

## **Areas for discussion**

### **Menstruation and Contraception: social and cultural influences on young women's decision making**

Please note the topics below are only suggested areas of discussion and may change during the research process subject to new ideas and themes emerging from the data. Probing will be used throughout (e.g. How did it make you feel? Can you explain further?)

### **Discussion points for focus groups**

These are intended to gauge general attitudes, views, norms and values about the topic. We will not be asking participants about their individual experiences in a group setting.

#### **Can you tell me a little bit about yourself? – go around the group**

- Name
- Age
- What you like to do in your spare time

#### **General attitudes towards menstruation:**

- How do young women feel generally about menstruation? What does it represent?
- What sorts of things do young women do to plan for their period? Does it affect their daily calendar? Do they avoid certain activities?
- What sorts of issues might affect a young woman if she does not have a regular cycle?
- How do young women prepare for their period? What sorts of things need considering?
- How do young women manage their period? Do they face any difficulties managing their period at school/college/work?
- What types of products do young women use to manage their period? What do they think about them?
- Are there any religious and cultural issues which need consideration? What are they? How do these views affect behaviour during menstruation?
- Are there restrictions on what young women feel they can and can't do during their period?
- How important is it for young women to have a period? What sorts of problems/worries might young women have if their period is late/early/heavier/lighter than usual?

#### **Attitudes towards hormonal contraception:**

- What sorts of things are important when a young woman is choosing a contraceptive?
- Where do young women get their information about contraception?
- What have young women heard about different methods of contraception?
- What effect does hormonal contraception have on fertility?
- What sorts of side effects are associated with different methods of contraception?

- Are some methods more reliable than other methods?
- Do young women use contraception to control/regulate their cycle?
- Would the possibility changes to bleeding patterns affect whether young women would choose a certain method of contraception?

### **Hormonal contraception and bleeding patterns**

- How do young women feel about contraceptives that could stop their periods?
- How do young women feel about a contraceptive that could cause irregular bleeding?
- How might irregular bleeding affect a young woman's day-to-day life? What sorts of issues might she encounter?

## **One-to-one interviews**

These are intended to provide individual insight into the data.

### **Can you tell me a little bit about yourself?**

- age
- where you live
- who you live with
- what you do (work or study)
- relationship
- children
- something about the area where you live
- what you do in your spare time

### **Feelings about menstruation – what it represents, attitude towards bleeding**

- Is it important for you to know when your next period will start? If so, why?
- Would it worry you if you did not know when to expect your next period? Why? How would it make you feel?
- How does expecting your period affect your day-to-day diary? Do you plan around it (e.g. holidays?)
- Would it bother you if your period was heavier than usual?
- Would it bother you if your period was lighter than usual?
- How do you feel if your period is late?
- How do you feel if it is early?
- Who knows about your period? Do you keep it to yourself or is your mum/sister/boyfriend etc aware?
- How might being on your period affect your sexual relationship?
- What are the practical aspects of menstruation? How do you manage bleeding? – type of product, cost considerations, pain management, other issues e.g. being prepared/choice of clothing

- How is menstruation viewed from a cultural/religious point of view? How do these views affect behaviour during menstruation?
- Personal values – are there any activities that you would not do during your period? Why?

**Attitudes towards hormonal contraception:**

- What sorts of things do you consider when you are choosing your contraceptive?
- What do you know about the side effects of hormonal contraception?
- What are your experiences of different types of hormonal contraception? (e.g. Pill, implant, Depo, Mirena)
- Did you experience any side effects? What were they? How did this make you feel?
- What have you heard about different types of contraception? What do you think about this?
- What sorts of things would stop you using a certain type of contraception?
- What types of contraception might you try in the future? How do you think these will affect your period?

**Hormonal contraception and bleeding patterns**

- What would you think if a contraceptive altered your cycle?
- What would you think if a contraceptive caused you to bleed between your periods?
- How long would you continue to use it?
- Do you use contraceptives to control your menstrual cycle?
- Would you choose a contraceptive that stopped your periods?
- What are your preferences for contraception and its effect on your period?
- Would you worry if your period was late, even though you were using contraception? How would you feel?
- What is 'natural' or 'normal'? Does this bother you?