



Independent



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Confidential

Volume 2:
**Menopause and
the workplace**

Menopause



Focus



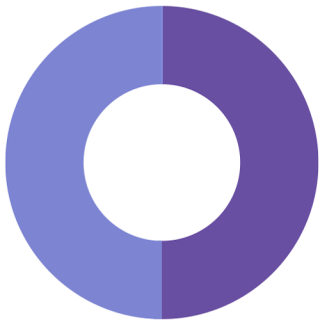
advocacy focus

- 3 Managing menopause at work
- 4 Impact of menopause symptoms on work
- 5 The last taboo topic at work?
- 6 Real Life Story
- 8 Tips for Managing the Menopause at Work
- 11 Speaking to your Manager about the Menopause
- 13 Supporting a colleague going through the menopause
- 15 Understanding your rights
- 16 What to do when menopause is affecting your work
- 18 Concentration and focus exercise
- 19 Building Confidence at Work
- 20 Decision Making Exercises
- 21 Sources
- 22 Further reading & RESOURCES
- 23 About Advocacy Focus

MANAGING THE MENOPAUSE

Many employers underestimate the effect symptoms of the menopause can have. Calling someone 'menopausal,' has even been used as a derogatory term, but we need to realise the significant impact that the menopause can have on a person's life and ultimately relationships in and out of work.

Physical and psychological symptoms of the menopause can affect performance at work, quality of working life and absence levels. For many people going through the menopause, presenteeism (showing up at work sick, fatigued or not functioning at normal levels of productivity) is evident but difficult to address and costly to the organisation if ignored.



Around half of menopausal people have been reported as finding work "somewhat or fairly difficult"



Up to 10% of menopausal people give up work altogether because of severe symptoms

£30k

The average cost of replacing an employee. Losing employees due to a lack of support can be far reaching

Symptoms may have a negative effect in the work place and can lead to:

- Lower productivity
- Lower ability to complete tasks effectively
- Lower engagement or commitment to work
- Lower job satisfaction
- Problems with time management
- Relationship issues with colleagues / managers
- Higher sickness absence
- Higher desire to leave work altogether.

It's not all negative though - some people have said work helps give them a focus and cope with their symptoms better!

Menopause Meltdown

The clock is a ticking
I'm trying to sleep
Sweat is a trickling
I don't sleep until 4
Get up
Go to work
Try and focus the day
I go into ward round
The sweat starts to pour
They look at my face
I get out the tissues
I am red and I'm dripping
Embarrassment ensues
Like a melting waxwork
At Madam Tussaud's
The harder I fight it
The more I outpour!
Will I survive this exhausting day?
When all I want is to hit the Hay?
No patience for patients
Not that they'd know
Somehow I get through it
Homeward bound at 4
Irrational temper
Socks on the floor
Should I cry?
Should I leave him?
Or begin to roar?
Total exhaustion
I need to sleep
My partner wants nookie
I want to snore!
At least it is weekend
I can stay in bed late
Insomnia strikes
Up at 6 never mind 8!

THE IMPACT OF MENOPAUSE SYMPTOMS ON WORK

Here we look at a few of the most common symptoms that can affect someone in the workplace.

Physical symptoms and effects in the workplace

- Disturbed sleep – possibly the most damaging symptom as sleep is essential for its restorative benefits. The loss of sleep can reduce the ability to concentrate and stay focused
- Hot flushes and night sweats – again these symptoms can affect sleep and can lower work performance by reducing concentration, motivation and attention to detail. Hot flushes can be a source of embarrassment for many people, particularly in front of colleagues.
- Heavy periods – can be distressing and embarrassing. Heavy blood loss can also lead to anaemia and vitamin deficiencies which can worsen tiredness and fatigue.

Psychological symptoms and effects in the workplace

- Confusion or 'Meno-Fog' – can cause concentration problems and lead to stress and anxiety
- Memory loss – can impair decision making and lead to self-doubt and reduced confidence
- Mood swings and irritability – can lead to problematic emotional or aggressive outbursts which may undermine their professionalism or lead to problems with employee relationships
- Depression – depressive episodes can occur, which is a whole topic in itself.

It is not fully known if symptoms are caused by changing hormone levels or by a 'domino effect', where one symptom leads to another. For example hot flushes leading to insomnia and then insomnia leading to depression. Whatever the cause, the symptoms can lead to significant emotional distress, hidden or noticeable, particularly at work.

WHAT IS A HOT FLUSH?

A sudden feeling of heat. Which can make skin red and hot. Severe flushes can cause sweat to soak through clothing. Some women only have occasional hot flushes that don't really bother them, while others can have several over the course of the day and find them uncomfortable, disruptive and embarrassing.



THE LAST WORKPLACE TABOO?

It's not just the symptoms themselves which can make work more difficult. Some individuals may talk to each other – or to their GP - about the menopause, but talking about the menopause at work is relatively unheard of. Attitudes in the workplace play a vital role, particularly where people are supervising or managing staff.

Policies and procedures that clearly show how menopausal employees will be supported should be in place and the entire workforce should be familiar with them. Training, talks and literature about the menopause will help open up a dialogue about the menopause and promoting understanding amongst employees.

People are often wary of disclosing symptoms at work with many not wanting their line manager to think their performance has or could be affected. Some individuals find the topic too embarrassing to talk about in general. Generational barriers may also exist as younger people cannot relate to what their older colleagues are going through. However, the more the subject is normalised, the more likely it is that future generations will feel open about talking about and disclosing the impact of their menopausal symptoms.

The stigma of menopause can also lead to problems at work in itself. The anxiety caused by covering up the symptoms or not wanting people to think differently of them can make symptoms worse. Often, people don't reveal negative symptoms for fear of losing their job or being discriminated against.

Reasons for non-disclosure at work:

There are many more reasons why someone may not want to disclose their symptoms, including:

- Thinking that it is a natural process which happens to us all (so they don't want special treatment)
- In denial, not wanting to see it as a sign of getting old
- Simply not recognising that they are menopausal
- Fearing that it may prevent them from career progression



COMMON WORKPLACE ISSUES SPECIFIC TO MENOPAUSE

Workplace factors relevant to menopause include:

Work space:

- Inadequate ventilation, high temperatures, humidity and dry air may exacerbate hot flushes
- Lack of access to appropriate facilities e.g. toilets, cold drinking water or quiet rest areas can make coping with heavy or irregular periods, hot flushes and fatigue difficult, as can confined work spaces or overcrowded desk areas.

Work wear:

- Unsuitable uniforms, suit jackets, heels/workboots or other heavy, uncomfortable work-wear can make the experience of hot flushes worse.

Work patterns:

- Not being able to take regular breaks
- Being at work can make heavy periods harder to manage
- Shift workers may struggle with the effects of sleep deprivation.

Work stress:

- Stress related to workload, deadlines, fixed start and finish times, increased responsibility, formal meetings, having to learn something new and/or giving a presentation is linked to frequency of hot flushes.



THE CEO - (MUM AND SINGLE PARENT TO TWO CHILDREN)

I don't even know when I started feeling 'rubbish'. Many women know roughly when they became menopausal. I didn't have a clue. I was busy running a charity in my first CEO role, raising my children on my own and keeping things ticking along at home. I simply didn't join the dots with regards to the symptoms I was experiencing, and that my early symptoms were possibly hormone related. Maybe because in my head I was far too young to be fast tracking my way towards menopause! I do remember my periods getting less and less, but again that refusal to admit that I was a 'woman of a certain age' kicked in. I didn't know at the time that the perimenopause can begin for most women in their early to mid-forties.

I do remember the tiredness and sleep disruption that knocked me for six. I remember feeling so bone achingly tired that the thought of putting one foot in front of the other, particularly at weekends after a long week at work, would sometimes make me want to cry. However, when I went to bed, I would spend all night tossing and turning (due to the hormonal spikes) and watching the clock tick round. Feeling exhausted was no way to start a busy working day, but that became my norm.

It was only when I began to get tremendous joint pain and low mood that I went to the GP. I'd done my own internet research, which had alarmed me to say the least, but I went armed with the self-diagnosis of peri-menopause. Seeing my Doctor wasn't a game changer sadly, but it was a step in the right direction. The Doctor, a much younger woman, wanted to treat my low mood with a combination of counselling – for which there was a several month waiting list – and anti-depressants. Admitting to the Doctor that I was struggling was a big deal for me. I have always been fiercely independent and hated succumbing to any form of 'illness'. My Mum has lived in a care home for over 10 years with advanced dementia, so I had no point of reference in regards to the menopause, to help me make sense of how I was feeling both physically and mentally.



"I do remember the tiredness and sleep disruption that knocked me for six. I remember feeling so bone achingly tired that the thought of putting one foot in front of the other, particularly at weekends after a long week at work, would sometimes make me want to cry."

For me though when perimenopause was at its peak, I think the hardest thing I had to deal with was fear. An irrational fear that would well up inside of me for no apparent reason until I felt physically sick. Fear that something bad was going to happen to my children was a recurrent theme for me. I remember my son travelling to San Francisco. I checked his flight tracker obsessively until he landed. Panicking in case the flight tracker suddenly disappeared off the screen. I had to stop watching the news as it caused me to worry about the world my children were growing up in. I know as a parent that we worry about our children, but the peri-menopause took this to a whole other level. Uncontrollable, irrational and all-consuming for what felt like the longest time.

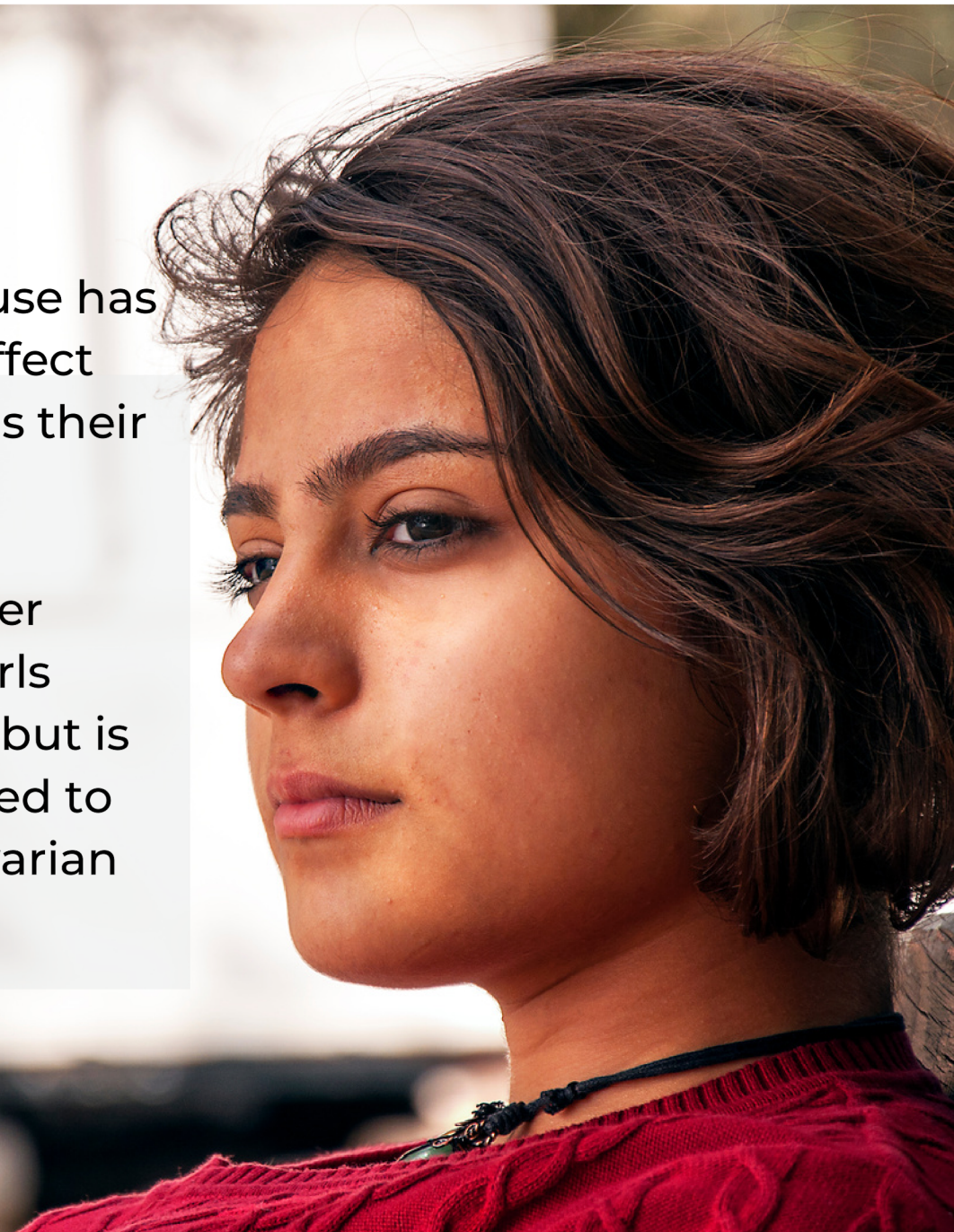


I am significantly better now than I was, but do wonder how much longer this will go on for? Who knows, it is different for every woman. What I do know is that the menopause is not an underground movement. It is not a taboo, off limits subject. Nor is it something to make fun of. Particularly when so many women give up work as they can't control their symptoms. Some women give up on life all together.

So that's where we come in, this is my call to action. We are an army of women that can take ownership of this, in whatever small way we are able to. The same as we prepare our children for puberty and our bodies for pregnancy, we need to get our daughters, sisters, nieces and friends ready for this part of a woman's life. Continuing as we are, ignoring symptoms and muddling through is no longer an option. So with that I ask you to talk about, shout about and raise hell fire about this and leave a strong (normalised) legacy for future generations. So here's to strong women. May be know them, may we be them, may we raise them.

The perimenopause has been known to affect women as early as their teens.

In fact, 10 cases per 100,000 are for girls aged 15-29 years, but is most often referred to as Premature Ovarian Sufficiency.



TIPS FOR MANAGING THE MENOPAUSE AT WORK

Here are some top tips that have been pulled together by people going through the menopause, which will help you stay well at work and help with some of your symptoms.

STAY HYDRATED

Between hot flushes and night sweats, you can easily lose a lot more water than normal, so be sure to drink more water than you are used to counteract this. The Institute of Medicine recommends that someone going through menopause drink nine glasses (2.2 litres) of water a day and an additional 8 ounces for every 20 minutes of exercise you do. Staying hydrating can also help women that suffer with hormonal headaches and migraines.



AVOID HOT FLUSH TRIGGERS

Hot weather, smoking, caffeine, spicy foods, alcohol, tight clothing and stress can all trigger hot flushes. Try to avoid eating hot food and drinking hot drinks during the day or before meetings. Interestingly only 7% of Japanese women experience hot flushes, this is possibly due to their heavy soy based diet. Dietary changes can significantly reduce hot flushes for women.



FIND WAYS TO RELAX AT WORK

Does your office have an empty room you can go in for some privacy? Things like mindfulness, meditation and other relaxation techniques during lunch time can all lower cortisol levels (stress hormone) and lower your risk of depression. There are lots of apps on your phone which help you do this, whether it's 10 or 20 minutes in a quiet room with your earphones in or even a lunch time yoga session.



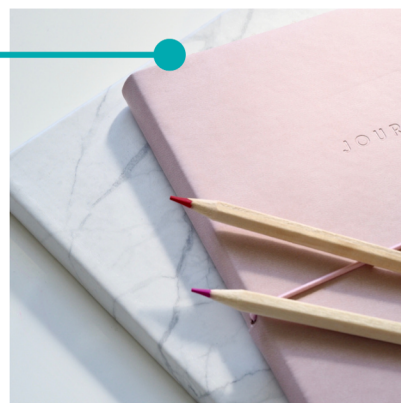
WEAR LAYERS

Dressing in light layers is a good way to manage hot flushes and changing office temperatures. Make sure you choose breathable fabrics like cotton which can help you to keep cool. Take layers on and off and adjust to how your body feels. Staying cool can significantly reduce the amount of hot flushes a woman can have during the day.



KEEP A DIARY

Make a note of your daily symptoms at work and at home and look for any patterns – such as time of day or after eating etc. By doing this, you can identify when you may feel your worse and adjust your workload accordingly. Do you concentrate more or less after lunch? If less, try doing the work that needs the most focus in the morning. That way you are proactively reducing your stress levels.



READ UP ON YOUR WORK PLACE POLICIES

Many employers are becoming 'menopause friendly,' and realising the importance of supporting people with the menopause at work. Check if your workplace has any policies around the menopause, if not here are some good policies to check out; sickness and absence policies, flexible working policies and your employee handbook. Look for ways your workplace supports people with long-term health conditions.



TALK

Talking is one of the oldest medicines in the book – and yes, it works! Finding someone to confide in is important. You'll be surprised to know just how much getting things off your chest can alleviate stress. Chances are, if you work in a big workplace with people of all ages, there will be someone who understands what you're going through. Talking about your symptoms can help you share your preferred coping strategies and working patterns, you could even set up a support group.



DON'T BE AFRAID TO ASK FOR HELP

Don't be afraid to discuss your health with your manager or employer, you'll be surprised how many supportive people there are out there if you just ask the question. If you are struggling to manage your symptoms or feel it is impacting on your ability to work, then be sure to ask for help. Most workplaces will be able to accommodate requests to help you feel more comfortable if it means it helps you to stay productive in work.



DON'T BE TOO HARD ON YOURSELF

The menopause can be confusing, scary, upsetting and for many people, a trying time. There are only about 20% of individuals that sail through it with little or no symptoms, so don't beat yourself up! The menopause is inevitable, so celebrate the small wins – and acknowledge that you are going through an important life transition. Practice self care at every opportunity and look after yourself, you are unique!



TAKE NOTES

Taking notes can be helpful if you experience any memory problems. Whether it's during a meeting or even just sat at your desk, carry around a notepad and pen in your bag to write down anything that pops into your head that you want to remember! If you use a calendar at work, fill it in at the earliest opportunity so that you don't miss any important meetings.



SEE YOUR GP

If things are getting a bit too much and you feel unable to cope, or that your work is really being affected, don't be afraid to seek medical help. There are a range of medications out there to help counteract specific menopause symptoms, your doctor can give you advice on available treatment options and advice on how to manage your symptoms at work. Ask questions, particularly if you are worried about possible side effects, your Doctor will be able to allay any fears or concerns you may have.



It's important to remember that the menopause is a natural stage of life – and it will end!

SPEAKING TO YOUR MANAGER ABOUT THE MENOPAUSE

BREATHE!

We can often make things worse than they seem in our head, if talking to your manager about something personal fills you with dread, it's important to remember that your manager is a human being too, who probably has had to deal with some health issues in their lives too. Take a deep breath and speak confidently about what you are going through; you deserve to be listened to and taken seriously. Take a colleague with you if it helps, sometimes we all need some moral support.

ASK FOR A MEETING

It's a good idea to arrange a meeting and book some time out with your manager instead of catching them off guard. This also gives you plenty of time to say what you need to say without being interrupted.

PREPARE

Keep a diary of your menopause symptoms and how they are affecting you so that you can speak through the impact they are having confidently and clearly. Think about any reasonable adjustments you would like to ask about that would help you feel more comfortable at work. Is it a change to your working hours, working from home, a change of uniform or even just an additional desk fan or access to cold water? Think about what symptoms are affecting you the most and how your working environment can better support you – and other colleagues. Most importantly, prepare what to say. Mentally rehearse what you're going to say, not because you might forget, but because this will make you seem more poised and clear and with a specific goal in mind.

KEEP IT SIMPLE

Explain your situation clearly. Talk to your boss about your current situation, what's happening and most importantly how's it affecting your work. Remember that not everyone understands what the menopause is and how impactful it can be. Whilst your organisation might be forward thinking, the ins and outs can be difficult even for you to understand. Keep your jargon simple, state your symptoms confidently, how they are affecting you and don't go into too much confusing detail.

DON'T EXPECT AN ANSWER IMMEDIATELY

Allow your manager time to digest the information and seek advice on any changes you have requested. Schedule a follow up meeting for a week later to go through any actions. Give your manager time to process the information and possibly read the information in this guide to bring them up to speed!

ASK FOR REGULAR REVIEW MEETINGS

It's not unreasonable to ask for regular support meetings, especially as your symptoms may change as you go through the menopause. Some symptoms may get better or worse and new ones may appear. Employers have a duty of care to ensure their employees are healthy and safe when at work, so don't hesitate in asking for regular meetings to discuss your needs.

TRY NOT TO BE EMBARRASSED

We get it – it can be embarrassing! Talking about any personal and private issues at work isn't easy for anyone. But it's important to remember that without talking about it, you may not get the support you need which could make your symptoms worse. Your manager is not only a human being, but a professional too, and will need to know about anything that may affect your performance at work.

BE HONEST!

This one sounds obvious but we often hate to make a big deal out of things. Sometimes we may think we can just get on with things and we may even understate our symptoms to not make a fuss. You can only get the support and understanding you need by being honest about your symptoms and how they are affecting you. Many people have experienced significant symptoms, been the butt of jokes or been discriminated against and not raised it with their managers for fear of reprisal or not being taken seriously. Speaking out and being honest about your experiences will change things for the better for you and for your colleagues.

BE A FORCE FOR CHANGE IN YOUR WORKPLACE

Why not lead the change, take action and set up an informal or formal support group at work? If your work is not as forward thinking when it comes to menopause, maybe it's not because they don't want to, but because they have no one to do it or how to go about it. Speak to your managers and HR team, offer to help them create new policies and support them to help support others going through the menopause at your workplace.



The menopause is a natural stage of life. Every experience of the menopause is unique. If you are struggling with your symptoms, it's best to let your employer know. Most workplaces will be able to offer you some form of support. Finally, be sure to check out your rights beforehand.

SUPPORTING A COLLEAGUE GOING THROUGH THE MENOPAUSE

Tips for individuals unfamiliar with menopause symptoms.



The menopause is a normal and natural stage of life that affects 47% of the current workforce. The average age of onset for the menopause is 51 in the UK, but people can become peri-menopausal in their 40s and sometimes even before 40 (early menopause).

The menopause can drastically affect an individual's quality of life at home and at work. There are over 50 documented symptoms of which some can be managed effectively – this is where you come in. Employers have a duty of care to any employee with a long-term health condition, this includes the menopause. But you can also make a significant difference as their colleague.

Stigma still exists around the menopause and there are a lot of myths regarding it. The important thing to understand is that menopause is a fact of life – just like puberty and pregnancy – with many very real and upsetting symptoms that cannot be helped. 80% of people who go through menopause will experience symptoms from mild to extreme and this can last on average between two and 10 years.

WHAT IS IT?

The menopause is the period of a person's life where their ovaries stop producing eggs, as a result, hormone levels drop over time which causes biochemical changes in the brain and body. Hormones are important because they regulate a lot of our body's processes, from digestion to our reproductive system and even our brain chemicals. This can result in a host of unwanted, confusing, painful and overwhelming symptoms for many women.

10%

of people going through menopause leave their jobs due to severe symptoms.

FIND OUT ABOUT IT

It's important to know how the menopause can affect someone. Does your workplace have any helpful resources? A quick internet search can bring up tonnes of information. For example, during menopause the vascular system (also called the circulatory system) is more unstable which can result in migraines or tension headaches becoming more frequent or hard to manage. Be sure to read up on the symptoms online or ask your employer for a factsheet – there are over 50 of them!

TALK!

No, not necessarily about the menopause. But be sure to ask your colleague how she is feeling today. Don't presume that because someone is going through the menopause they can't function as a human being, ask how you can help them, if they are having a bad day, or just ask about their weekend. It's nice to talk and be supportive for each other. We need to normalise the conversation about the menopause and ensure we are looking out for our colleague's wellbeing.

45

Percent of people going through menopause feel their symptoms negatively affect their work

42

Percent say their symptoms were worse than expected

56

Percent say the menopause has been made fun of at work

UNDERSTAND THAT SOME THINGS ARE OUT OF THEIR CONTROL

Most people cannot help or change the way their symptoms affect them. Whether they are struggling with hot flushes which means they ask for a window to be opened, or are feeling particularly low that day, don't make things worse by telling her to 'cheer up' or have a go about feeling cold. Understand that she cannot help the way she is feeling, because if she could, she would obviously not choose to feel that way. Be sympathetic!

BELIEVE THEM

This can be a really trying and confusing time for many individuals. Most people do not exaggerate their symptoms just to get time off or change their hours just because they feel like it. When someone makes adjustments to their working life due to menopause, it is often because their symptoms are really affecting them physically and mentally, and sometimes it's their last resort. Be supportive and offer to help in any way you can. It was found that 10% of people going through menopause actually leave work due to their menopause symptoms, so don't think that they can just switch them off or that they are putting them on.

DON'T TRY AND 'FIX THINGS'

Your colleague doesn't want you to 'fix' how they are feeling, they just want to know that you are aware that they are menopausal and are sometimes at the mercy of their symptoms. Let them know that you are aware that they may need additional support, or a friendly ear now and again and that you are there if and whenever they need you.

ENCOURAGE THEM TO GET HELP

If you notice that your colleague isn't coping too well, gently suggest that they confide in someone, whether it is you, a manager, HR or their GP.

BE PATIENT

Some people sail through the menopause, but others suffer really badly with symptoms. Be patient with your colleague if you can see that they are particularly stressed that day or if you see them becoming worked up. Don't snap at them and try to remain calm.

SUPPORT THEM

It's true that a cup of tea can go a long way! Offer to make your colleague a brew or get them a glass of water if you see them becoming flushed in the face and reaching for the window. If they know you have got their back then they will relax more and it is one less thing to worry about.



REMEMBER THAT...

Not all menopausal people have mood swings. And if they do – they can't help it! Don't assume that because someone is menopausal they are going to be grouchy, grumpy or moody and take things out on you. Whilst haywire hormones can cause some people to become angry or temperamental, others may experience the opposite and have symptoms that affect them in a different way. It's a myth that all menopausal people are moody and that you don't want to get on the wrong side of them, most are trying really hard to not let their symptoms affect them at work.

UNDERSTANDING YOUR RIGHTS

As someone going through menopause, you have rights at work. Your employer has a duty of care to ensure your health, safety and welfare when you are at work. The way employers support employees with the menopause should be no different to the way they support any employee with a long-term health condition. Read up on your rights, below.

FLEXIBLE WORKING

You have a statutory right to request flexible working if you have been employed for at least 26 weeks. Flexible working requests can include a change to your working hours, such as starting later in the day if you are experiencing sleep problems, or even working from home to alleviate some symptoms that are exacerbated by the office or workplace. Your request has to be considered and can only be denied upon specific grounds, such as if it may affect the ability to meet customer demand or have a detrimental effect on quality. These days, most employers are flexible and will be more than happy to accommodate most reasonable requests that don't affect productivity.

LONG TERM HEALTH CONDITIONS IN THE WORKPLACE

Employers have a responsibility to take into account the health and safety of their employees whilst at work. The menopause is regarded as a long-term health condition and therefore, your employer must take into account any difficulties you may face. The Health and Safety at Work Act states that all employers need to ensure the health, safety and welfare of their employees, and as such are required to do risk assessments. This includes any specific risks to menopausal individuals at work.

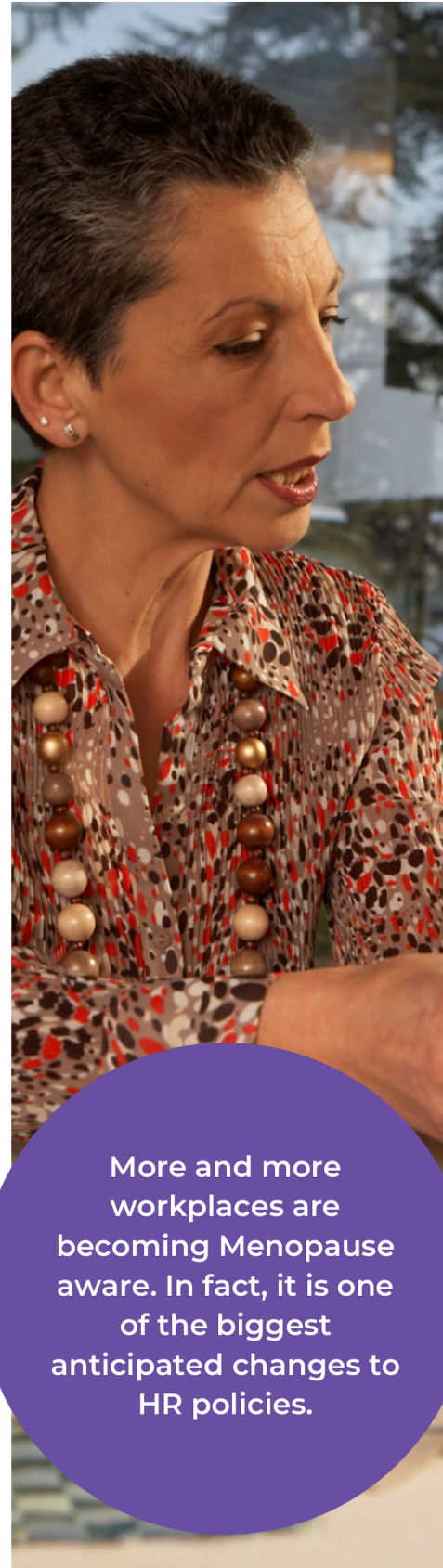
THE EQUALITY ACT 2010

If your employer fails to meet any reasonable adjustments you request, you may be entitled to make a discrimination claim under the Equality Act 2010 depending upon the circumstances. Employers have a reasonable duty of care to provide a safe and comfortable environment for menopausal individuals and ensure that working practices do not adversely affect you to avoid any claims of sex or age.

For example, an employer imposing a strict uniform policy who then refuses any requests for you to wear more comfortable workwear could amount to indirect sex discrimination. Employers should treat menopause the same as any other long term health condition that affects people and therefore should make the appropriate adjustments in the workplace .

WORKPLACE POLICIES

It is not currently a legal requirement for workplaces to have specific menopause policies like they do pregnancy policies for example. This may change in the future. Your workplace may have taken it upon themselves to create these, as it is good practice to do so in regards to employees' wellbeing, so it is always worth asking.



More and more workplaces are becoming Menopause aware. In fact, it is one of the biggest anticipated changes to HR policies.

WHAT TO DO WHEN THE MENOPAUSE IS AFFECTING YOUR WORK

For many people work is a positive thing and this is no different for people going through the menopause; it gives us routine, a sense of purpose, boosts our self-esteem and forms part of our identity. However some working environments are not menopause friendly and can often make symptoms worse; from cramped work spaces and lack of ventilation/temperature control to unbreathable uniforms or a strict dress code policy. If your environment is contributing towards your symptoms or making them worse, speak to a colleague or your line manager and look for some quick solutions to improve your working environment i.e. sitting near a window or seeking permission to relax your dress code over the summer months to help with your hot flushes.

✓ ACKNOWLEDGE YOUR SYMPTOMS

Sometimes it's hard to recognise your symptoms for what they are; especially during the early stages of the menopause. Try not to push unwanted symptoms aside and acknowledge if something in your body is changing or doesn't feel right. If you are having worrying or severe symptoms then it's important to see a Doctor. For symptoms that are menopause related there are many online forums and support groups where you can get support and reassurance from women going through the menopause too.

✓ WHAT WOULD HELP?

Would a desk fan help you combat those hot flushes? Would starting work later in the day help when you've only had two hours sleep? Would access to a cold water machine help you to keep more hydrated? Think about any reasonable adjustments your workplace can make to help you and your colleagues feel more comfortable. These adjustments will benefit the whole workplace, it just takes one person to come up with the idea or suggestion.

✓ SELF-CARE

If you are someone who takes great pride in their work and suddenly you find that you are struggling to make decisions, or are not as productive as you once were, it's important not to put any additional pressure on yourself. The menopause is a natural stage of life, and your feelings and symptoms are simply out of your control. Take it easy, accept that these changes are temporary, and think about how you can make adjustments to your diet, lifestyle and sleep routine to help manage symptoms at home and at work. Be kind to yourself.

✓ AT HOME

If you feel happy and supported at home, then this will reflect your outlook and positivity at work. However, if you are having problems at home or relationships are becoming strained, this can affect the way you react or deal with things at work. Think about how you can effectively manage your symptoms at home and make sure your family understands what you are going through. Give your family and friends some information about the menopause so they have an understanding of what you are going through. If you live alone then consider joining a social group or taking part in something locally. Connections with others is so important for your health and wellbeing.



✓ SPEAK TO SOMEONE

Let your manager know if you need help. Your workplace can only support you and look to make reasonable adjustments where necessary, if you tell them. If you feel uncomfortable speaking to your manager, can you speak to someone in HR? Or maybe confide in a colleague that you know and trust who can support you to speak to someone.

✓ SPEAK TO YOUR GP

There are a range of medical and non-medical treatment options available to help with the menopause. Regularly checking in with your GP will help you get the treatment you need to manage your symptoms and help you in your professional and personal life. An open dialogue with your employer about how you are managing your own symptoms, and how they can support you further, is key to successfully staying in work and coping well.

✓ REMEMBER YOUR RIGHTS

Yes – you have rights! As a menopausal individual at work, your employer has a duty of care to ensure your health, safety and welfare in the workplace. You have rights to request flexible, working when you have been in your role for 26 weeks, and any requests you make in regards to your employer making reasonable adjustments should be taken seriously. If your symptoms are impacting on your day to day role, you can request a risk assessment or occupational health referral via your manager.

74%

of menopausal people experience hot flushes.

69%

of menopausal people experience weight gain.

54%

of menopausal people experience mood changes.

84%

of menopausal people say their menopause symptoms interfere with their lives



BUILDING CONFIDENCE AT WORK

MY STRENGTHS AND QUALITIES

Things I am good at:	Challenges I have overcome:
1.	1.
2.	2.
3.	3.

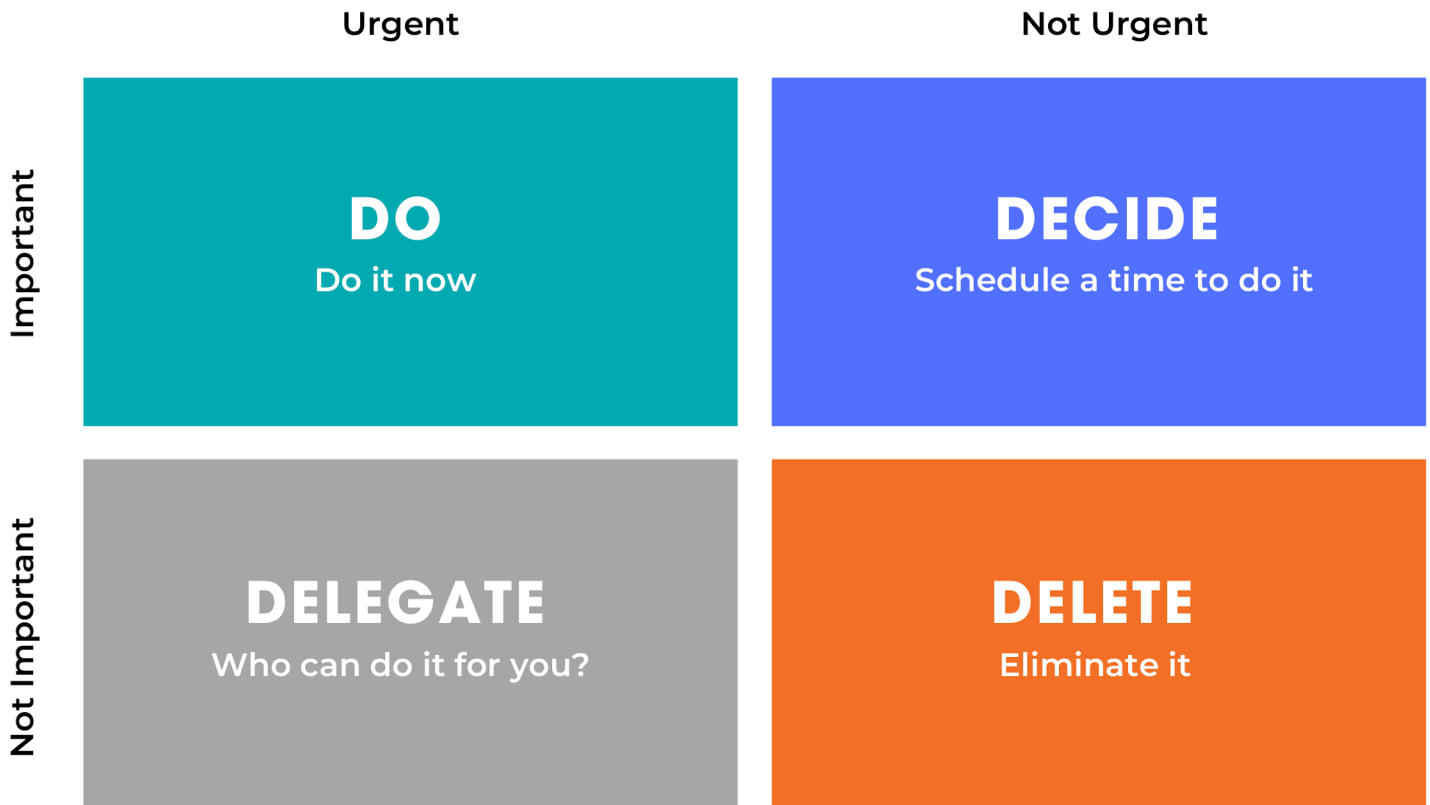
1.	1.
2.	2.
3.	3.

What I value most:	Times I have helped others:
1.	1.
2.	2.
3.	3.

Things that make me unique:	Times I have made others happy:
1.	1.
2.	2.
3.	3.

DECISION MAKING EXERCISES

1. THE ESIENHOWER DECISION MATRIX



Use the exercise above to assess the priority of any task by it's level of urgency and important.

2. THE WARREN BUFFET METHOD

1. Make a list of everything you want to get done today
2. Begin with the task at the top of the list
3. Continue ONLY when you have completed it
4. When a task has been completed, cross it off the list

SOURCES

All the facts and statistics in this toolkit were taken from credible sources.
For all sources, see below.

<https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/birthsdeathsandmarriages/deaths/bulletins/suicidesintheunitedkingdom/2016registrations>

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/menopause-transition-effects-on-womens-economic-participation>

<https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/menopause/symptoms/><https://www.menopausedoctor.co.uk>

<https://www.beestonshenton.co.uk/employment-law/menopause-workplace/>

<http://www.menopausemakeover.com/2010/08/13/how-much-water-should-you-consume/>

<https://menopauseintheworkplace.co.uk/>

<https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/menopause/>

<https://thebms.org.uk/publications/tools-for-clinicians/>

<https://www.cwu.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/11/Wales-TUC-Report-The-Menopause-a-workplace-issue.pdf>

<https://www.aarp.org/health/conditions-treatments/info-2018/menopause-symptoms-doctors-relief-treatment.html>

<https://www.nhsemployers.org/retention-and-staff-experience/health-and-wellbeing/protecting-staff-and-preventing-ill-health/taking-a-targeted-approach/menopause-in-the-workplace>

<http://www.fom.ac.uk/wp-content/uploads/Menopause-Focus-Infographic.pdf>

<https://www.mind.org.uk/information-support/types-of-mental-health-problems/statistics-and-facts-about-mental-health/how-common-are-mental-health-problems/#.XekI95P7TIU>

FURTHER READING & RESOURCES

There are lots of useful resources online to help employees during the menopause. Some of our favourites include:



thebms.org.uk



H E N P I C K E D

henpicked.net



NHS.uk



avogel.co.uk

SEE HER THRIVE

seeherthrive.com

Menopause *matters*

menopausematters.co.uk

The Advisory, Conciliation and Arbitration Service - www.acas.org.uk

UNISON - unison.org.uk

Menopause symptoms - www.nhs.uk/conditions/menopause/symptoms/

Menopause UK - www.menopauseuk.org

Healthline - www.healthline.com

Women's Health Concern - www.womens-health-concern.org

Menopause Support - www.menopausesupport.co.uk

Menopause Doctor - www.menopausedoctor.org.uk

Let's Talk Menopause - www.letstalkmenopause.co.uk

If you are looking for something more specific, you can find lots of useful and helpful information, tips and tricks and support online.

Simply type what you're looking for into a search engine.

About Advocacy Focus

We help people live the lives they want to live.

We are a registered charity providing advocacy support across the North-West. We support people with complex health and social care needs take back control of their lives, by helping them communicate their needs and wishes when important decisions are being made about their care or treatment. We support people with mental ill health, Dementia, communication difficulties, cognitive impairments, children in care and more. As Advocates, we protect and champion peoples' rights and as a result we are always looking for ways to support and enable more people. With mental ill health and wellbeing at the heart of our agenda; ensuring everyone is healthy and happy is our ultimate goal. This is reflected in our community projects, where we work with isolated and lonely people and constantly work to challenge workplace stigma and discrimination when it comes to mental ill health and female health issues.

**Ask us about our Menopause
Workplace Training -
Call us on 0300 323 0965
or email
training@advocacyfocus.org.uk**

advocacy
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Volume 3 will focus on
Menopause in the
Workplace from an
employers perspective.
Statistics and toolkits
for employers to adopt
and use in their
workplace.

