

Talking to colleagues going through the menopause

Talking about the menopause is important.

Normalising conversations about the menopause enables people to ask for help when they need it. Clear and positive conversations help build a good working culture and minimise the negative impact of menopause symptoms for both the individual and the organisation.

Things you can do:

Listen to them

- Check in with them. Ask if they would like to talk to you about how they are feeling.
- Keep in mind that not everyone will want to talk about certain symptoms or feelings.
- Remember that everyone's menopause experience is different so don't make assumptions about what they are experiencing.
- Let them know you're there if they need you. This will help them feel supported.

It's really important to respect your colleagues' wishes around privacy and not share information with others unless you are asked to.

Build them up

People can lose confidence and self-esteem during the menopause. Words of encouragement can help make them feel more uplifted and empowered. Remind them of their strengths and the things they are good at. Invite them to engage with a range of people or activities to help them feel good about themselves even when experiencing symptoms.



Things you can say

Open questions can invite someone to share how they're doing if they want to. Be patient and allow time for them to think about their responses, especially if they are struggling with brain fog or memory problems.

How are you feeling?

I am here for you.

What are you going through?

What is making this harder for you?

How can I support you?



Why do people find it hard to talk about the menopause at work?

- The menopause is a private or personal matter.
- It can feel daunting or embarrassing to share their symptoms with others.
- Staff members may feel that they don't know their line manager well enough to talk about it.
- Existing negative attitudes in the workplace can make people feel apprehensive to talk about it.
- Staff members are not sure their line manager will be sympathetic.
- Worries about confidentiality.
- Fear of judgement and that colleagues will see them as less able to do their job.
- Concerns that job security or promotion opportunities might be taken away.
- Transgender and non-binary people may find it more challenging to discuss menopause symptoms.

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Sign up to the Menopause Workplace Pledge: wellbeingofwomen.org.uk/mwp