

Talking Menopause – General Awareness Toolkit

Table of contents:

1. Introduction
2. What is the menopause
3. Hormone changes during the menopause
4. Possible menopause symptoms
5. How to track your symptoms
6. How to prepare to see your doctor
7. The legal position in relation to the menopause
8. Practical solutions on an individual basis, including reasonable adjustments
9. Ongoing support for your colleagues

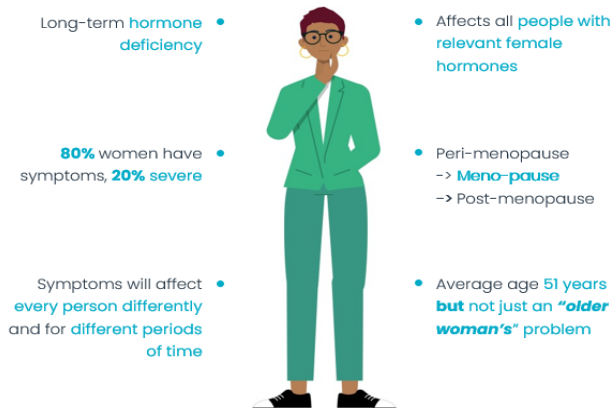
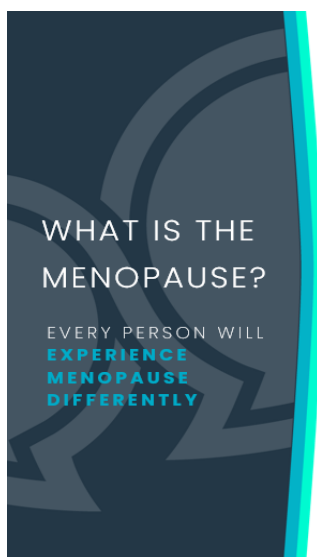
Introduction

We appreciate that menopause awareness and menopause related conversations are fairly new to many organisations. The purpose of this General Awareness toolkit is for you to feel confident and have the relevant tools to create an environment where you and your colleagues feel comfortable talking about menopause within your organisation.

This toolkit will enable you to:

- Be educated on evidence based, non-biased menopause facts
- Make informed choices to signpost & support yourselves & others
- Have the confidence to create a menopause confident & inclusive working environment
- Help colleagues thrive, be supported & increase talent retention & employee engagement through the menopause

What is the menopause?



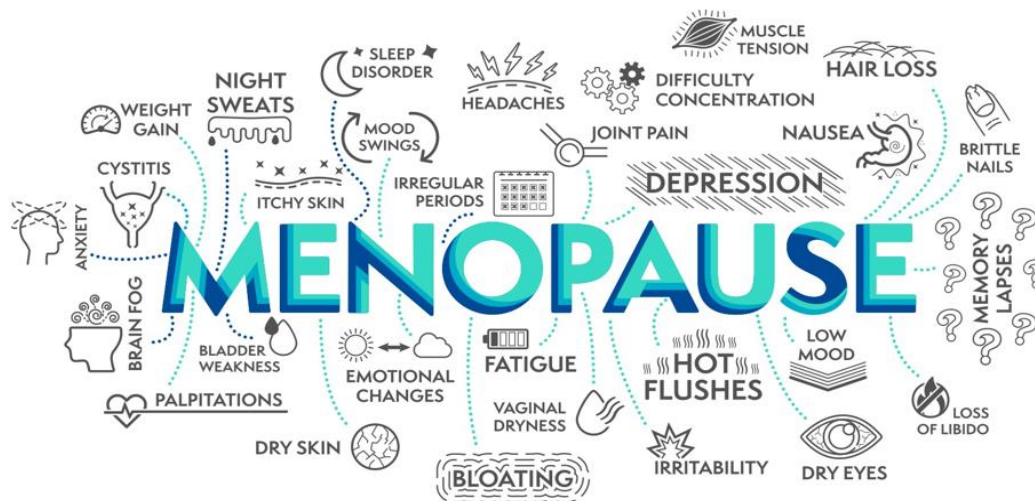
Every person going through the menopause will have different combinations of symptoms and therefore will experience the menopause differently. Many people experiencing menopause in the workplace can feel isolated and alone due to a lack of organisational knowledge and support.

Everyone is unique in terms of how long their symptoms last, their severity, how they react to them and their previous life experiences. Perceptions of menopause can differ depending on culture, race, disability, religion, sexual orientation and socio-economic backgrounds.

The term “menopause” is used to describe the whole process incorporating peri and post menopause. Perimenopause is the period of time leading up to the ‘menopause’. Medically, the menopause actually refers to the point in time when someone has not had a period for 12 months but the term is used much more widely to describe the process of transition when individuals change from being able to reproduce or not.

During the perimenopause, the relevant hormones fluctuate and are in overall decline. Typically 80% of people experiencing menopause will experience symptoms and the other 20% still experience menopause but may not have any noticeable symptoms. 20% overall typically have severe symptoms. Severe could be classed as having a negative effect on an individual’s day to day life, for example ‘knocked me off my feet’, extreme anxiety or change in overall mental health. Some will only experience symptoms for a few months, others can continue to experience symptoms for many years. The average menopause lasts between 4 and 9 years.

Examples of possible menopause symptoms:



Overall, psychological symptoms affect individuals more than the physical ones with the three impacting people the most at work being anxiety, brain fog and fatigue.


The Fawcett Society’s report into Women and the Menopause in 2022 found that 77% of women described their symptoms as “very difficult”. The most common difficulties reported were 84% experiencing trouble sleeping, 73% experienced brain fog and 69% said they experienced difficulties with anxiety or depression due to their menopause. The survey also

found that 1 in 10 women had left the workplace due to their menopausal symptoms, 14% had reduced their hours and 8% had passed the chance of promotion.

When considering how these symptoms can affect women in the workplace, brain fog, for example can be incredibly debilitating and frustrating, where you may forget a colleague's name, have temporary memory loss or take longer to complete a task.

Physical symptoms such as heart palpitations, worsening migraines, aching joints for example, may necessitate further medical investigations which can cause anxiety and need to attend hospital or GP appointments.



How to track symptoms




BALANCE APP

ORCHA CERTIFIED IN HAND
MENOPAUSE HELP AND
SUPPORT TO MILLIONS OF
WOMEN ACROSS THE WORLD

WWW.BALANCE-MENOPAUSE.COM



TRACKS SYMPTOMS AND HEALTH
Logs symptoms, moods, periods, nutrition, exercise and sleep

MONITOR CHANGES AND PATTERNS
Records changes over time, produces downloadable Health Report® for GP

CONNECTING PEOPLE AROUND THE WORLD
A growing community sharing experiences and treatment reviews




We recommend downloading the balance app to track symptoms. This app is free to download and has a whole realm of information with factsheets and guidelines around the different menopause symptoms and how to cope with them.

SYMPTOM CHECKER

EVERY PART OF THE BODY IS AFFECTED BY THE MENOPAUSE

WWW.BALANCE-MENOPAUSE.COM



Menopause Symptom Questionnaire

This can be used to monitor symptoms and is worth doing regularly to assess how symptoms change with time or with treatment.

Alternatively, download **balance** app to take the **balance** Menopause Symptom Questionnaire® and access a personal Health Report®.

Please indicate the extent to which you are bothered at the moment by any of these symptoms by placing a tick in the appropriate box:

SYMPTOMS	Not at all 0	A little 1	Quite a bit 2	Extremely 3	Comment
Heart beating quickly or strongly					
Finding tense or nervous					
Difficulty in sleeping					
Memory problems					
Attacks of anxiety, panic					
Difficulty in concentrating					
Fatigue (low or lacking in energy)					
Loss of interest in most things					
Feeling unhappy or depressed					
Crying spells					
Irritability					
Feeling dizzy or faint					
Pressure or tightness in head					
Tinnitus (ringing or buzzing in the ear)					
Headaches					
Muscle and joint pains					
Hot and needles in any part of the body					
Hearing difficulties					
Hot flashes					
Sweating at night					
Loss of interest in sex					
Urinary symptoms					
Symptoms due to vaginal dryness					
Score					



The downloadable Symptom Checker and Health Report is useful to take along to a GP appointment.

The legal position in relation to the menopause

MENOPAUSE AT WORK **WHY NOW?**



LEGAL	ECONOMIC	SOCIAL
<p>EQUALITY ACT 2010 Legally protects people from discrimination in the workplace.</p> <p>HEALTH AND SAFETY AT WORK Ensure working environment does not worsen symptoms.</p>	<p>Women are working in greater numbers than before, working longer, ageing population, increased state pension age, abolition of default retirement age, retain skills and talent</p>	<p>Negative stereo typing gendered ageism, when performance at work is affected by other issues there is generally more acceptance, ensure women have the highest quality of working life, open and supportive workplace essential, increase wellbeing</p>

From a legal perspective, the Equality Act 2010 has nine protected characteristics and ultimately the Act legally protects employees from workplace discrimination. The government recently confirmed in January 2023 that menopause will not become the 10th protected characteristic. Currently an employee could bring a claim under age or sex or disability. Menopause is not a disability; however the symptoms could be classed as disabling if they have a physical or mental impairment which has a substantial and long-term (more than 12 months) adverse effect on their ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities.

When considering Health & Safety at work, employers should ensure that the working environment does not worsen an employee's symptoms. For example, in the office, where is your 'safe place'? Is there access to showers? Do you have a contingency plan for temporary cover if they are unable to work? Consider how practical existing solutions are and whether it would be beneficial to introduce risk assessments for staff who are experiencing menopausal symptoms at work.

Having open and honest conversations along with understanding and support are crucial. By encouraging a menopause confident culture and introducing practical, individualised reasonable adjustments can ensure that those going through the menopause feel supported and understood.

Practical solutions on an individual basis, including reasonable adjustments



SUPPORT EMPLOYEES MANAGE THEIR MENOPAUSE SYMPTOMS



TEMPERATURE

- Offer solutions to stay cool/warm



TIME

- Increased breaks
- Additional time for assigned tasks



VENTILATION

- Access to window or well-ventilated area



DRESS CODE

- Flexible uniform or dress code options



STAYING FRESH

- Make available toilet/wash facilities



REST AREA

- Options for a necessary rest area on-site



RESPONSIBILITIES

- Offer temporary change in duties



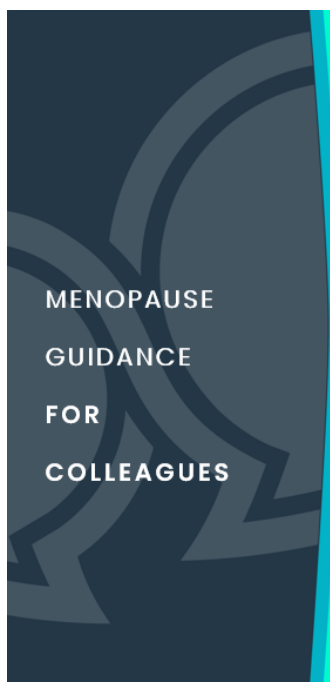
HYDRATION

- Provide access to cold water



Reasonable adjustments are determined and agreed on an individual basis between a manager and team member, considering their role, responsibilities and environment. They are dependent on the organisation's ability to support the individualised adjustments which is why a list is not provided. Regular reviews of reasonable adjustments are important especially as requirements can change based on fluctuating hormones and symptoms.

How to support your colleagues



HOW TO SUPPORT YOUR COLLEAGUES

- Be an open ambassador for menopause awareness in your organisation
- Understand how their symptoms are affecting them and what support they feel they need
- Sometimes less is more... if they need support, they will ask for it!
- Don't make jokes or disparaging comments about their symptoms or current situation
- Encourage other colleagues to have a supportive work ethic
- If in doubt, ask them how they are if you are concerned



MENOPAUSE
GUIDANCE
FOR
COLLEAGUES

IF THEY HAVE
A **REASONABLE ADJUSTMENTS
PLAN IN PLACE**

- Educate yourself around the menopause and its symptoms so that you can support them
- Encourage your colleague to discuss what adjustments have been agreed
- If they need additional support, ensure you are perceptive of their requirements
- Know where to signpost them if you feel they need further support
- Be understanding of their requirements
- Don't make derogatory comments about their symptoms
- Similarly, call out negative behaviours with other colleagues
- Understand they may find it difficult to open up about their symptoms if they are very personal to them



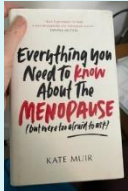
MENOPAUSE
GUIDANCE
FOR
COLLEAGUES

IF YOU ARE
**CONCERNED ABOUT
YOUR COLLEAGUE...**

- Tell them they have your support and you will do what you can to help them
- Understand in advance of talking to them what internal support is already available
- Talk to them in a quiet place where you will not be disturbed
- Give them time to talk and accept the silence
- Ask them what they feel they may need initially
- Encourage them to seek help from their line manager and that you can accompany them
- Ensure you offer an ongoing supportive working relationship



Recommended Book List



Everything you need to know about the Menopause (but were too afraid to ask)
By Kate Muir

Menopause
By Dr Louise Newson



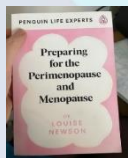
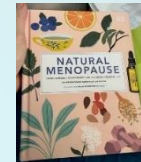
The Complete Guide to POI and Early Menopause
By Hannah Short and Mandy Leonhardt

Oestrogen Matters
By Avrum Bluming and Carol Tavris, PHD



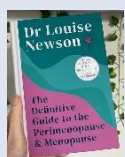
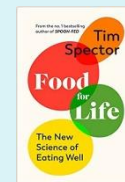
Menopausal
By Davina McCall with Dr Naomi Potter

Natural Menopause
By Anne Henderson



Preparing for the Perimenopause and Menopause
By Dr Louise Newson

Food for Life – The New Science of Eating Well
By Tim Spector



The Definitive Guide to the Perimenopause and Menopause
By Dr Louise Newson



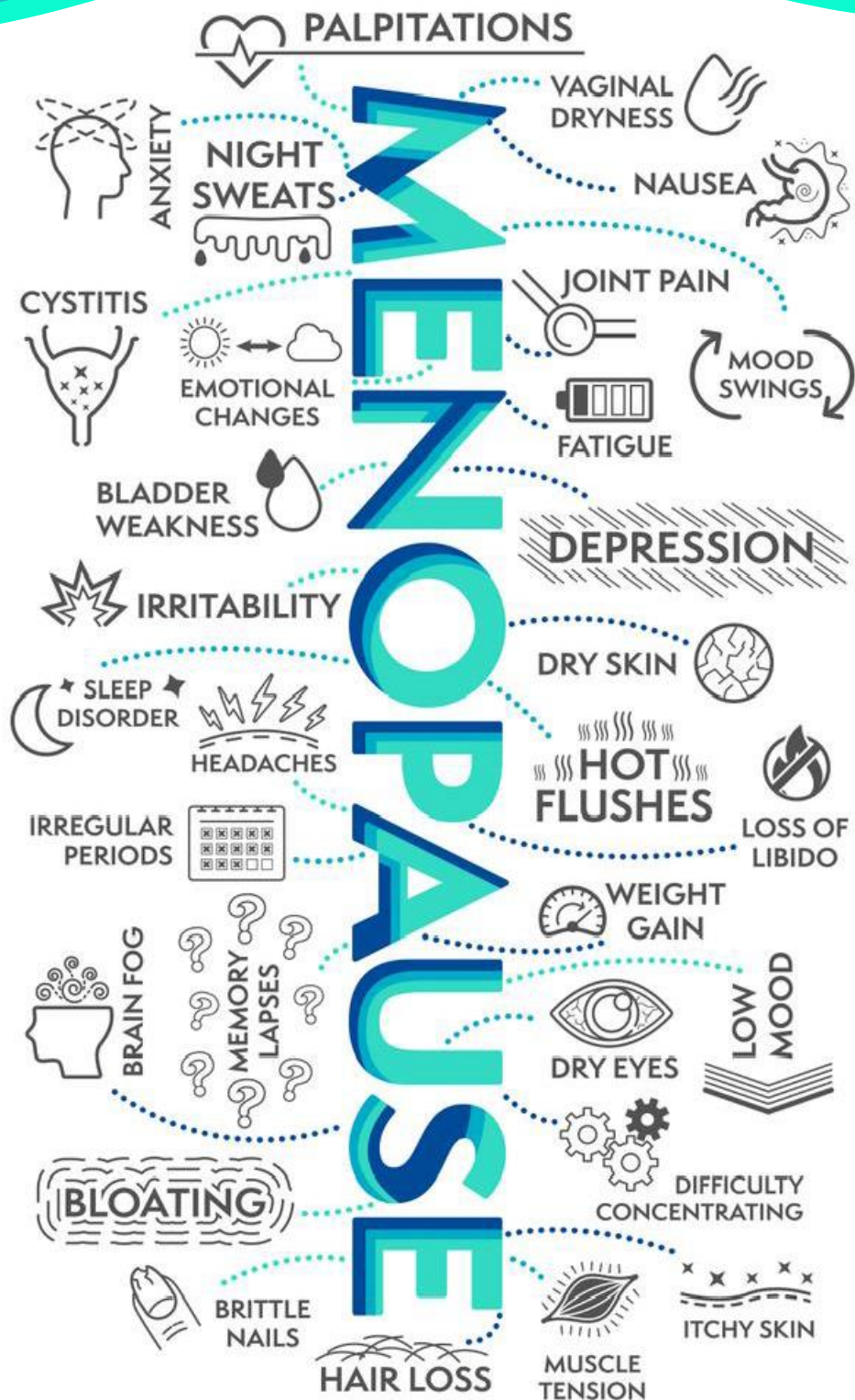
**TALKING
MENOPAUSE**

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START THE CONVERSATION AT WORK