Mother 16

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

Participant: Yeah erm obviously I was about 11 when I er m started my periods. And I was very regular from the start so obviously and I do have heavy periods as well but they last about 7 days and I do have a really active social life. I have a lot of activities so obviously everything has to be on hold around that sort of time in the week as well so yeah my whole life is revolved arouond my time of the month to be honest.

Interviewer: Yeah, OK.

Participant: Yeah so basically it’s um, you know I’m just quite out-going and happy and bubbly but as soon as I get 2 days before my period I hallucinate I get pains and eat, my appetite goes through the roof so obviously it does affect your personality in general.

Interviewer: Absolutely. Can I ask you a few questions like how old you are..

Participant: Yeah I’m 40 with a 16 year old daughter.

Interviewer: Is she still living at home?

Participant: Yeah she’s at home bless her I don’t think she’ll be leaving for a long time (laughs)

Interviewer: Oh bless her. What do you do for a living?

Participant: I work as a controller in a local taxi firm so my jobs on my doorstep, I’ve been there for two years.

Interviewer: Do you enjoy it?

Participant: Yeah I do actually, well I’ve just been there a long time already I’ve got used to it and it’s convenient as well because it’s local, she gets a train to school so both of us can’t really afford to get out the area you know, it’s transport so.

Interviewer: Absolutely, is she still in secondary school, your daughter?

Participant: Yeah she is yeah, she’ll be taking her GCSEs this summer

Interviewer: Really- how’s that going?

Participant: Really well, she’s an A\* student to be honest with you. Yeah she’s very good, she’s a good girl so she works hard to get what she’s doing so yeah it’ll be sixth form then it’ll be university so we’ll have to wait and see.

Interviewer: Good luck, I hope everything goes well.

Participant: Yeah I do

Interviewer: When did she start her periods and things like that?

Participant: Well we had a bit of a problem with her err because she started about 2 years ago but she’s only had about 4 periods. She has a period and then she doesn't have one for 3 or 4 months. But is that quite common for her age group?

Interviewer: Well I think… how old was she when she started?

Participant: She was about 14

Interviewer: Yeah I think, I mean yeah a good person to talk to would be your GP but they’d probably say that because she’s so young it might take a while to get into the swing of things

Participant: Yeah that’s what I think, it’s just sort of, they’re so heavy as well when she does have them but they’re just not regular. She still suffers quite bad she gets sort of like migraines and a headache before and runny nose which is really weird… but she gets all the symptoms yeah. And stuff..

Interviewer: Oh bless… what other type of symptoms does she get? Does she get tummy cramps?

Participant: Yeah she has to take paracetamol and she feels sick as well. Yeah it is horrible bless her but you know we all have to have them don’t we.

Interviewer: We do, we do. Does the paracetamol help with the cramps?

Participant: Yeah it does, it does with the pains and stuff, the tummy pains. You know I did think about buying some evening primrose oil and getting that in my system. But I don’t think… is it the vitamin b3 or b6… there’s another one as well that you can take and stuff so I’ve tried all that but it’s very hard to be continuous with it every day you just sort of you know, it’s just one of those things you just accept isn’t it.

Interviewer: Are your daughters periods quite similar to yours would you say?

Participant: Very which I find peculiar and it’s exactly the same time as well it’s changing around. She gets it the same time as me.

Interviewer: Does she, before she started, because you had a lot of trouble with yours, did you talk to her about all of those things before she started her periods?

Participant: Yeah but obviously as she was a late started I didn’t know whether she would experience the same symptoms but obviously err she does so (recording cutes off)

Interviewer: OK so we were talking a bit about how your daughters periods are quite similar to how yours were. So can you tell me the ways in which they are similar to yours?

Participant: Okie dokie… yeah so obviously she didn’t start… she was about 12 or 13 really and obviously they were 3 weeks apart from mine but then the last two times they’ve got closer and close to my due day which is the same sort of cycle and they’re really, really long which is really bizarre. I think she just has the exactly the same as me you know so unfortunately she is going to suffer a little bit. She needs big pads in the night and it’s just not a nice experience at all. So if I’m at work and, on the second day of my menstrual cycle so if I get it on the Mon day or the Tuesday I’m on so heavy I shouldn’t really go out the house I should lay in bed because I lose too much blood. I always have an accident wherever I am no matter how hard I try. If I’m in a heavy flow situation, I could be in bed or at work, wherever I am it’s gonna get effected no doubt about it. Sometimes you just don’t know when you’re gonna have this flow and it just happens.

Interviewer: Absolutely. Do you guys talk a lot about your period experiences?

Participant: We do but erm we laughed when she got it on, the last one she had was on the 23rd December last year which was her birthday so obviously Jany, Feb last year we’re missing one again so we are sort of like what’s happening but I do believe it is a literally a case of balancing out her hormones but I said to her there’s a lot of people who are late starters and stuff, it doesn't mean she’s going to get it as early as I did. You know, it’s just a case of hoping she gets a regular pattern and I said to her unfortunately it’s something we all have to experience and deal with in our everyday lives and that’s my attitude towards men, they don’t know how easy they got it.

Interviewer: And what about your daughter, does she talk to girls about it or does she talk to her dad?

Participant: Erm no, she doesn’t have a relationship very well with her dad erm so she hasn’t seen him for the last 7 or 8 years erm. Whether she talks to her friends she’s not like me, she just gets on with it, she studies if she gets on she does if she doesn’t she don’t. It’s a bit like that. With me, I’m freaking out more than her I think.

Interviewer: Has she ever been to the doctors about her periods?

Participant: No, I was going to leave it but because she got one on her 16th we sort of thought this is it, it’s here and now, this is how it’s gonna be but obviously she’s been more, she’s irregular still and then I remember talking to some mums a few years ago with their older girls and they said the same thing that their girls hadn’t even started at 16 so I wasn’t that worried worried and because she’s had a few I knoew it’s all sort of in the process. I just thought by her 16th though, I thought she’d be a bit more regular. I reckon by this year though she’ll fall into a pattern.

Interviewer: Yeah yeah. Can you tell me about other things she does to relieve the pain so does she take paracetamol…

Participant: She’s only had 4 periods so… she just goes and lays down. If she’s got school she gets through the day she’ll take a couple of paracetamol with her and as soon as she’s in doors she goes straight to bed to rest up.

Interviewer: Oh bless her. Sorry-you’re breaking up a little bit. That’s better. Has she ever like, when she wasn’t feeling well, has she ever taken time off school?

Participant: No, but she doesn’t do PE.

Interviewer: How are her teachers?

Participant: Yeah they understand, they have to. She’s older now so yeah they do.

Interviewer: Yeah. How does she feel about being a late starter?

Participant: I think it’s frustrating for her because obviously she wants to get into a routine and know where she is. One minute she’s getting there and next thing you know she’s not had another one so it must play on her mind but it doesn't bother her too much because she’s studying for her GCSEs.

Interviewer: How are her moods and things around the time of her periods? Does it make her grumpy?

Participant: Oh god, very emotional. We’re both, before Christmas we were both in tears and we didn’t know why. We were losing the plot it was awful. Hormones go through the roof and she’s very moody indoors and doesn't want to talk and… the normal stuff. When we both actually get it it’s a relief you know, the two days before is dangerous and they’re the days I think you should stay in. But when we’ve actually got it, the first day’s fine because it’s the relief and the second day it’s the heavy flow and the rest then is just getting on with it. It’s just the pattern really. We do clash the two days before but once we’ve come on it’s a different outlook completely than the two days before. It’s like being in the big brother house and someone’s left the lid off the marmite or something, it’s just a world war three. But you can’t help it, it’s your hormones and you’re a ranging lunatic. There’s nothing you can do unless you just don’t talk to each other. But that’s it, it’s just moods, symptoms and it’s very stressful her period.

Interviewer: does she cope with it in a similar way?

Participant: We’re different people, I’m loud, she’s quiet.

Interviewer: Does it impact on her friendship groups?

Participant: Nah, she’s alright at school. Obviously she gets very short tempered a bit but she’s more of a placid person so when she comes home she just don’t want to talk to anybody, just leave her alone like that. That is it.

Interviewer: Does it ever impact on stuff that you guys would do together as a mother and daughter?

Participant: Definitely, she’s not interested in going out or doing anything like that, she’s quite happy to stay in her room and play on her playstation. Well I just go out on my own now, I take no notice. You can’t make somebody do something they don’t want to do can you, especially if they’re pre-menstrual. I just open the door ajar, throw some food in and run out (laughs)

Interviewer: Is there anything else you know that you wanted to talk about today that we haven’t covered?

Participant: No, no, I would like some information or any advice but there’s nothing really I could do.

Interviewer: OK, I’ll just stop the recording and have a chat.