

Design Thinking Tools & Activities

Persona Charades Game - Instructions

Introduction

Personas are incredibly useful tools in user-centered design, marketing, and other disciplines focusing on customers or “users”. A persona is a fictional character created to represent a user type that might use a site, brand, or product in a similar way. are particularly useful during ideation activities for new products and services as they allow for the extrapolation of user preferences to inform attributes, thereby removing some of the ambiguity inherent in new product design.

Male contraception is an especially ripe field of product design for persona generation and application given the lack of additional methods to date coupled with decades of knowledge around experiences with female methods.

These cards have been created to share a collection of personas representative of **Users**, **Beneficiaries**, and **Intermediaries** for the next generation of male birth control. These stakeholder groups are defined as follows:

- Users - This group is defined as the individuals that will take or utilize the next generation of contraceptives designed for men.
- Beneficiaries - This group includes individuals who will benefit from the next generation of male contraceptives without having to take or use these products themselves.
- Intermediaries - This group is composed of individuals that will neither take, nor directly benefit from the next generation of male contraceptives, but still have a vested interest in ensuring their development.

The personas within each stakeholder group are connected to broadly defined life stages that are representative of a man’s reproductive journey. These stages are **Learning**, **Exploring**, **Deciding**, and **Concluding**, and are defined as follows:

- Learning - The initial stage, this is when a young man begins thinking about sex and establishes the foundation of their understanding of sexuality and relationship dynamics.
- Exploring - The next stage involves a man getting to know their sexuality and experimenting with sex irrespective of relationship status and without a focus on conceiving a child.
- Deciding - The third phase finds a man at the juncture in life where he is considering life events like getting married and having children, or not.
- Concluding - The final stage, this is when a man has ultimately completed their

Male Contraceptive Initiative



Design Thinking Tools & Activities

Persona Charades Game - Instructions

Introduction (continued)

reproductive journey, whether that includes fathering children or not.

It is important to note that neither the personas nor the life stages are exhaustive. They are intended to be illustrative as well as provocative. There are blank cards in each persona deck for you to use to create new personas if you like.

The purpose is to create representations of different perspectives and use these to brainstorm about their lives and how male contraception impacts them. The hope is that through this exercise we can begin developing empathy for different perspectives and utilize these insights to help identify opportunities with respect to developing new male contraceptives.

We encourage you to reach out to us at contact@malecontraceptive.org with any questions or comments, as well as to share any outputs from your experiences using these cards.

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Design Thinking Tools & Activities

Persona Charades Game - Instructions

Set-up & Preparation

- Read the introduction to the group and discuss what personas are and why brainstorming is a useful exercise.
- Divide the participants into two groups.
- Have the participant groups sit separately, facing the front of the room.
- Print out the sets of the Persona Cards, making sure to print the decks for Users, Beneficiaries, and Intermediaries, and have copies available for participants.
- Have a timer or watch available to keep time.
- Encourage participants to be as creative as possible!

Design Thinking Tools & Activities

Persona Charades Game - Instructions

Gameplay Option #1: Guess the Persona

How to play:

- Separate the decks (i.e., Users, Beneficiaries, and Intermediaries), shuffle the cards in each, and lie them face down.
- Flip a coin to see which team goes first.
- Ask for a volunteer from the first group to come to the front of the room and draw a card at random from one of the three decks.
- Give the participant a minute or two to review their persona card and get into “character”.
 - The participant will be acting or performing as the persona from the card they drew.
- Give the participant one (1) minute to role play as their persona while the rest of their team attempts to guess which persona they are.
- Award one (1) point if they correctly guess the persona, award zero (0) points for incorrect guesses.
- Alternate turns between each team, with a new volunteer each round, until the first team reaches a certain amount of points or a certain amount of time has transpired. If the latter, the team with the most points at the end of the time period wins.
- Go around the room and ask participants to share reflections on the experience.

Design Thinking Tools & Activities

Persona Charades Game - Instructions

Gameplay Option #2: Guess the Persona Pair

How to play:

- Separate the decks (i.e., Users, Beneficiaries, and Intermediaries), shuffle the cards in each, and lie them face down.
- Flip a coin to see which team goes first.
- Ask for two (2) volunteers from the first group to come to the front of the room and draw a card at random from one of the three decks.
- Give the participants a minute or two to review their persona cards and get into “character”.
 - The participants will be acting or performing as the persona from the card they drew, acting as though they are friends or in a relationship.
- Give the participants one (1) minute to role play as their personas while the rest of their team attempts to guess which personas they are.
- Award one (1) point if they correctly guess one of the personas, three (3) points if they are able to guess both personas, and award zero (0) points for incorrect guesses.
- Alternate turns between each team, with new volunteers each round, until the first team reaches a certain amount of points or a certain amount of time has transpired. If the latter, the team with the most points at the end of the time period wins.
- Go around the room and ask participants to share reflections on the experience.