

Male Contraceptive Initiative



Design Thinking Tools & Activities

Storyworld Activity - 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. They 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

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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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Set-up & Preparation

- Read the introduction to the group and discuss what personas are and why brainstorming is a useful exercise.
- Have the participants pair off in groups of two or three (depending on the game; see below).
- Have participants sit facing each other.
- Print out the sets of the Persona Cards, making sure to print the decks for Users, Beneficiaries, and Intermediaries.
- Print out the Scenarios worksheet prompts and provide copies to each participant or participant group.
- Each player will need to draw a card or set of cards based on the game that they are playing (See following sections for gameplay suggestions).
- Encourage participants to be as creative as possible!

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Gameplay Option #1: Individual Personas

How to play:

- Pair off participants in groups of two.
- Have participants sit facing each other.
- Each participant group is to choose one (1) card at random from the User Persona deck.
- Each participant spends a few minutes (5 maximum) reviewing their persona card and getting into “character”.
- Participants will effectively role play using their assigned persona card as their character
- Provide a headline to the larger group that in some way pertains to male contraception.
- Each participant group works to write out a narrative from the perspective of their persona based on the headline that was provided.
- Go around the room and ask each participant group to read their story to the larger group, as well as to reflect on the experience.
- Repeat the process with the Beneficiary and Intermediary personas.

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Gameplay Option #2: Persona Pairs

How to play:

- Pair off participants in groups of two.
- Have participants sit facing each other.
- Have one participant choose one (1) card at random from the User Persona deck, and the other participant choose one (1) card at random from the Beneficiary Persona deck.
 - For this exercise, the participants' card pairing will be used as a proxy for an intimate, heterosexual relationship.
- Each participant spends a few minutes (5 maximum) reviewing their persona card and getting into "character"
 - Participants will effectively roleplay using their assigned persona card as their character who is in a relationship with the other character.
- Provide a headline to the larger group that in some way pertains to male contraception.
- Each participant group works to write out a narrative from the perspectives of their personas and how they would react to the headline that was provided.
- Repeat the process with participants switching roles (i.e., the User becomes the Beneficiary and draws from that deck, while the Beneficiary becomes the User and draws from that deck).
- Go around the room and ask each participant group to share which persona pairing they were assigned, read their story to the larger group, and reflect on the experience.

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Gameplay Option #3: Persona Groups

How to play:

- Pair off participants in groups of three.
- Have participants sit facing each other.
- Have one participant choose one (1) card at random from the User Persona deck, another participant choose one (1) card at random from the Beneficiary Persona deck, and the final participant choose one (1) card at random from the Intermediary Persona deck.
 - For this exercise, the User and Beneficiary card pairing will be used as a proxy for an intimate, heterosexual relationship, whereas the participant with the Intermediary card acting as an outside supporter for the couple.
- Each participant spends a few minutes (3 maximum) reviewing their persona card and getting into “character”
 - Participants will effectively roleplay using their assigned persona card as their character who is in a relationship with the other character.
- Provide a headline to the larger group that in some way pertains to male contraception.
- Each participant group works to write out a narrative from the perspectives of their personas and how they would react to the headline that was provided, with the User and Beneficiary as a couple and the Intermediary as an advisor.
- Repeat the process with participants switching roles until every participant has the opportunity to take on the role of a User, Beneficiary, and Intermediary.
- Go around the room and ask each participant group to share which persona grouping they were assigned, read their story to the larger group, and reflect on the experience.

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Gameplay Option #4: Play as Yourself

How to play:

- Pair off with a friend, family member, or partner.
- Sit facing each other.
- Have one participant write a headline and the other write the article.
- The participant tasked with writing the narrative reads their story to the other participant when completed.
- Participants take turns writing headlines and articles, and reading their narratives to each other for a set period of time or until they begin to lose interest.
- Ask each participant to reflect on the experience.