

Raising Menopause Awareness at Queen Mary Support for Managers

Presenters:

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Aims and desired outcomes

Aims to provide:

- A knowledge of what the menopause is.
- An awareness of the menopause symptoms.
- A knowledge of the diversity of the menopause.
- An understanding of how symptoms can impact staff at work.
- An awareness of support and resources at Queen Mary.
- Examples of Employment Tribunal cases related to menopause.

Desired Outcomes:

- A knowledge of how menopause symptoms can affect staff.
- Knowledge and confidence to be able to support staff

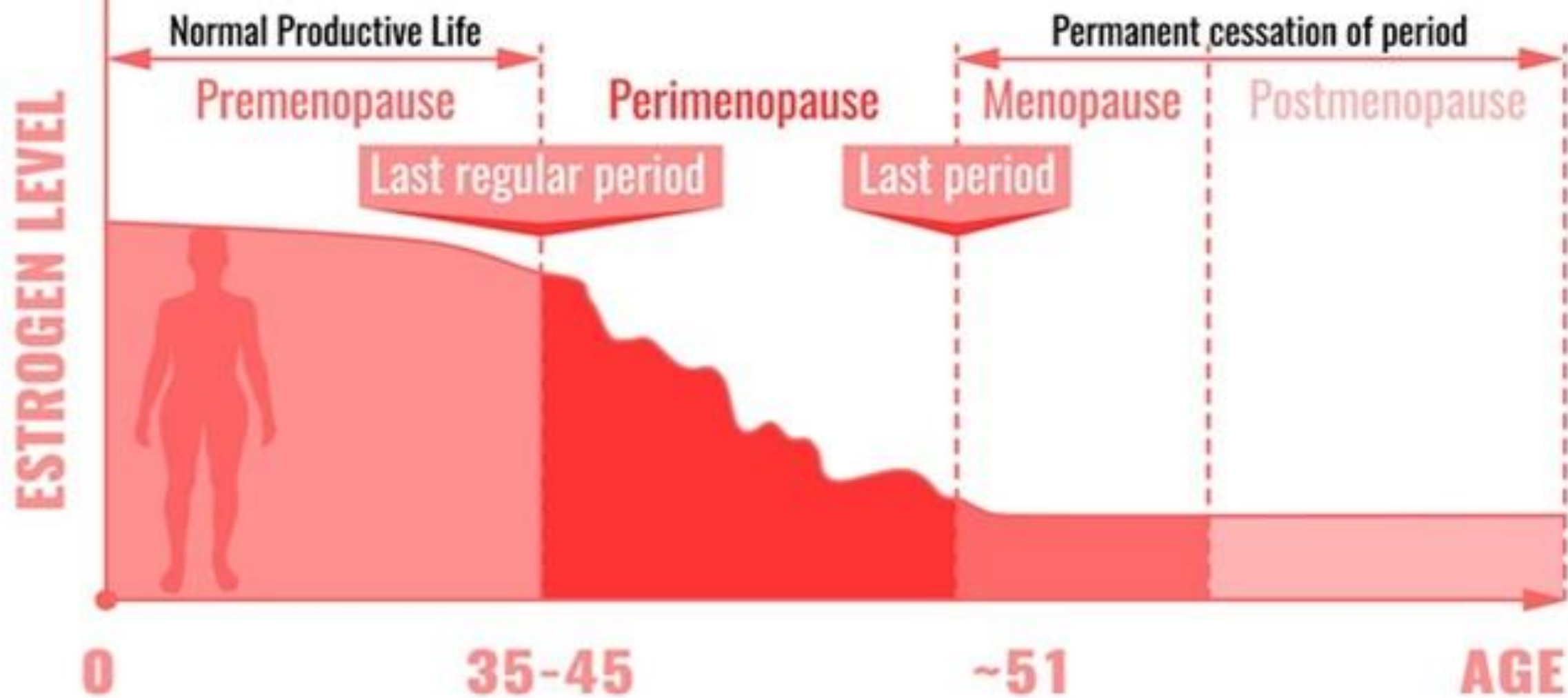


Knowledge and Understanding

What's your understanding of the menopause?



STAGES OF MENOPAUSE



Symptoms

- The body can be affected by perimenopause and menopause in numerous ways, causing a myriad of symptoms
- Symptoms can impact self-confidence, mental health well-being, and relationships with others

PHYSICAL SYMPTOMS			
Hot flushes	Hair loss/thinning	Muscle and joint stiffness	Palpitations
Night sweats	Brittle nails	Brittle bones	Changes in blood pressure
Fatigue	Skin changes	Headaches	Bloating
Dizziness	Chronic bad breath	Allergies worsen	Recurrent urinary tract infections
Vertigo	Gum problems	Weight gain	Digestive problems
Tinnitus	Burning tongue/roof of mouth		
Electric shock sensations	Changes in body odour		
PHYSICHOLOGICAL SYMPTOMS			
Depression	Low Mood	Low self-esteem	Irritability
Anxiety	Stress		Mood swings
COGNITIVE SYMPTOMS			
Difficulty concentrating	Poor attention to detail	Forgetfulness	Brain fog
Sleep disturbance	Getting Muddled		

Impact of Menopause in the workplace - Fawcett Society Survey (March 2022)

The Fawcett Society (UK charity who campaign for gender equality and women's rights at work, home and in public life)

They surveyed 4,000 women who were perimenopausal and post menopausal across the UK and aged between 45-55. Their findings were:

Symptoms

- 77% of women experienced one or more symptoms they described as 'very difficult';
- 69% experienced anxiety or depression due to menopause;
- 84% experienced trouble sleeping;
- 73% experienced brain fog.

Impact

- 10% had left their job and 14% had reduced their hours.
- 8% had not applied for a promotion;
- 44% of women felt their ability to undertake their role had been affected;
- 52% said they had lost confidence;
- 39% cited anxiety or depression on their GP Fit Note rather than share their menopause status;
- 45% of women said they had not spoken to their GP surgery about their symptoms.

LGBTQIA+ and the menopause

Our understanding of the menopause has historically focused on cis-gendered, heterosexual women.

This has a real impact on LGBTQIA+ people:

- Not everyone who experiences the menopause will identify as a woman
- Language can be alienating
- Experiences in healthcare settings
- Healthcare training
- Lack of specific resources



Disability and the menopause

For disabled people, the onset of the menopause can bring heightened symptoms and complications.

Fawcett Society, Menopause and the Workplace Report (2022) found:

- Disabled women were far more likely to experience difficult menopause symptoms.
 - 92% - difficulty sleeping
 - 85% - brain fog
 - 82% - joint pain or stiffness
 - 82% - anxiety or depression
 - 22% of disabled women said they had left a job due to their menopause symptoms compared to 9% for non-disabled women



Race and ethnicity and the menopause

- Research has begun to find evidence of differences in experiences of the menopause depending on race and ethnic background What is known:
 - Differences in the timing of the menopause transition
 - Differences in types of and severity of symptoms
 - Healthcare disparities
 - Cultural differences in how the menopause is perceived



Differing Support Needs

- Symptoms will vary amongst individuals
- How individuals experience the same symptom will vary
- Everyone's menopause experience will be different
- The type of support each person may need will be different
- The period for how long symptoms may last will be different
- The length that support may be needed will vary



EXAMPLES

**Symptoms, Potential Work Impact &
Practical Support Suggestions**

Symptoms, Impact & Practical Support Suggestions

Symptoms: Sleep disturbance, Night sweats, Fatigue

Potential impact at work:

- Feeling tired during working hours
- Poor concentration
- May start to have irregular timekeeping
- May start to have odd days of sickness absence

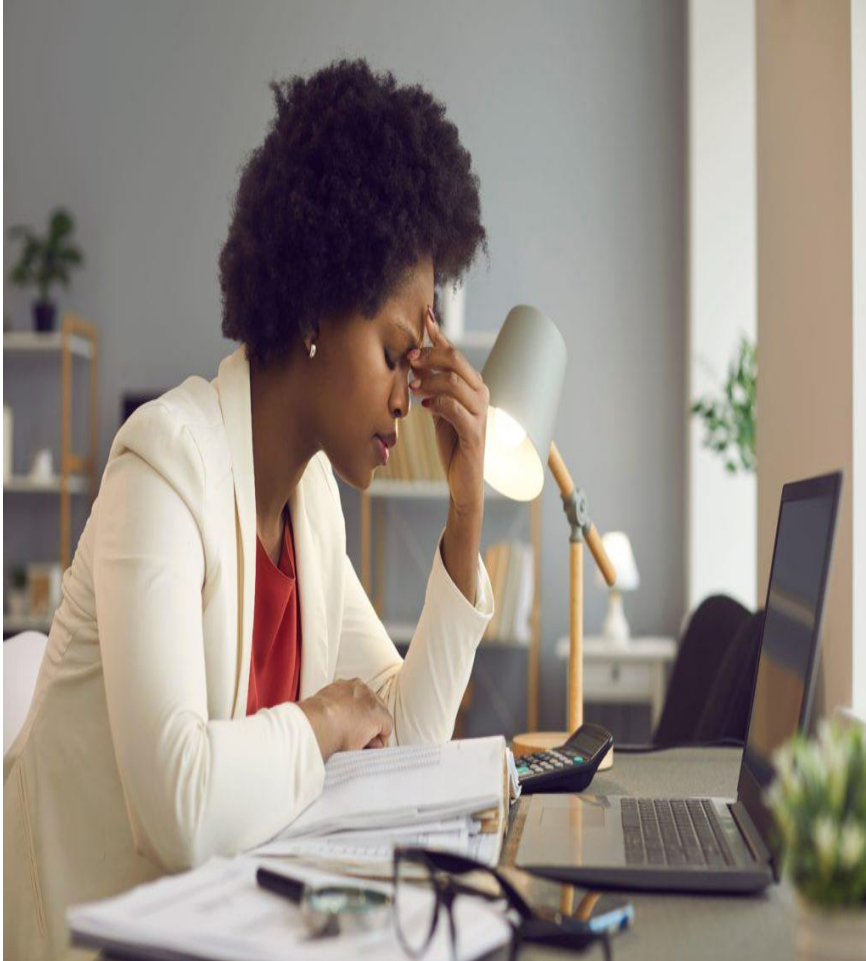
Suggested support:

- Enable access to a rest room to take a break.
- Schedule demanding work at times of the day when the staff member feels more productive
- Temporarily adjust a shift patterns
- Informal temporary arrangement to adjust working hours.
- Suggest temporary flexible working (formal arrangement) or hybrid working.
- An Occupational Health referral to advise on workplace adjustments



Symptoms, Impact & Practical Support Suggestions

Symptom – Anxiety



Potential impact at work:

- Feeling that they are unable to do their role
- Feeling overwhelmed by their role or in undertaking certain tasks
- Loss of self-confidence
- Difficulty in concentrating
- Worrying about work and how others may perceive them
- Feelings of stress

Suggested support:

- Find out if there are any specific work contributors adding to the anxiety.
- Break down tasks into manageable chunks.
- Extend deadlines.
- Have regular 121 meetings and provide feedback/check in on well-being.
- Enable time away from their work to undertake relaxation.
- Mention the confidential counselling services - Employee Assistance Programme.
- Occupational Health referral to advise on workplace adjustments.

Symptoms, Impact & Practical Support Suggestions



Symptoms – Brain Fog, Poor concentration, Forgetfulness, Muddling things

Potential impact at work:

- Struggle to meet deadlines/Missing deadlines
- Forgetting to do tasks
- Working at a slower pace
- Struggling to organise and structure work
- Working long hours to get on top of work
- Feeling overwhelmed with work

Suggested support:

- Meet regularly to agree work and discuss deadlines
- Follow up by email on agreed work or objectives i– this can act as a reference for the member of staff
- Provide clear verbal and written communications about work to be carried out
- Break down tasks into smaller achievable targets
- Extending deadlines/ being clear about required deadlines.
- Have regular 121 meeting and provide feedback/reassurance/check in on well-being.

Why support in the workplace is important

The Fawcett Society (UK charity who campaign for gender equality and women's rights)

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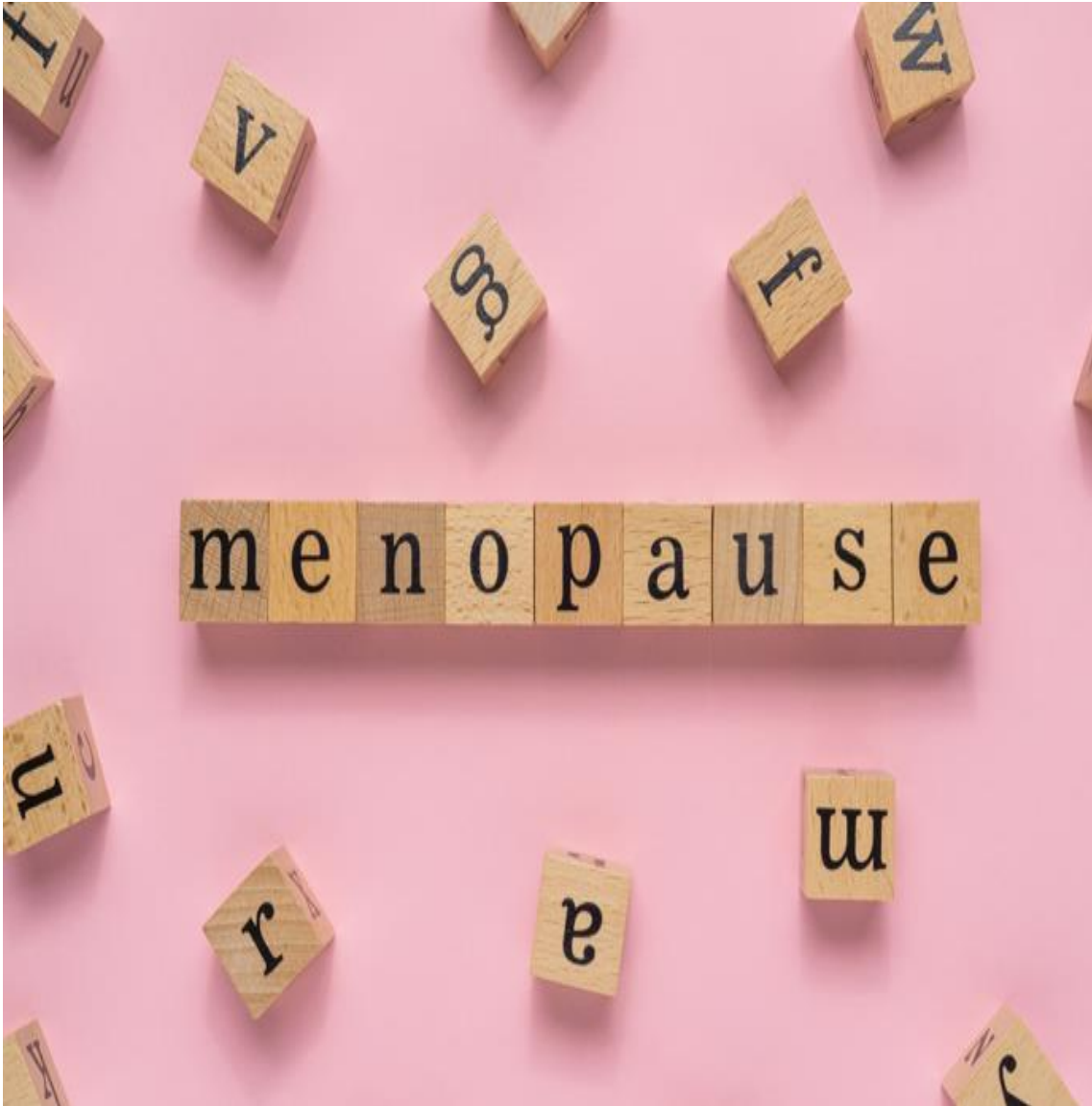
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- 39% had cited that they had requested that anxiety or depression be written as the main reason for their sickness absence on their GP Fit Note rather than share their menopause status.

Support and Resources

Menopause Intranet Pages



Webinar Workshops 12-20 October 2023



Menopause Policy Statement



Definitions, Stages and Associated Impacts



Who can experience the menopause?



Support for Staff and Managers



Guidance and Resources



Lifestyle, Exercise, Diet and Menopause



The Law and Menopause



Menopause Surveys



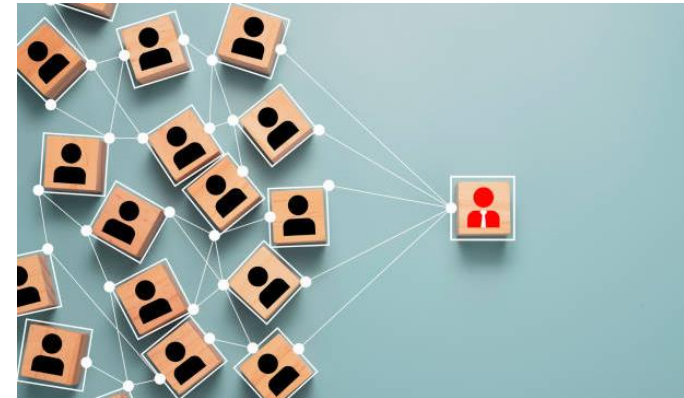
FAQs



Tips for managers when having a menopause discussions with a staff member

Not everyone will experience menopause in the same way and therefore as a manager it is important to manage each individual situation in accordance to your staff member's particular circumstance.

- Allow adequate time to have the conversation;
- Find an appropriate confidentiality space to hold the meeting;
- Encourage them to speak openly and honestly;
- Either at the meeting or following the meeting suggest ways in which your they can be supported;
- Agree actions, and how to implement any support;
- Agree if other members of the team should be informed or not, and if so by whom;
- Ensure that designated time is allowed for follow up meetings. Regular routine one-to-one management catch ups with your staff member is an ideal time to enquire into your staff member's well-being.



Sharing a good example from the NHS on how to undertake a well-being meeting

hr.qmul.ac.uk/equality/menopause/-guidance-and-resources/

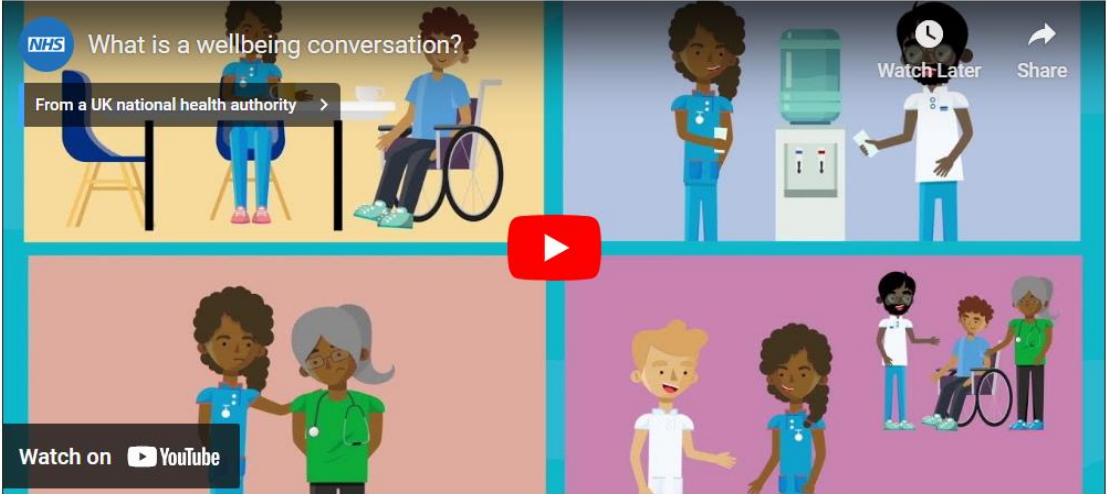
HR Redundancy Pay Human Resources BBC UHR : Universities... A - Z - Human Reso... QMUL | Job Listings... News House Travel Other Study

- Protected Characteristics
- Equality & Diversity
- Training
- Staff Networks
- Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Calendar
- Equality Links
- Contact Us
- Menopause
 - Webinar Workshops 12-20 October 2023
 - Menopause Policy Statement
 - Definitions, Stages and Associated Impacts
 - Support
 - Guidance and Resources

Conversation Guides

- Preparing for a conversation with your manager
- Preparing for a conversation with your GP
- Preparing for a conversation with your staff member

Below you will see a great example from the NHS on how to undertake a wellbeing conversation.



The video player shows a YouTube video from the NHS. The title is "What is a wellbeing conversation?" and it is from a UK national health authority. The video content includes illustrations of a healthcare professional talking to a patient in a wheelchair, a healthcare professional at a water dispenser, and a healthcare professional talking to a patient. The video is available on YouTube.

Webinar Presentations/Factsheets

Following the webinars during October, the presentation slides and factsheets will be added to [this page](#).

Supporting your staff

Our Community – supporting each other

- Dr Sharon Ellis, Professional Services Chief Operating Officer and Senior Sponsor for supporting the raising of menopause awareness at Queen Mary
- Annual webinars for raising awareness across the university
- Experience sharing/Allyship



Support resources to assist managers

HR Department - Employee Relations Team

- Dedicated ER Managers and Advisers for Faculties and Professional Services;
 - Advice and guidance;
 - Signpost to different support;
- Menopause Policy Statement
 - Hybrid Working Policy
 - Flexible Working Policy



Support resources to assist managers

The Employee Assistance Programme

Free, confidential, independent resource to help staff balance work, family and personal life.

24 hour support - by phone, email or online.

The service provides information, resources, referrals and counselling on any issue - this includes support and guidance in relation to menopausal matters.

Contact details:

Freephone: 0800 243 458

Email: assistance@workplaceoptions.com

Website: www.workplaceoptions.co.uk -

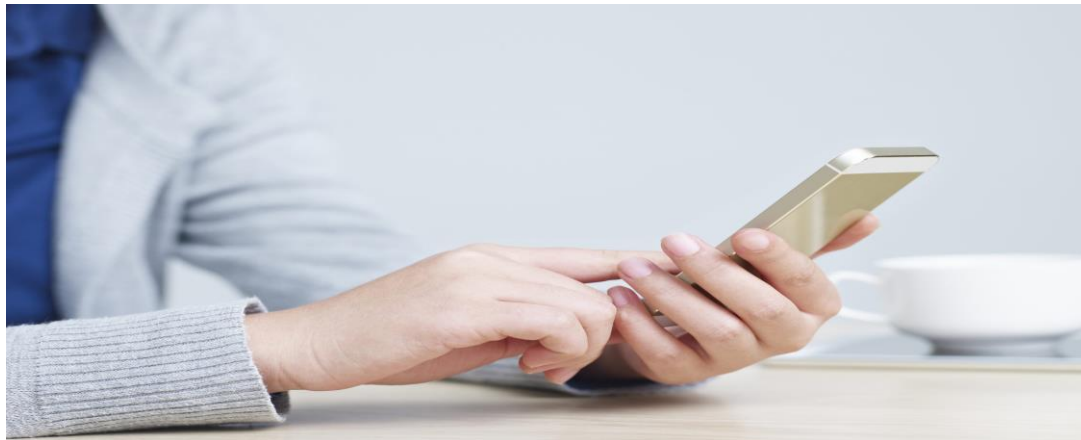
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Occupational Health Works (OH Works)

Focuses on the health and wellbeing of staff in the workplace.

OH Team to provide staff with a wide range of health advice and signpost to medical specialists as appropriate.



Future staff support ambitions

Menopause Surveys

Have been created to ensure that support for staff and those staff who have management responsibilities is reflective of the needs of our community. We would encourage you all to complete one. The link can be found on the Menopause intranet homepage.

Online Menopause Awareness Training

Current exploration into developing a menopause awareness online training tool.

Creation of a Menopause Network

The aim is to have a group of volunteers who are interested in championing menopause awareness across the University.

If you are interested in helping to set up and develop a menopause network at the University, email: menopause@qmul.ac.uk

Menopause Champions

The aim is to have a pool of voluntary menopause champions from across all areas of the University to signpost employees to where they can seek further support, help and advice within the University.



Menopause and the Law

Knowledge and Understanding

Do you know which legislation would be applicable to the menopause?



The Law and Menopause

The following legislation is key in relation to menopause:

The Equality Act 2010 -

<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/equality-act-2010-guidance>

This legislation legally protects people from discrimination in the workplace and in wider society.

The Health and safety at Work Act 1974 -

<https://www.hse.gov.uk/legislation/hswa.htm>

This legislation states, “An employer must, where reasonably practical, ensure everyone’s health, safety and welfare at work”.



Employment Tribunal Cases – related to menopause

Rooney v Leicester City Council (2023)

- Rooney started her role as a childcare social worker in August 2006. In 2017, she started to experience menopausal symptoms. She had several periods of sickness absence because of this and due to work-related stress. Rooney felt that the management of her absences by her employer, Leicester City Council, was insensitive and heavy-handed. This led to her resignation in 2018. The employee raised two separate tribunal claims. First for constructive dismissal, non-payment of holiday, and overtime, and reimbursement for expenses. Her second claim was asserting disability and sex discrimination on the grounds of her disability due to the menopause. She was not successful at the Employment Tribunal stage so decided to appeal the decision and was successful. The appeal hearing ruled that Ms Rooney's disability was by virtue of her symptoms of menopause combined with symptoms of stress and anxiety. The case involves the first Employment Appeal Tribunal decision that menopause symptoms can amount to a disability for the purposes of the Equality Act, setting a legal precedent. 2 Oct 2023

Merchant v BT (2012)

- Ms Merchant was being performance-managed for capability concerns. Her manager had received a report from her GP which indicated there were health issues related to menopause. He chose to disregard medical evidence and dismissed her for poor performance. He also made the additional mistake of relying on his own personal experience of his wife having undergone the menopause.
- Rather than relying on fresh medical evidence he relied on anecdotal evidence. [The tribunal found against BT](#), as the manager had failed to follow the capability policy which referred to seeking medical evidence. It also concluded BT would not have treated a male in comparable circumstances suffering with failed concentration in the same way.

Employment Tribunal Cases – related to menopause

A v Bonmarche Ltd (2019)

- The claimant was a senior supervisor at the retailer and had worked there a long time. Her manager started a bullying campaign, ridiculing her as she was going through menopause. He called her a dinosaur and encouraged other staff to laugh at his comments.
- During a restructure, her post was unaffected, yet others were encouraged to apply for her role. She suffered some significant sickness absence but did manage to return to her role on a phased basis working shorter hours. However, the claimant's manager placed her on a full shift for the following week. She resigned and suffered a complete breakdown due to harassment and bullying she had endured. She was successful in her claim of age and sex discrimination.
- **The claimant was awarded £28k.** £10,000 was for loss of earnings, £18,000 was injury to feelings as a result of the serious bullying and harassment she had suffered.

The costs of not supporting menopause in the workplace

- Costly in terms of legal fees.
- Organisation reputational damage - in terms of being a good and reasonable employer and supporting the health and wellbeing of all employees – not just women.
- Attracting people to the organisation and retaining people.

How can managers support a menopause inclusive workplace?

- Create space for your staff to raise this topic
- Educate yourself
- Listen to your employees
- Remember everyone is different
- Help to break the stigma and taboo

