



Menopause Friendly
MEMBERSHIP & ACCREDITATION
WORKPLACE TRAINING

MENOPAUSE FRIENDLY AUSTRALIA

MANAGER INFORMATION PACK



DISCLAIMER

Everyone's experience of menopause is different. We experience different symptoms, have different views or philosophies about how we'd manage them and different medical histories, too. This workbook is to help you work out what's right for you and plan your next steps.

People of diverse gender expressions and identities experience menopause, and although we may use the terms 'women' 'female' 'her' when quoting specific research, this workbook is focused on how everyone can be supported.

Disclaimer: The information, including but not limited to, text, graphics, images and other material contained in this workbook are for informational purposes only. No material is intended to be a substitute for professional medical advice, diagnosis or treatment. Always seek the advice of your GP or other qualified healthcare provider with any questions you may have regarding any medical condition or treatment and before undertaking a new healthcare regime.



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INTRODUCTION



Offering support to colleagues with menopausal symptoms that are impacting on their work will help you to:

- improve your team's morale
- retain valuable skills and talent
- reduce sickness absence.

This workbook provides knowledge and understanding around menopause and where to signpost support and help.

Your role as a manager in supporting those experiencing menopause symptoms is *crucial.*

WHY IT'S URGENT AND IMPORTANT

DEMOGRAPHIC CASE

Menopause has always been around. But we're now living and working for longer, which means more people are working through their menopause transition than ever before.

As an example, in Australia women over 50 are the fastest-growing workplace demographic. However research tells us that the majority of people are unwilling to discuss menopause-related health problems with their line manager or ask for the support or any adjustments they may need.



81%

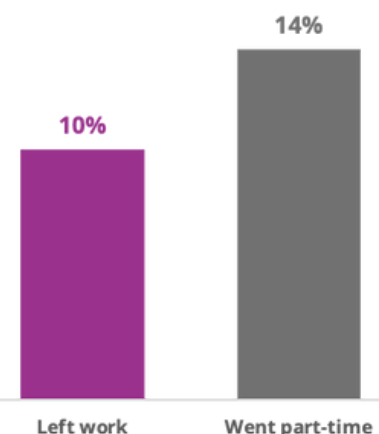
of people going through menopause are at work

Source: Fawcett Society Report, 2022

BUSINESS CASE

The benefits include helping us create a more inclusive culture, retain talent and improve performance and motivation. Research tells us that:

- 1 in 4 have considered leaving work during their menopause transition
- 1 in 10 who have worked during the menopause left a job due to their symptoms
- 14% have gone part time
- 8% have not applied for promotion



Source: Fawcett Society Report, 2022

WHY IT'S URGENT AND IMPORTANT

LEGAL CASE

Menopause at work can be covered by certain pieces of legislation to protect employees such as Respect@Work legislation and Workplace Health and Safety laws. Harmonised psychosocial hazard regulations require workplaces to do everything they reasonably can to prevent exposure to psychosocial hazards and risks. 73% of people say menopause increased their stress levels and anxiety so addressing menopause is key to minimising stress related injuries.

If an employee is experiencing some workplace challenges due to their symptoms, we have a responsibility to discuss whether there are any supportive changes/ reasonable workplace adjustments that may assist.

GENDER EQUALITY CASE

Women retire earlier than men often at the height of their careers, contributing to Australia's 21.7% gender pay gap. Nearly half of those who retired before 55 said their own health was the reason. The average age of menopause is 51, so introducing menopause support is something all employers should do to improve the representation of women in leadership.

Among people who are currently experiencing menopause:

86%

wished they had better access to flexible working options

70%

don't feel comfortable talking to their manager about their needs

“ I don't want my male boss to withhold opportunities because he thinks I can't handle it. I already have to fight for equality.

Source: CircleIn: Menopause and the workplace 2021

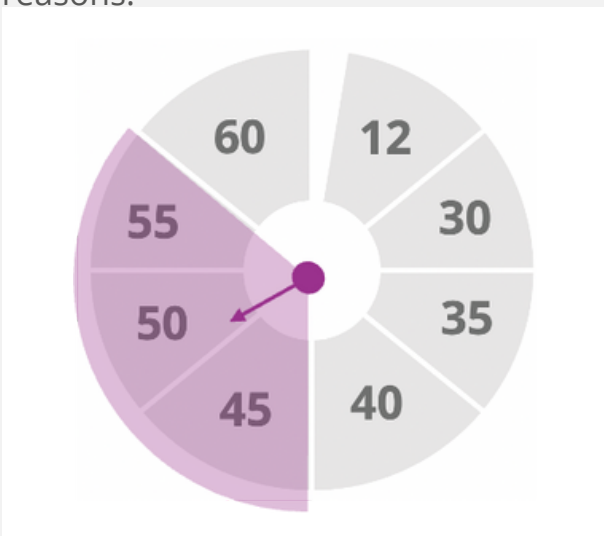
MENOPAUSE: THE FACTS

DEFINITION

Menopause is defined as a biological stage in life that occurs when hormones change and eventually menstruation stops. Someone is said to have reached menopause when they have had no period for 12 consecutive months (for those reaching menopause naturally).

AVERAGE AGE

The average menopause age is 51, however it can be earlier naturally or due to surgery, illness or other reasons.



STAGES OF MENOPAUSE

Perimenopause

The time leading up to menopause when they may experience changes and menopausal symptoms. This can be years before menopause.

Menopause

A one-day event when menstruation stops.

Postmenopause

The time after menopause has occurred, starting when periods have ceased for 12 consecutive months and for the rest of life.

When we talk about menopause in this guidance, we are referring to any of these stages.

MENOPAUSE: THE FACTS

SYMPTOMS

Hormonal changes can result in a wide range of symptoms, both physical and psychological. In research, the ones reported as having the biggest effect at work include:

Physical

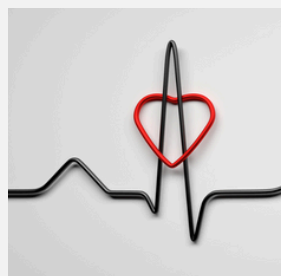
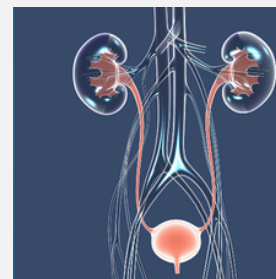
- Difficulty sleeping, insomnia or fatigue
- Hot flushes during the day or night
- Migraines or headaches
- Aches and pains
- Irregular and/or heavy periods
- Urinary issues, e.g. increased frequency

Psychological

- Low mood, depression or changes in mood
- Nervousness, worry or anxiety
- Reduced ability to concentrate or focus
- Problems with memory recall

THINKING ABOUT LONG-TERM HEALTH, TOO

Understanding menopause is more than just being aware of symptoms, it's about long-term health, too. As hormone levels change, we need to take extra care about our wellbeing, in particular heart and bone health.



MENOPAUSE: THE FACTS

Everyone should have menopause awareness, so they can support colleagues, friends and family.



3 in 4 people experience menopause symptoms at some time

51

is the average age to reach menopause

8 in 10

people of menopausal age are in work

2 in 5

said symptoms were worse than expected



1 in 4 people experience serious symptoms

3%

of people reach menopause before they are 40

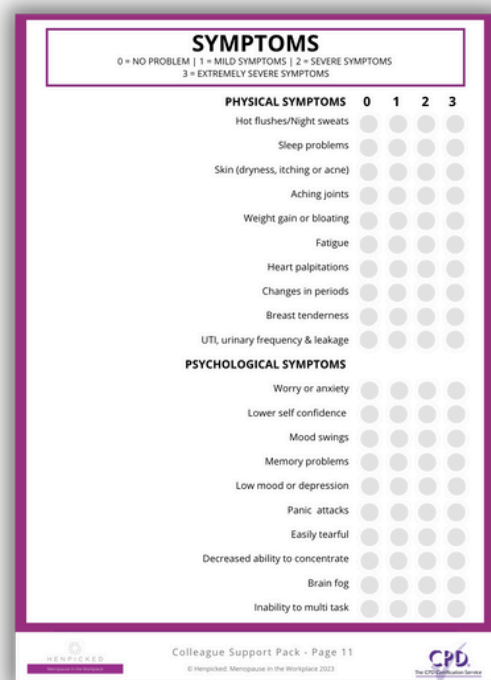
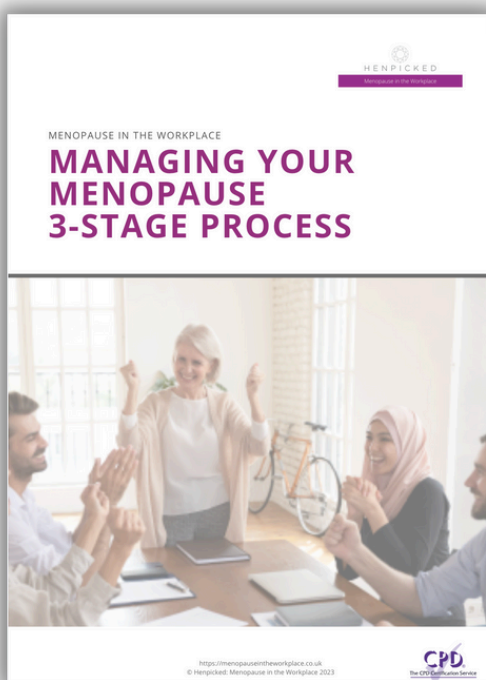
The majority of people are unwilling to disclose menopause-related health problems to line managers

MANAGING MENOPAUSE

SIGNPOSTING OUR 3-STAGE PROCESS

The Managing your menopause: 3-stage process can help those experiencing menopause understand their options and choices for managing symptoms. Everyone's experience of menopause is different. Everyone experiences different symptoms, has different views or philosophies around how they'd prefer to manage them and different medical histories, too.

This workbook is to help anyone experiencing menopause symptoms work out what's right for them, and plan their next steps. As a manager, this can be a useful tool to signpost:



HOW TO HAVE A CONVERSATION ABOUT MENOPAUSE

People can find it hard to talk to their manager about how menopause is affecting them. However, your role as manager is to help your team be their best at work. Preparation will help you both. This will result in a much better conversation and outcome for both you and your colleague.

Above all, it's in both your best interests to find a good solution. All anyone wants is for your team to be fit and well to enable them to do their job to the best of their ability.

Our helpful five-step guide will support you in having successful conversations.



Keep reading to understand our tried, trusted and tested guide to supportive conversations about menopause at work.

HOW TO HAVE A CONVERSATION ABOUT MENOPAUSE

1

PREPARE FOR YOUR MEETING

Check out what support is available in your organisation. Search your organisation's intranet or talk to HR.

2

BOOK A MEETING

Arrange a time to meet, allowing enough time for the conversation. Think about where you are meeting, finding a space which will allow the conversation to be confidential.

3

ENCOURAGE THEM TO BE OPEN AND HONEST

Understand how menopause is affecting them at work, what they're doing to manage their menopause symptoms and what you as their line manager could do to help. Discuss what support they would like e.g. workplace adjustments and timescales. Or sometimes just knowing someone understands and is there to listen can help.

Agree with your colleague what you can both do. If you need to, take time to find out information and seek advice.

4

DO THEY WANT THE MEETING TO BE CONFIDENTIAL?

Some of us are happy talking about menopause openly, others are not. Talk to your colleague about whether you want the conversation to be kept confidential or if they're happy to discuss it with colleagues. It's their choice.

5

FOLLOW UP

At the end of the meeting put a time in the diary to meet again, whether that's to agree a way forward, to monitor progress or update. Menopause symptoms can change over time. so you might need to consider different adjustments or support

HOW TO HAVE A CONVERSATION ABOUT MENOPAUSE

PAUSE: HOW TO HAVE SUPPORTIVE CONVERSATIONS

Prepare

Notice when a colleague needs your help and support.

Think about when and where to talk to them.

Ask

Ask open questions, not making assumptions.

Give people time and space to share what they feel comfortable sharing.

Understand

Show empathy, appreciate how challenging this might be for someone.

Appreciate how hard this might feel for someone discussing this with you.

Support

Explore together how you can support your colleague.

Understand the challenges they're facing and how you can help and/or signpost further support

Evaluate

Keep the conversation going.

Check-in to see how they are getting on, is the support helping and any further help they need.

HOW TO HAVE A CONVERSATION ABOUT MENOPAUSE

REASONABLE WORKPLACE ADJUSTMENTS

These will be different for everyone, which is why having individual conversations is so important. Appropriate changes can be made on a case-by-case basis by the line manager, thinking about what will support the colleague and the organisational requirements of their role.

Many adjustments will be simple, and may vary in the time they are needed. Make sure you record what you've agreed.



Keep reading to learn examples based on the menopause symptoms people often find challenging at work...

HOW TO HAVE A CONVERSATION ABOUT MENOPAUSE

REASONABLE WORKPLACE ADJUSTMENTS



Difficulty sleeping, tiredness or fatigue

This is a common complaint during the menopause, often starting during the perimenopause.

- Review start and finish times - could these be adjusted, or is homeworking an option?
- Consider flexibility around breaks



Hot flushes

These can start during perimenopause and continue after menopause.

- Offer a fan or consider if their workplace can be nearer a source of ventilation
- Ensure access to fresh drinking water
- Allow time away from workstations or meetings to manage hot flushes
- Consider flexibility in dress code e.g. uniforms or workwear



Difficulty focussing or concentrating

Some can experience problems with concentration.

- Consider adjusting working hours to times of the day when concentration is better or adjust working pattern
- Provide notebooks or other memory aids
- Offer a quiet space for work
- Encourage scheduling time to focus

HOW TO HAVE A CONVERSATION ABOUT MENOPAUSE

REASONABLE WORKPLACE ADJUSTMENTS



Anxiety or loss of confidence

Anxiety can cause many different symptoms. It might affect how a person could feel physically or mentally and how they behave.

- Have regular one-to-one discussions
- Talking therapies e.g. Cognitive Behavioural Therapy can help
- Refer to our Employee Assistance Programme (EAP) if you have one or your Workplace Health & Safety team



Problems with memory recall

This is one of the lesser-known symptoms of hormonal change during menopause. It's often referred to as 'brain fog' and includes difficulty processing or retaining information.

- Provide notebooks or other memory aids, following conversations up with an email
- Reduce interruptions or provide a quiet space to work



Fluctuating or heavy periods

For many, one of the first signs of the menopause transition is a change in their periods.

- Ensure access to toilet and washing facilities is available
- Consider flexible working when periods are very heavy
- Offer additional uniforms

USEFUL RESOURCES

WHERE TO GO FOR FURTHER INFORMATION

General menopause information



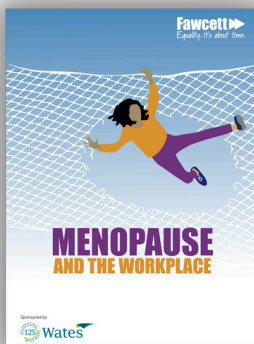
[Australasian Menopause Society](#)



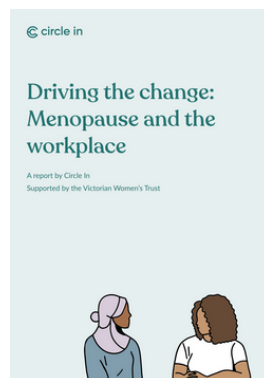
[Jean Hailes Foundation](#)



[International Menopause Society](#)



The Fawcett Society
Menopause and the
Workplace report
2022



[Circle In Menopause in the Workplace Report 2021](#)



[Dear Menopause Podcast](#)



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