

Male Contraceptive Initiative



Design Thinking Tools & Activities

Design a Persona 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. (Note: please be sure to print double-sided!)
- Print out the Design a Persona worksheet and provide copies to each participant. (Total number of copies to be determined by the number of activities planned for).
- 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).
- Be sure to have pens, pencils, markers or other writing instruments available for each participant.
- Encourage participants to be as creative as possible!

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Gameplay Option #1: Expand a Persona

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, Beneficiary, or Intermediary Persona decks.
- Each participant spends a few minutes (5 maximum) reviewing the persona card that was drawn and discusses what they think that persona is like and what their interests are with respect to contraception.
- Have the participants work together to draw and fill out the details for this persona. The intention is for the participant group to expand upon the information provided in the persona card to further articulate the persona.
- Go around the room and ask each participant group to share which persona they designed for, as well as to present their detailed biography to the larger group.
- Ask the larger group to provide feedback and suggestions as to how each participant group could improve their persona.
- Have the participants work together to revise and improve their persona design. This should reflect the feedback that the larger group provided.
- Go around the room and ask each participant group to present their revised idea to the larger group.
- Repeat the experience until each participant has had the opportunity to expand a User, Beneficiary, and Intermediary persona, or until the group loses interest.
- Go around the room and ask each participant group to share reflections on the experience.

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Gameplay Option #2: Create a New Persona

How to play:

- Pair off participants in groups of two.
- Have participants sit facing each other.
- Provide a set of User, Beneficiary, and Intermediary cards to each participant group.
- Each participant group spends a few minutes (10 maximum) reviewing all of the persona cards.
- Have the participants work together to identify a new User, Beneficiary, or Intermediary persona, as well as draw and fill out the details for their new persona. The intention is to design a persona that is not represented in any of the existing decks.
- Go around the room and ask each participant group to share which persona they designed to the larger group.
- Ask the larger group to provide feedback and suggestions as to how each participant group could improve their persona.
- Have the participants work together to revise and improve their persona design. This should reflect the feedback that the larger group provided.
- Go around the room and ask each participant group to present their revised idea to the larger group.
- Repeat the experience with the pairings so that they have the opportunity to create new Users, Beneficiaries, and Intermediaries.
- Go around the room and ask each participant group to share reflections on the experience.

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Gameplay Option #3: Persona-fy Yourself

How to play:

- Pair off with a friend, family member, or partner.
- Sit facing each other.
- Have each participant draw and fill out the details for their persona. The intention is for each participant to design a persona that they think would represent their own interests and needs.
- Each participant takes turns presenting their idea to their partner, providing as much detail as they are comfortable sharing with respect to each component of the persona profile.
- The participant being presented to provides feedback with respect to improving the persona idea.
- Participants switch places to present ideas and provide feedback.
- Have the participants to revise and improve their persona design. This should reflect the feedback that the larger group provided.
- Each participant then presents their revised idea to their partner for additional conversation and feedback.
- Each participant reflects on the experience with their partner.