Mother 15

Interviewer: OK so would it be alright to start off just by telling me a bit about yourself.

Participant: Erm yeah sure, erm I don’t know what you want to know but err I’ve got 2 kids and my daughter’s 16, my son’s 14. I’ve got 2 dogs and a husband. Err I work part-time.

Interviewer: What do you do?

Participant: Um, a civil servant

Interviewer: Oh that’s interesting

Participant: Err sometimes (laughs) and then my husband works at the airport and that… really just a very ordinary life.

Interviewer: OK, that’s fine, that sounds fine. What type of things do you do in your spare time?

Participant: Well erm, used to be all about the kids but now they’re older you can’t get them out of bed. Erm I was until recently studying computing. Erm I try and get up to (location) when I can and I’m a, a volunteer for the local council.

Interviewer: Have you got family up in (location) then?

Participant: Yeah, my sister’s up there and I’ve got quite a bit of family up there but erm mainly see my sister and a friend.

Interviewer: That’s good. So, can we talk a little bit about your daughter… when she started her periods and things like that?

Participant: Yeah sure, yeah. I think she was about 11. And err, erm yeah she seems to manage it all herself OK.

Interviewer: That’s good. Did she tell you when she first started?

Participant: Yeah, yeah she did yeah

Interviewer: And was she prepared for it?

Participant: Yeah she was fine yeah, yeah, quite open a bout these things and it wasn’t err, wasn’t an issue err we just sorted her out and gave her what she, you know, she needed and she already knew about it all. She knew about it all right from when she was little and so she knew about things like where babies come from from when she was about five.

Interviewer: OK, and did she have sex education at school?

Participant: Yeah, yeah

Interviewer: OK. Did you talk to her about symptoms that accompany periods and things like that before she started.

Participant: No, I don’t think I did no.

Interviewer: Does she get any symptoms?

Participant: She gets some cramps sometimes and takes some paracetamol and she um, gets spotty and I just try and… we got some advice about spots from the pharmacist at boots which is whitch hazel and she’s got some spot cream stuff… I’ve forgotten what it’s called. Um, uh, it’s something like benzoperoxide or something like that. It’s a fairly common spot cream for teenagers. It’s um, behind the counter at boots. It’s um yeah that’s it really. She, she gets moody and snappy.

Interviewer: Yeah, yeah. And um, are her period fairly regular?

Participant: As far as I know yes. But to be honest she kind of manages it herself now. Um she’s 16 now so it’s, she doesn’t come and tell you these things you know you just notice but as far as I’m aware yes.

Interviewer: How would you say her health is generally?

She’s fine, she’s, I’d say a fairly average teenage girl. Most of the time she’s fine. She gets you know the same coughs and cols as everyone else but there’s no health issues at all.

Interviewer: Since she started her periods have you noticed that there have been any changes or are they fairly the same as how they were when they started?

Participant: Oh, that’s I mean, oh I don’t know. I think they’re probably heavier than they were when they first started. Going from the kind of pads she likes to use. She likes to use these kind of Always ultra but the extra long ones that you use for nights. I think she probably feels a bit more secure with them on but she started using tampons erm, she didn’t tell me (laughs) she just started using tampons and went away and bought herself some tampons and I asked her do they not hurt when you first started using them and she said no so… cause I remember it hurt me. So…

Interviewer: it’s good that they didn’t!

Particiapant: Yeah like I say she just gets on with it.

Interviewer: And when she first started, is that when she… the tummy cramps and the spots and things, did they start at the same time or was that something that developed over time?

Participant: I think it’s just been more in the past year really. Since she’s been about 15. Before that she wasn’t too… she didn’t seem to be too bad, you never would have known any different. But it’s hard to tell because they sort of turn 11 and then they sort of go into Kevin and Perry mode you know where they just suddenly become horrible teenagers and sometimes it’s really difficult to tell what’s just being a horrible teenager and what’s being extra snappy.

Interviewer: Yeah, yeah. And with the tummy cramps you said she takes paracetamol. Does she use anything else like hot water bottles or hot baths or anything like that?

Participant: No, no, she just takes paracetamol.

Interviewer: And is that effective then?

Participant: As far as I know yes.

Interviewer: OK, that’s good, that’s good. Has she ever been to the doctors about her periods?

Participant: No, there’s been no need. She mentioned a month ago that I think she’d come on twice in a month which was unusual for her but I didn’t really do anything about it because everyone has little blips every now and again but um, that would indicate to me that she’s fairly normal the rest of the time.

Interviewer: OK, so when she’s on her period, she has a tummy ache and spots and what not-does that impact on her daily life at all?

Participant: No I don’t think it makes any difference at all, she just carries on as I say she just gets on with it. I think she does, she does comfort eat a bit and then she does a lot of moaning about being fat.

Interviewer: Oh bless her

Particiapant: Which she’s not (laughs)

Interviewer: And do you think that impacts on her self-esteem at all?

Participant: Yeah it does, it does, when she’s feeling fat it does.

Interviewer: OK and has she ever had a day off?

Participant: No. She’s probably the most boring person in the universe from that point of view- all the questions your asking me- she just gets on with it (laughs)

Interviewer: It’s fine honestly. They whole point of this is to get perspectives of mums with daughters who are coping differently with it so it’s fine. Does she gets on with her brother,

Participant: I think they get on better than they used to but she can be quite horrible to everyone and that can cause arguments and if he winds her up at all she can get to near the edge of reason quite quickly.

Interviewer: How does that impact on family life?

Participant: Well everyone just ends up shouting at each other and my son is usually the one that ends up getting in trouble.

Interviewer: How do you deal with that stress?

Participant: Erm just get away from it, just leave and go into another room. Try and break the fight up and then I usually end up sending (her brother) to his room to separate them and then I drink beer and try and talk to her about it later.

Interviewer: Is it normally easier to discuss a bit later on?

Participant: I don’t know, it’s difficult because being teenagers they can only see their own point of view. It’s difficult to err get a rationale view point on these things.

Interviewer: Has it ever impacted on what you guys do together as a family?

Participant: No, I mean only in terms of the bad moods when err you know, erm you can’t get them to do anything because they’re in such a bad mood erm but and if there’s arguments and things it might make you feel like you don’t want to go anywhere or do anything. Just your better off if you just let them go to their rooms and shut the door really to keep the peace but err it wouldn’t prevent anything from happening and it never has.

Interviewer: Erm, so you mentioned she just gets on with it um, is that because of her personality generally or…

Participant: I think because I’m a get on with it person and I don’t um, I feel sorry for them if they’re generally ill or anything like that but um I, I never make a fuss about these things so there’s no fuss need. If she says she’s got a sore tummy, I just say oh take a couple of paracetamol um but they see me going into work no matter how rotten I feel and err I’m not much of one to make a big deal about stuff like that. She probably doesn’t make a big deal because she doesn’t realise there’s a deal to be made about it. If it was a real problem I’d take her to the doctors and get her put on the pill but because it’s not, I haven’t. It’s never been a big issue for her. It’s just something that’s part of life. If it was a problem then I would deal with it, I would take her to the doctors and sort it but it’s just never been a problem.

Interviewer: Is there anything we haven’t talked about today?

Participant: No