesn’t like being in pain (daughter), because she’s not ill very often when she is ill it’s a bit of a drama erm but with the periods erm, she, she copes alright with it I think, she knows what it is, you know I think when you’re ill and you don’t know what it is, that’s the frightening part for her, ‘when am I going to get better’ but I think because she has erm she knows what the pain is and if she takes a couple of paracetamol it’ll help a little bit erm although last time when she was unwell it was a bit worse and I tried, I went to the chemist and got something that I thought was for period pains, whether they are or not… they’re probably just the same as paracetamol really but when you look at what’s in them you think well actually there’s not much different from that and that but anyway yeah she, she, she seems to cope with it OK erm, I think it’s more, for (daughter), it’s more before I think she has you know the days leading up to it and I’ve kind of spoken to her and said well that’s still all part of it and so she kind of knows why she gets these feelings and, and now she’s told me that she’s got some app that can tell her when it, and she says ‘it’s very accurate you know, it tells me, it was right again this month so I’m not quite sure what she types into this app (laughs) but according to her it tells her when it’s gonna start so there you go, technology (laughs)

Interviewer: (Laughs) That sounds good actually

Participant: Well she said it works, did she not tell you (laughs)

Interviewer: Erm… so, I’m just gonna ask now how it affects your life so does it affect your life at all? If not, again don’t worry.

Participant: (daughter)?

Interviewer: Yeah so like erm if you say that she erm, she’s in a bit of discomfort and pain, does it impact on your like stress levels or…

Participant: Yes I think it probably does actually yeah, it’s hard to, to get the balance of as I say because when she’s ill she’s ‘oh’ and it’s getting the balance of ‘you’re not ill, you’ve got your period but I know what you’re going through and if, if it’s bad enough then I’ll you know’ and so for me it’s knowing the right thing to do, knowing whether to be hard or whether to be soft and sometimes with (daughter) being a bit firmer is the better approach than being wrapped up in cotton wool and saying OK you can stay off school and I think that’s why from the beginning, no the first time but when it came to the second time erm, I kind of felt, she’s got to know that every time she gets her period she can’t stay off school you know erm that she’s not ill and that really, you’re gonna have this for the rest of your life so you’ve kind of got to just get on with it and, and I think that’s worked with (daughter), I think if she was in real pain and it was really affecting her then she would, she would say look mum, she would tell me but for me, yes it’s hard, I would, I would rather just say, ‘oh just stay off it’s fine’ you just, you don’t like to see your child in pain erm but if I know that that’s the reason she’s in pain and that I know that it’s not causing her, you know if she was being very ill with it then of course I would probably take her to the doctor you know I would have her checked out but because she manages it so well herself, erm then it, you know the stress levels have probably gone down but it’s things like when we’re on holiday and I felt so sorry for her and said ‘I’ve got my period’ and of course the best part of the holiday was having our own pool and being able to swim around and I, I felt awful for her because I just you know, and I thought ‘what do we do here’ and I talked to her about using tampons and nope she wasn’t having any of that erm and funnily enough, I think my younger daughter had just had her talk at school because (younger daughter) was saying ‘you can swim, you can swim you know the lady at school said you can swim’ but ‘oh I don’t know, I don’t know so I think we sort of padded her up with I don’t know how many pairs of bikini bottoms and well she did go in but she didn’t enjoy it as much and it wasn’t quite the same and so yes it is, it is hard when you’re a mum and how it’s going to affect them because I remember how it affected me and I, and for some reason before (daughter) started I thought cause I knew what she was like as a patient, I thought ‘I can just imagine she will get this real bad and it’s gonna be the worst thing ever’ so really in the way that it’s panned out and the fact that she does get on with it as well as she does is quite good in that you know so yes in a way it does and it’s knowing what to do for the best, right thing to do as I say if I was, if she had been up thorugh the night and she’s been sick and she’d been, yes I would probably let her stay off the next day if it was that bad but it’s just knowing the right thing and giving her the confidence and being a good mum but being sympathetic as well you know which you have to be.

Interviewer: OK so knowing what to do

Participant: Yeah but I wouldn’t say it stresses me out, it’s just wanting to make sure she’s doing the right thing and that she’s coping alright and that she knows that if she’s not coping with it then she can come and talk to me about it. So that’s probably the main thing yeah.

Interviewer: Yeah and how about erm like in the house so when she’s on her period and feeling bad does that ever cause any difficulty within the home like between relationships between family members?

Participant: I would say not, no, I would probably say that no, no it doesn’t cause us problems and because sometimes I don’t even know if she’s got it or not, it might be but no I wouldn’t say that having a period causes any problems with and she gets on well with (younger daughter), they get on OK so no I wouldn’t say, I would probably have to say no I don’t think that does. (Participant looks uneasy as if she has given the ‘wrong’ answer)

Interviewer: It’s OK, it’s OK.

Participant: OK

Interviewer: OK so you mentioned holidays, so like if she’s on it can cause a little bit of difficulty, how about any other like family events like Christmas, birthdays and things like that?

Participant: No I don’t think so no. Erm, no I don’t really think it would make any difference. I wouldn’t think about it if I was planning something and no, of course if she does go away, if she goes away overnight anywhere, I mean for example this week she’s got her period and we’re going down to my mums on Tuesday and she just you know that’s fine, it’s not a problem that we’re gonna be staying at somebody elses’s house. You know obviously we talk about being clean and all that sort of thing but I wouldn’t factor it in if I was thinking of doing something. I mean we’ve booked a big holiday for Easter and she did ask me last night, are we going to any water parks or… because she said my period is due the second week of the holiday, halfway through the second week, I said that’s fine, well she said can we do the sort of watery things at the beginning of the holiday, she said because I’m due to start my period halfway through the second week and I said oh that’s fine then so you’ve got a week and a half and it’s not just a swimming holiday, I mean we’re going to Florida so it’s quite a big so there’ll be a lot of things happening but again it wasn’t a major issue, it was just something she obviously thought about and thought right OK if we’re gonna be going swimming, this is when it’s due so we’ll, can we do that sort of thing at the beginning which is but I didn’t plan the holiday and say well this is when the periods due so we can’t go then because you know I wouldn’t sort of, no I wouldn’t factor that in because it’s not a big problem erm and I think also because with (daughter), it’s only been recently that she’s started to be kind of regular with it but at the beginning it was very hap hazard so even though she started in November, she didn’t get another on until Jan- I remember, yes she started November and then I think it was the December and it was around the time she started the first one that she was due to stay overnight at my mother-in-law’s house cause my husband and I were going away and I remember her being a little bit anxious then and I remember me being a bit anxious then thinking ‘gosh that’s’ because it was only the second time and as it happened she didn’t get it then and it didn’t come for another month so you know that was fine so that was probably one time when she was anxious about it but it didn’t actually materialise so it was fine erm but no apart from that, as I say now it’s only started to be sort of more regular monthly and now she has her app she’ll be fine (laughs)

Interviewer: (laughs) technology…

Participant: Yep (laughs)

Interviewer: OK so has it impacted on your life in any way at all do you think? Or your husbands or family’s life?

Participant: (pause) I don’t think so no, very helpful…

Interviewer: No, no, no, it’s fine

Participant: No I don’t think it has really…

Interviewer: It’s good that you’re honest, we’re trying to get like a broad range of experiences so…

Participant: OK, but no I don’t think I wouldn’t say it’s a major impact on our family at all, if (daughter)’s got her period then no, it wouldn't stop us doing anything I don’t think, at the moment the way she is with it we would just carry on and I think if she did have a problem with it, she would say you know if she felt she was uncomfortable doing something, I’d say we’re gonna be doing this and that and she’d say I’ll have my period then and wouldn’t fancy doing that. But it hasn’t really, I don’t think that situation has actually happened where, so no I think would be to that.

Interviewer: OK, is there anything else we haven’t covered that you’d like to talk about?

Participant: Ummmm, I don’t think so err, I think we’ve really, the questions you’ve asked have kind of covered what I know about (daughter)’s periods and how she deals with it and that kind of thing erm so.

Interviewer: Thank you for saying that, is it OK if I stop the recording?

Participant: Of course