Mother 11

Daughter: 14 years old

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

Participant: Erm, what sort of age and things yeah?

Interviewer: Yeah

Participant: Yeah, I’m 41, I’m a florist by trade and I also make cakes and I work from home erm. I’ve got 3 children. They age from 21 to 10 erm I’m married erm, I don’t know what else you want to know really (laughs)

Interviewer: That’s OK, what type of things do you do in your spare time?

Participant: Er spare time I tend to help out at the school and do fundraising for them, I do the treasurer thing at the PTA and that’s only at the youngest ones school, hopefully by the end of this year that will all be… I can pass onto somebody else hopefully erm and um, yeah just in my spare time I tend to do the housework (laughs)

Interviewer: Yeah, me too it’s fine!

Participant: Yeah, rather than working, housework yeah that’s it, and ironing

Interviewer: Ironing yeah

Participant: That’s if I’m not running round like a looney doing my flouristry and all those sorts of things

Interviewer: Are you quite busy with that?

Participant: Yeah, this week is a dreadful week, got a funeral unfortuntely and then finish it off with a birthday cake for a 5 year old so it starts bad and finishes OK (laughs)

Interviewer: Yeah, yeah. I’m guessing that’s all last minute as well

Participant: Yeah, you can’t plan too far ahead. I think the most you get is, the most is maybe 10 days of a fortnights notice um and as little as 24 hours notice sometimes so yeah you have to be ultra organised all the time and have flower and something here just in case so you know.

Interviewer: OK, so who, what child are we talking about at the moment?

Participant: That would be child number 2, she’s 14

Interviewer: OK, and can you tell me a bit about her periods so when they started…

Participant: Right yeah OK, so she was, um, she started in the August after leaving primary school. Um, so she was about 11 and 4 months. Um, we knew something was sort of afoot because she’d been suffering with little pains and aches for the last year or 18 months before that erm things like the greasy hair and the hormones were kicking in and the spots and all those sorts of things- little bits and pieces erm. When she first started yeah it was a shock to her definitely, we had fainting, we had the feeling sick erm just basically very unwell not wanting to do anything, go very far so you know she just wanted to sort of chill out in doors and things you know which is understandable. You get some months that are really bad and you just stay in bed but you know it was very emotional, lots of tummy pain with her first one… erm, always been very very sick and very difficult to get off the toilet. It makes the bowel movement very loose and very sudden erm so yeah it sort of restricted what we could do with her but as they went on, the first year of them, they were very um, not very regular, they were all over the place so some months it was… had all the pains but nothing blood wise and then we have certain months where lots of blood but not too much pain and then we had the fainting and the bits in between you know, not feeling very well um. Makes it difficult for schooling and things like that. She really hasn’t settled very well into her periods at all and she seems to suffer quite badly actually, she reminds me very much of me when I was her age because I started at 10, I was 10 years and 3 months when I started mine so I was quite young really err not to say… I think she had a friend at her school who was 9 when she started hers so they know about it but not really educated at that age to expect it and they are, children are getting younger now. See we’ve now got a 10 year old going through the same sort of thing, getting all the pains and the aches and the mood swings…. It’s far more difficult with the youngest one because she really is… she doesn’t understand why she gets all these things but (older daughter) gets very emotional with hers so we tend to have the tears and all the rest of it so it just um.

Interviewer: Yeah, yeah. Does she talk to you quite a lot? You said you had a similar experience so does she know about that and…

Participant: Yeah, I tend to just go into um, you just over drive really and you just go right, OK this is what I needed when I was that age and so it would be the heat packs to put on the tummy or hot water bottle or um sometimes we actually use the cold pack because I think to myself well if it’s cold, it might reduce whatever the inflammation is inside um. For a long time um, we weren't allowed to give her ibuprofen because it says not under the age of 12 so we were sticking to paracetamol and that really, it was helping a little bit with the pain but it wasn’t getting rid of the loose bowels and things like that um so within the last year she started using the combination of paracetamol and ibuprofen so um that seems to… the ibuprofen keeps the swelling down and her toilet doesn’t need to be so immediate and I do think to myself the ibuprofen is probably better because it takes down any swelling and any inflammation that's going on anyway and we find she doesn’t need to go to the toilet as often when she’s taken that whereas the paracetamol gets rid of the pain. But doesn’t get rid of it completely. It’s still there but not so intense.

Interviewer: Yeah

Participant: So um

Interviewer: What do you think is the most, the most effective? What seems to be the thing, is there anything that seems to stand out as…

Participant: No, you have to do a combination of it all otherwise it does, I mean this month’s been dreadful, when you phoned, when we spoke, she literally, she had 3 days off school this month because she couldn’t get out of bed and it’s debilitating for her erm and it’s sort of interrupting her learning but we find it’s very difficult for the school because they don’t understand.

Interviewer: Can you tell me a bit more about that?

Participant: Um, yeah err we tend to you know, when she’s off poorly we try not to give them too much detail but the, if it’s the caretaker come, well she’s trained as the nurse as well so she covers as well. If she’s on, she understands- as soon as I say oh it’s (daughter), she’ll go “yeah OK, is it that time?”- yes it’s that time, “that's fine she said, don’t worry to take as long as you need” cause she seems to understand but the actual nurse has got very little sympathy at the school and the teachers don’t. They see it as you’re a blot on their books because she’s having time off. Um, not that she’s really fallen behind or anything but it does you know, like this week it was 3 days that she had off and it was just, what can you do? You can’t send her to school if she’s got such bad diarrhoea you know she can’t get off the toilet. I’m pretty sure they wouldn’t like that in their class and we have known to have a phone call to come and get her because she’s fainted. So then they get funny because “oh if she’s not well then you shouldn’t have sent her to school” so we’re caught in a catch 22 with them so and even worse with the PE teachers. Cause they just really do not understand and they don’t care. That’s how it comes across, they don’t care. You know “exercise is good for you” well not for some people because it makes it worse actually and you’re trying to explain that to them and there’s very little empathy you know.

Interviewer: Yeah, yeah. Mhmm.

Participant: You know, I mean I remember being like that and thinking ‘oh god I’ve now got to try to, you’ve got dressed for school, now I’ve got to get undressed to get into my PE stuff an I’ve got to wear a silly little skirt and pair of shorts, and everybody’s going to see’ and I always remember that horrible feeling and I just don’t want her to go through that. That’s, you know, I say it’s fine if you don’t want to do it, don’t do it. So I have to leave messages and say and they go “oh well there’s thousands of women, hundreds of thousands of women suffering like you do and they still get on and do their exercise and you go ‘well not all of them no’. You know and unfortunately she’s been unlucky to have such severe period pain and you know symptoms with it. But yeah, we find it very difficult with the school, like I say very little empathy and very little sympathy. They really don’t understand.

Interviewer: How are they with (your daughter)? So, like if she takes a note into school to say she can’t do PE, how do they react to her?

Participant: Erm, I only ever hear what the PE teachers say. Um, when I phone in I tend to catch it early in the morning so I don’t actually have to speak to anyone cause I just say what I need to say, leave a message, who she is, what class she’s in and they can do the rest. Um, err, the PE department erm she’s had, she’s been told they don’t believe her when she’s had it you know and that makes it all the more difficult and that’s unfair and she comes home in tears then um.

Interviewer: How does that make you feel when she comes home in tears?

Participant: I could go up there and shake them. Cause they might have been lucky enough not to, especially when you’re dealing with another woman and you think you might be lucky enough not to be able to suffer with this but this is debilitating for her because she gets, she gets the headaches as well you know because it’s all getting ready you know and it’s very difficult to explain to someone you know, it’s not just about taking pills and it’s, sometimes it is just the rest and not moving around too much that can help. And you know when you are literally, physically doubled over in pain you know when somebody says to you ‘I’m doubled over in pain’, she is, she’s got her arm across her stomach trying to hold it and she’s literally just bent herself in half you know. Yeah I remember being there and doing that and you know…

Interviewer: And sometimes exercise is the last thing…

Participant: You would wanna do exactly. And you know sometimes it makes their loss heavier as well especially if you do too much jumping around and then you get light headed and you think ‘oh gosh’ you know and you know you’ve had a massive loss and it makes it uncomfortable as well you know.

Interviewer: Yeah, yeah, absolutely. Um so if she does go into school and she’s got period pain and she’s quite heavy, how, how does that affect you when you know she’s gone into school?

Participant: I keep my mobile phone next to me cause I know there’s a possibility of her fainting or she’ll be doubled over in pain or she’s got no sympathy from her teachers obviously and they don’t understand and she doesn’t want everybody to know because there’s boys in the class, that makes it embarrassing um. You know and it’s, yeah I’m on high alert basically. Strange, strange feeling. And also dad’s on high alert as well because he knows how she gets and obviously it’s his little girl and he worries as well so he tends to be ‘well let me know if you need me to get her, which he has had to do in the past because, with my work sometimes-if I’ve got to deliver for a funeral then I’m out and erm if I’m sorting the stuff and it’s (location) I have to go to and he is working in say (location), he would go and get her you know. Um but he (her dad) doesn’t seem to get so much of a reaction, or he doesn’t notice so much of a reaction from the school in that ‘she shouldn’t be going home’ or ‘she should be toughing it out’ you know as well mum, you tend to get neurotic mother (laughs) that syndrome, you know what I mean ‘oh, oh is it that time of the month, well you know she really should be at school and she really should be learning’ well give her the work, she’ll do it at home and just at the moment she can’t be sat up you know, she just needs to be somewhere comfortable and that’s not from being pandering around her. That’s just because she doesn’t feel very well. You know and being there myself, the last thing you want is to be sat in one of those uncomfortable school chairs sat there thinking oh my god all I want to do is go to sleep or lay there and you can just do that at home so yeah. You get different receptions depending on who goes up the school you know. I don’t think they like to discuss it with the husband you see.

Interviewer: OK, yeah. OK, what does it take for her to be sent home?

Participant: Well, erm it depends on the teacher obviously, and which class she’s in because you get some of them who are very very good with her and they say go and see the nurse, go and take paracetamol and come back to class then if you still don’t feel very well at the end of class then go back and see her um but they are very much very last case, she really would have to be doubled over in pain and be in tears when I go to pick her up and she’d say ‘I’ve been feeling ill all morning’ and this could be lunch time. If you think that’s 4 hours she’s sat there in pain so yeah. In it’s, that’s how bad it can be for the school to take notice or for her to faint- in which case you get the ‘well she shouldn’t have been in school’. Yeah.

Interviewer: Yeah. So does she take time off school every month for it? Or is it…

Participant: No, this month has been particularly bad and… the beginning of last week was particularly bad um. Last month she still had all the pains and everything but she was able to deal with school. Um the month before she was OK. And I think the one just before Christmas she was quite poorly so she had a few days off before Christmas.

Interviewer: So every few maybe

Participant: Yeah, every 3 or 4 months she seems to but then we can have a couple of months where there’s two or three bad months together. So it’s sort of you just sit there and think oh this will be a bad one. Especially if she’s late as well. Because it’s not regular, it’s not 28 days sometimes it can be 6 weeks and when she comes on then it really is bad and you know, you’re sort of prepared and ready and stock up on paracetamol and the ibuprofen in the cupboard and make sure the frozen packs are ready and the heat packs are ready and the kettles boiled (laughs)

Interviewer: Do you find the frozen packs are better than the heat packs?

Participant: No, the heat packs are far better yeah, yeah sometimes it’s just the uncomfortable, you want to be warm, make it warm whereas the coldness doesn’t make you feel…but it would help with the swelling because it does everything swells around there doesn’t it and you bloat a little bit and just think maybe that’ll bring the swelling down. But if she had the choice it would always be the hot water bottle or the heat packs so yeah.

Interviewer: Yeah, um. Can you tell me about the time frame of it so does it start before her periods….

Participant: Yeah, yeah about 24-28 hrs beforehand we can see her starting going downhill. She loses the colour out of her face, she becomes very pale. She moans, lots of symptoms she gets, headaches, sore throat, generally just feeling very very tired um, what’s the other thing she was saying the other day…. Oh her nose felt really blocked, she said everything felt really stuffy in her head like everything was sort of like, you know when you get hayfever everything seems blocked you know but yeah… thy’re the signs, she goes very pale. Even my mum said, she goes ‘oh you know something’s brewing’ because of the colour of her face and her eyes go very dark. She has dark rings under her eyes. Normally she’s quite err, she’s pale anyway but she’s got a little flush in her cheeks when she’s well so we know the major signs there. Oh and she goes off her food a little bit as well because obviously she doesn’t quite feel…

Interviewer: Is that because she’s in pain or is that because she’s uncomfortable?

Participant: Yeah something, you know the hormones I think are just plotting and ready to do their thing really and she just, she just general just feels not nautious, but she doesn’t really fancy anything. And if she does it’s either sweet stuff or carbonated drinks which are really no good for her anyway because the, it send her a little bit loopy (laughs). She’s one of those that can’t deal with the E-numbers (laughs). It definitely brings her up and out of the dulldrums but yeah and then she crashes the next day again so there’s no point giving her those sorts of things yeah… try and keep her on an even keel… try to tell her to drink lots and lots of water. Especially when she’s leading up to being due on because it’s to do with thin the blood and keeping her hydrated and sorts of things. And the months she does do that she seems to have better months. So um, well we all do that actually. Puposefully drink lots of water this month and it actually lessens the effects.

Interviewer: OK, so you mentioned the water drinking, are there any other times when the period is improved or things that make it worse?

Participant: Yeah, she’s had a few issues with bullying and obviously just before Christmas she had an incident at school and it’s made it worse to deal with because, I think it’s emotionally it’s, up here trying, in her head trying to sort all these things out and of course then the period starts and you’ve got another thing to think about and worry about and it just gets too much you know and the body then reacts in that way. Um, yeah like I say drinking lots of water I find and she’ll have a good month if she’s relaxed and not to worried about school. If everything’s going alright at school she seems to be yeah, a good month or whatever. But this month I don’t know, she’s just had an off month although it’s been a very good month for her you know, new boyfriend and those sorts of things (laughs), her birthday all those sorts of things but again it’s getting tired and worn out and she doesn’t realised she doing it, a couple of late nights and then it hits hard then.

Interviewer: OK, so can you tell me has she been to the doctors?

Participant: Yeah we’ve been to the doctors about it. Their attitude was very much, it’s something she will have to bear unfortunately. She’s someone who suffers. Paracetamol, ibuprofen, hot water bottle.

Interviewer: OK, so they didn’t give any other advice?

Participant: No, no not at all. All they turned around and say well because of her age obviously she’s only 14 now but I think it was about a year ago since we’ve been so and because of her age they won’t do anything else for her. There’s nothing else. It just doesn’t seem. Some months the calpol and ibuprofen mixed together seem to be able to clear it for her but it feels like we need something else, something a bit stronger. And obviously as the years are going on, she’s becoming more and more a woman and she’s changing and her body’s getting bigger, not bigger but you know she’s growing into a woman and sometimes you do need something a little but extra. I think the doctors are reluctant to give her anything and that, that’s, really marks me a little bit because I think when I was younger I was given medicine that would stop the flow so it wasn’t heavy periods then. It didn’t stop the pain but it did stop the heaviness of the blood loss and the rest of it which can sometimes be just as bad because that feels like you’ve got a pulling sensation below and it aches and makes everything pulsate. It’s a nasty feeling that one.

Interviewer: Yeah, yeah. OK um, so how about at school with sex education or science. Did she learn anything about period pain or how to relieve it?

Participant: I’m not entirely sure to be honest. We heard a lot about putting condoms on the plastic willies, because they’ve just done that recently, but she’s not come back and said any more. But no, she’s not really mentioned anything other than that. The only thing I can remember is her coming out from her sex education from year 5, so she would have been ab out 10, 9 or 10 years old and her going ‘I’m really not looking forward to those pyramids’. I said no, you mean periods and she said ‘no I’m sure he said pyramids’ (laughs) You know but so they obviously learnt something at that age but I don’t know. I have to be honest, she’s not said an awful lot.

Interviewer: OK, OK. So can we discuss the impact of it on her life a bit more so things like her social life and friendship groups. You said she’s had a few issues about bullying and things anyway at school? Can you tell me a bit more about that?

Participant: Yeah, she tends to have a worse month if she has a rocky time with her friends or with the bullying at school. It gets worse, she has a lot more pain and heavy flow um. Obviously the bowel movements become more frequent and prolonged. We have a lot of crying and you know. It, it breaks my heart to watch her go through that really and it’s very difficult to know what to do because as a mum you just want to protect your children don’t you. They’re your cubs sort of thing and you want to go round and hurt everyone for hurting her. But it’s probably heightened because of what she’s going through.

Interviewer: Has she still got a social support at school?

Participant: Yeah she has got a close group of friends. She seems to have an issue with one young girl. Only because she’s an only child so it’s, it makes it more difficult to explain to somebody that they don’t get their own way all the time. But otherwise the other 3 girls in her group are lovely and she seems to… she one of those who is very bubbly and happy all the time so when she’s having her period then she turns into devil child (laughs)

Interviewer: And do her friends understand why she’s like that?

Participant: She’s not like that I don’t think with them um, she can be a bit short with them and I know she’s had them say to her ‘I don't understand why you’re treating me like that’ because normally she’s so bubbly and nice. Just her patience becomes very worn at that time of the month. I know where it comes from.

Interviewer: And is that everyone in the family?

Participant: Yeah yeah

Interviewer: How does that affect atmosphere and things like that at home?

Participant: Well we try to turn it into… it sounds awful but we try to turn it into a joke. Um, cause the joke is if anybody’s in a strop or anything she’ll just turn to her older brother and go ‘oh you’re on your period’ ‘shut up’ so we do the same sort of thing back to her and we say ‘oh you’re on your period?’ and she’ll say ‘yes actually’ (Laughs) but yeah we try and turn it into a joke and make it a bit lighter cause obviously we say to her it’s something that you’re going to have probably for the next 30-40 years. Make light of it you know, you’re going to have good months and bad months. But she can be really off sometimes at home you know. But the family are aware, even the younger sister. I say (to my younger daughter) ‘you just keep laughing, you’re next’ and the husband and son are sitting together saying can you imagine all three of them together (laughs)

Interviewer: And how about her relationship with her sister and brother, does it ever cause any conflict?

Participant: Well (her brother) don’t really understand, he’s a boy isn’t he. Dad’s a little bit more sympathetic but she just keeps out of the way like most men do. “Oh god it’s that time of the month, I’m going out, I need to go to Wicks or BnQ” (laughs). Yeah, “I need to look at tools while you’re going through that” um yeah so (her brother) would do anything for her if she was in trouble, pick her up and drop her off from school, all those sorts of things brothers do. Her younger sister, they tend to butt heads anyway if she’s got her periods or not and it just gets worse that time so we just try and keep them separated (laughs). The youngest one’s quite head strong, quite independent. She seems to forget sometimes that she’s only10 and of course that goes against (daughter) who tells her you are only 10 (laughs) you know and that’s where it comes in really, she doesn’t like that she’s the younger one ‘why was I born last’ and that’s where it comes in with (daughter) because at certain times of the month she is more heightened to it and tends to be less tolerant towards her younger sister and they tend to have cat fights which everyone does with their younger sister.

Interviewer: Yeah. And how about with you if she’s in pain and feeling grumpy?

Participant: Yeah, yeah. Me, I’ve learnt some very interesting things this week. I’ve been on a training course with regards to personalities and things like that.

Interviewer: That’s very interesting!

Participant: Yeah it was really fun actually, and they were saying all these things that were relevant to your personality and they were saying that because of the type of personality I am, I’m very much one of those who if you see someone crying, you will find a different group of personalities to hand dthat person off to and I’m thinking yeah I’m a little bit like that with (daughter) and you know I’m like enough of the crying, I can’t physically do anything for you other than you have to follow what I’m saying otherwise it’s not going to get any better. If you’re doing all of that it will still carry on, the pain carries on anyway you know not that I’m not sympathetic. It’s just my personality is very much sort of I just get on and deal with it and I tend to be one that’s quite hard to it now because I’ve been through it for so long and you try to help someone and they don’t want to listen. And you think listen to your mum. At the time, when you’re going through pain you just think I just want it to go and unfortunately I’m not particularly patient but I’m not unsympathetic because I will try to help her and you know and it, the hot baths and hot showers because something I always think, it’s best to shower when you’ve got your period rather than sit in water where it’s going… you’re soaking in your own you know, especially if you lose a lot of blood you’re sat in the water with it- why would you do that? Have a shower and wash it off. Sometimes it’s nice to run a hot shower and put it on your back so it’s running on your back you know or stand in the shower and lean against the wall because you get the hot sweats. Then you can go the other side and get the feverish feel and get cold so if you’ve got the hot sweats lean against the shower wall because that’s nice and cool but let the hot water run on your tummy and keep yourself clean because it makes you feel uncomfortable and a bit dirty doesn’t it.

Interviewer: Yeah. So does it impact on what she does around the house or…

Participant: Yeah she just doesn't do anything when she’s like that and dto be honest I’m not gonna hassel her about doing it. Sometimes I’ll say to her just do that little bit of washing up knowing, she can do it and I always say to her do the washing up then leave it to drain for a little while then go back and wipe it up and put it away for me. So she’s not too long on her feet because I worry if I’m not here she might faint and hurt herself with nobody here to look after her but other than that no, I tend to be a little bit more laid back than my mum maybe. She’d say ‘it’s only a period, its not gonna kill you. Even though my mum used to suffer. You can see probably where the influence comes from. They do their odd jobs anyway and keep their bedrooms tidy.

Interviewer: OK, and how about hobbies and sports? Does it impact on what she does?

Participant: Yeah when she’s due or when she’s on she tends to be a bit of a hermit and stays in doors a little bit more, doesn’t go out as much. Things like walking home from school, she wouldn’t do that but hobbies and interest. She doesn’t really have anything where she does anything outside of school really. She’s quite happy to potter around indoors and facebook and snapchat… but yeah she seems to just be quite happy, she’s quite a slim girl anyway so she’s not missing out on doing anything and if you give her half a chance she’ll walk to school but we do find that she becomes home bound, she just wants to stay in doors where it’s safe and everything’s familiar.

Interviewer: Yeah, yeah. And how about how she copes in herself, have you noticed how she copes- does she do anything to take her mind off it or make herself feel better or…

Participant: Having her phone next to her or watching a dvd on her telly um, not really anything other than that really. All she wants to do is sleep. She does the mundane every day things, she knows how to sort herself out, when she goes to the toilet she knows to change but yeah she’s not the sort of person to preoccupy herself with ‘doing’ tasks- sleep it off. If I go to sleep hopefully when I wake up it’ll be better and that’s how I used to deal with being ill. It’s just the rest side of things and I think the rest cause sometimes she does have a few nights of lost sleep when she’s due on and sometimes you need to catch up with that don’t you because it sort of like interferes.

Interviewer: Yeah yeah, and how does it impact on your family life?

Participant: No, erm (her dad)’s got his own business so he works for himself really and so do I, I work from home so… that’s the good thing. The only issue we have is when we’re both going in different directions um and that sort of interferes with, not interferes, that’s the wrong work, it has an impact then when obviously he has to go several miles that way and I have to go severeal miles that way then obviously we have to come back together. Bearing in mind I’m only out you know, if I’ve got to do a delivery I’m only out for a few, like half an hour to an hour at any one time depending on how far I’ve got to go erm, more my time is taken up if I have to go and source my materials and I’m out of the house but that’s the only time but then we can always rely on my mum, she’s closer to the school. We know certain days she’s busy so we know if she’s available so and um (daughter) knows as well if she gets that bad but as far as anything social… we tend to just avoid going out really if she’s like that because we don’t really think it’s fair and she wouldn’t enjoy herself anyway cause she’d be constantly thinking ‘all I wanna do is go home’ and very often she just sits there and doesn’t say anything to anyone so everyone just thinks she’s really miserable (laughs) which in a way she is sort of thing, all these sort of uh, especially when you see on the telly, the new princess and all of that, it’s wonderful thinking oh yeah I’d love a girl but it’s all the things that comes on afterwards. You know and you don’t think further into their lives and all the things they might have coming you know.

Interviewer: So if she stays at home from school, and your doing your flowers or cakes, does that interfere with what you can do?

Participant: No, because I can carry on and work depending on where I am I say to her I’ll take my phone up the garden and I say to her just phone me if you want me, that sounds daft I know but more often than not she’s happy, she spends all her time in her bedroom anyway really and she’s quite happy to sit there and watch telly you know or on her phone or if not just sleeping. We find that’s a big thing she does, I wish I could go back to that age you know when you’re due on and then you get to our age and you think oh I got to go to work and you know you’ve got to give in and go and you know, I know it’s schooling and it’s important but when she gets to work age she might be a bit more well-equipped to deal with it and what to expect and what to do to relieve it but at the moment we’re very restricted in what we can give her and how we can treat it and you know it’s very difficult.

Interviewer: How do you feel about that? You said sometimes you just don’t go out if she’s on her period- how do you feel about that?

Participant: Yeah, sometimes it’s a little bit annoying to be honest because you know it always happens when you’ve got a busy week or if you know you’ve got to go and do the shopping and you sit there and go oh no but she’s at the age now at 14 that I can leave her here and know that she’s safe and she can stay in bed if she wants to you know, I don’t force her to come with us but sometimes you just sit there and think I really should be there with her but I can’t because I’ve got to do these jobs you know. We're quite homely people really we like to stay in around the home anyway so we’re OK with that you know, we don’t go out a lot so it doesn’t impact us too much and to be quite honest I’m quite happy to stay at home with her anyway and like you say I’ve got enough to do running around. She knows I’m here, I’m not miles and miles away at work and she’s left here, I’m just down the end of the garden, well that’s where the flowers are done anyway and the cakes are done in there. Depending on what has to take priority, depending on what’s urgent, I normally do those during the day and the cakes in the evening, afternoon time so she knows I’m only sort of feet away rather than miles away. But as far as us and our life, we’re quite, we don’t go out in the evenings, we don’t do anything as far as that is… during the summer months it’s different cause we tend to go down to the beach or whatever but we wouldn’t go if she wasn’t feeling up to it cause you just think it’s not fair if she’s got a long way to walk but we do give her the option. Um, it’s, it’s up to her really but you can normally gauge it as a mum given that we’ve now been through it for 3 years, I think we’re sort of well sourced in all the signs and all of that, even daddy really.

Interviewer: Yeah, does she talk to her dad about it much?

Participant: Um, yeah daddy’s more, um, I’d say a lot more involved than my dad was and I think it’s more of a generational thing because men seem to be a little bit more weary and he was brought up with younger siblings and his job was more to look after them while they went to work… and yeah. My issue is that I brought up my children to be children not to be baby sitters for more that I may have, I don’t like that idea but yeah he’s a little bit more sympathetic, more empathetic to that situation with (daughter) than my dad was with me. He was very much sort of ‘oh that’s going on’ up the top of the garden and play with his tools (laughs) ‘oh I need to read the paper’ and shaking the paper hidden behind it. You know we were always very open with my mum, oh it’s that time of the month, and I remember my grandad sitting there going ‘time of the month for what?’ (laughs) he wouldn’t know, but of course your so naive to those sorts of things at that age but yeah I mean he’ll be very good, he’ll know that it’ll either be paracetamol or ibuprofen is due or she needs a hot water bottle and he’d go and help all those sorts of things which is great yeah, yeah err although the little sister will go “she’s got legs and arms can’t she get it herself” (laughs) no sympathy whatsoever.

Interviewer: Oh bless her. And what if you plan trips away or anything, is it ever something that you factor in?

Participant: Yeah you have to. We have to be aware it could be erm… we record it all in my diary so we know roughly and we try to avoid those times of the month but then saying that she’s been so irregular you know, the last six months it’s all been a bit higgledy piggledy so she’s either a week late or a week early or could be 4 weeks late so she gets months that she completely misses so we don’t plan really into depth but we’re going away for a long weekend in June you know and if it falls on that weekend… we worked out roughly it shouldn’t do but if it does we’ll just take everything with us and hope that it’s just going to be a hope where she’s not going to be as bad but we take that paracetamol and ibuprofen. Everything just in case. Unfortunately I’m a just in case sort of person, I even take my Dettol spray and… cause she suffers with motion sickness as well and she gets a bit car sick. It’s getting better with age but um yeah, we had a time when we’d gone to france and we’d got so far down the road in the hire car and opened the back door and she’s just about got out in time but it’s caught the back of the metal bits of the car…

Interviewer: It’s good to be prepared

Participant: It is, we’re a just in case family anyway so (laughs)

Interviewer: OK, and um how does it impact on your stress levels?

Participant: I do worry about her. Yeah as soon as we know cause it’s the couple of days before hand because you know that the signs are there and your guts telling you it’s due and then all of a sudden a thought in your head and you think maybe it’s not and she really is poorly and that’s when my head makes more of it, my anxiety works up and I think I hope she’s not going to be sick because I can’t deal with sick… I can deal with anything else but sick is daddy’s turn (laughs) but yeah it does, it makes me worry a lot and I worry for the younger one as well and you just think oh it’s coming, I wish I could do more to help them but I’m not entirely sure what I can do though. I can only do what I know I can do and what helped me. Well try to help me you know. But you do worry, you can’t help it. As a parent you do worry anyway with them being ill but when that’s coming round you’re waiting for the phone call from the school or the phone call from the friend to say she’s not very well on the way home or your mum to phone and say I had to come and get her today.

Interviewer: One last thing, what do you do to make yourself feel better so if you’re feeling anxious or stressed you know…

Participant: My flowers (laughs) I go play with my flowers for a little while. Right I just need to go and have an hour out OK and then leave them all in doors. Yeah that’s it, that’s it. It’s either that or I’m one of these if I feel well I’ll go take a couple of paracetamol, go upstairs and go to sleep. It does make you feel better. But I suffer with anxiety anyway and panic attacks so I try and keep them away from that cause they don’t need to see that and I tend to go a bit loopy with it all but mine tend to yeah, I tend to, I get the giddy spells when you’re anxious anyway and I get them, get the light headed feeling when I’m due on so I know exactly how she feels and all you want to do is be somewhere safe. So sometimes my thing is to go up to my workshop and play with my flowers or cook.

Interviewer: You’re in the perfect career

Participant: I know I know!

Interviewer: Is there anything else you’d like to talk about?

Participant: No, I don’t think so

Interviewer: If you do think of anything just let me know. Can I stop the recording?

Participant: Yeah yeah