

Raising Menopause Awareness at Queen Mary

Support for Staff

Presenters:

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Coordinator**



Aims and desired outcomes

Aims to provide:

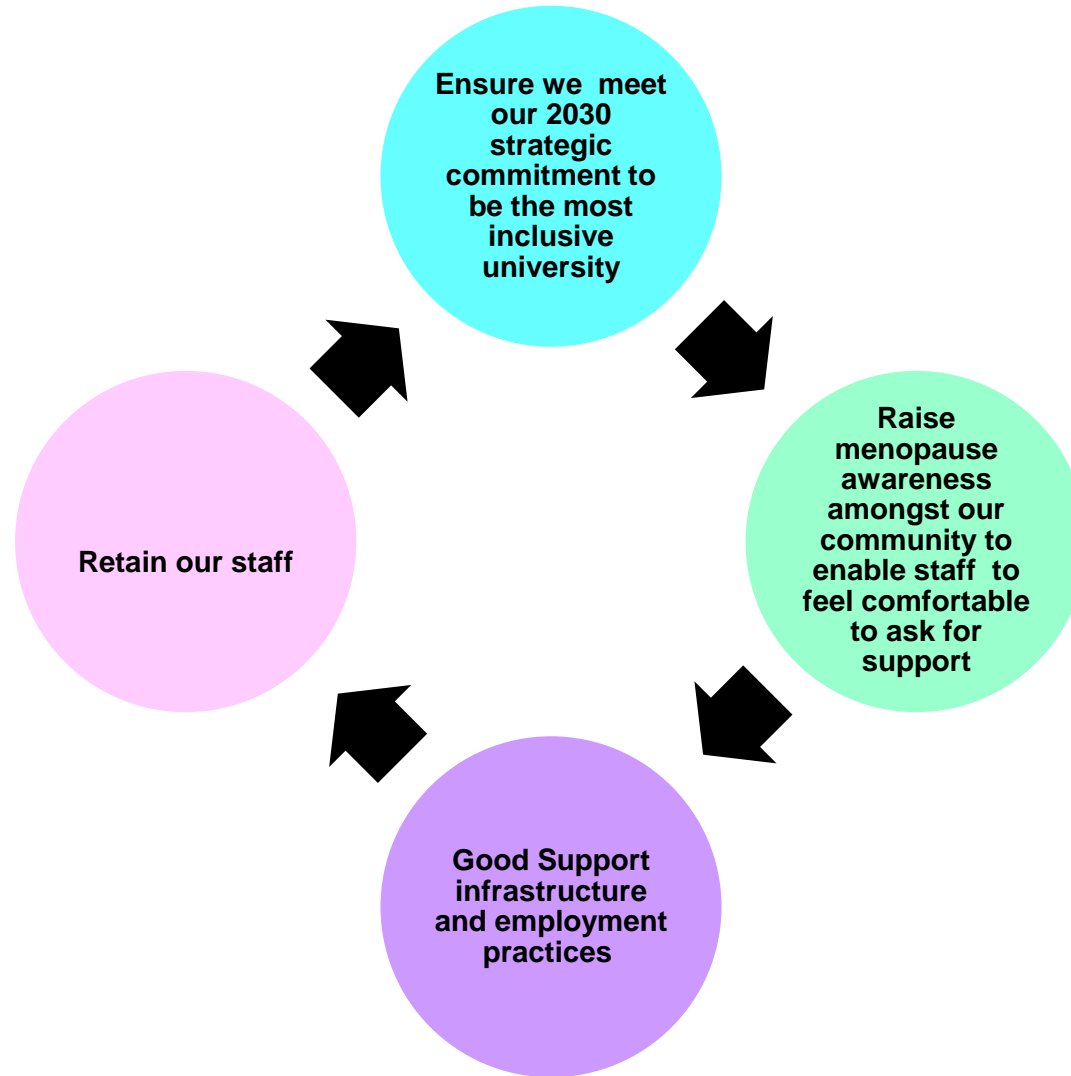
- Set the context for why support for staff is important at Queen Mary.
- Inform staff about available support
- A knowledge of equality, diversity and inclusion considerations.

Desired Outcomes:

- Knowledgeable about menopause support.
- A culture where staff feel able to discuss the menopause openly.
- Staff feel equipped and able to have a conversation with their line manager/another manager about support.
- Staff feel they will be supported.



Why support is important



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		

Why support in the workplace is important - Findings from a Fawcett Society survey, (May 2022)

The Fawcett Society is a UK charity who campaign for gender equality and women's rights, they interviewed 4,000 women who were perimenopausal and post menopausal across the UK and aged between 45-55.

Findings:

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;

Symptoms and possible impact on work



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

Suggestions of support you might ask for and suggestions of how you can support yourself :

- Access to a rest room to take a break.
- Schedule more demanding work at times of the day when you feel more productive.
- If you work shifts you may want to temporarily ask to adjust your shift pattern.
- If you do not work shifts you may want to ask to temporarily adjust your working hours.

Symptoms, Impact & Suggested Support



Symptom – **Anxiety**

Potential impact at work:

- Feeling that you are unable to do your job
- Feeling overwhelmed by your job or when undertaking certain tasks
- Loosing of self-confidence
- Difficulty concentrating
- Worrying about work and how others may perceive you
- Feelings of stress

Suggestions of support you might ask for and suggestions of how you can support yourself :

- Think about if there are any specific work contributors which may be causing or adding to your anxiety and have a conversation with your line manager.
- Break down tasks into manageable chunks.
- Ask for extensions to deadlines when needed.
- Take a short break away from your desk/work (if possible) to undertake relaxation i.e. going for a walk.
- Ask for regular 121 well-being meetings with your manager so that you can discuss your support needs and how any adjustments are going.

Symptoms, Impact & Suggested Support



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

Some suggestions of how you can support yourself and support you might ask for:

- Use your mobile phone, a manual or online diary as prompt reminders.
- Ask to meet with your line manager regularly to agree work and discuss deadlines
- If needed, ask for deadlines to be extended
- Ask for regular 121 well-being meetings with your manager so that you can and provide feedback on any work adjustments and as well as discuss your work.

Differing support needs

- Symptoms will vary amongst individuals
- How individuals experience the same symptoms 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 and therefore how long support may be needed will vary



Support for Staff

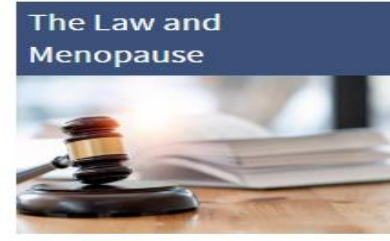
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Queen Mary

Menopause Intranet Pages

On the HR intranet site, you will find some dedicated pages related to information about the menopause

Menopause Intranet link: <https://hr.qmul.ac.uk/equality/>



Support for 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 for staff

Line Managers

- Responsible for supporting staff's wellbeing

You can:

- Discuss your situation
- Explain the type of support that think would help you at work
- Specific menopause awareness training for managers



Tips for preparing to have a menopause conversation with your line manager

Prior to the meeting

Providing brief explanation about Menopause

Being prepared

Keep a diary of symptoms

Decide on a location for conversation

Sufficient time

During the meeting

Being clear

Offering solutions and making suggestions

After the meeting

Follow up meetings



Support for staff

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 for staff

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.



Support for staff

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:

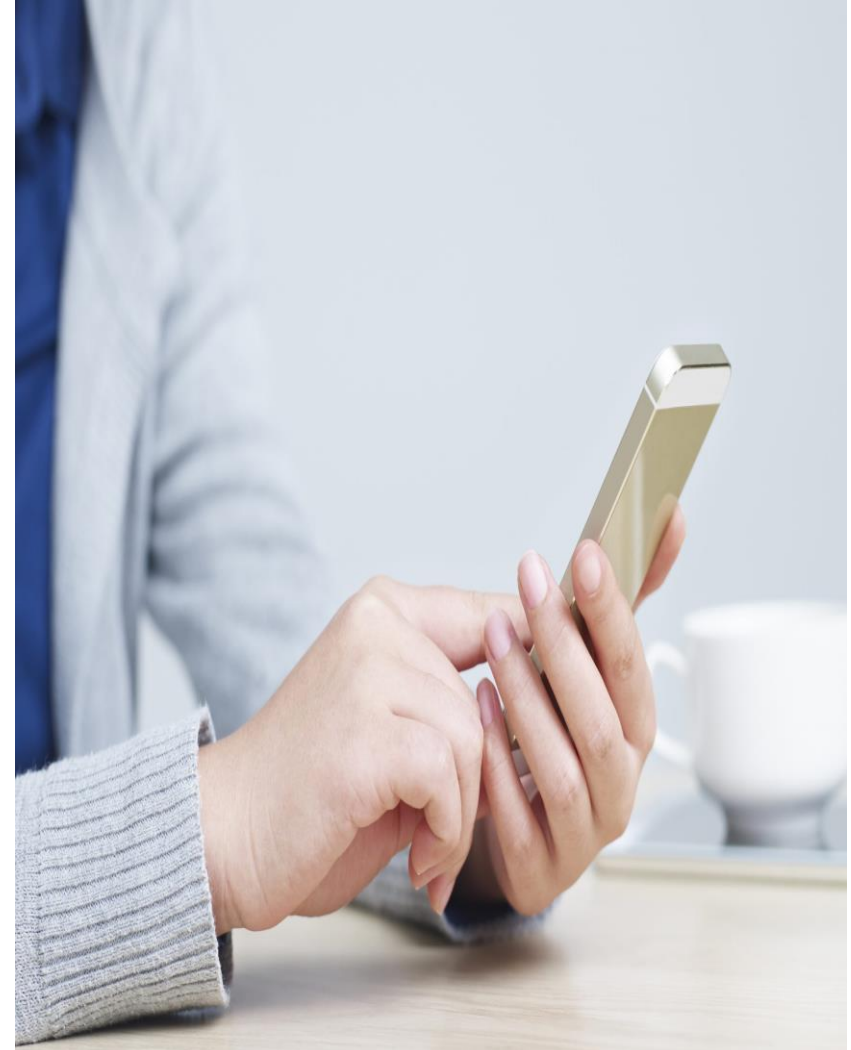
Freephone: 0800 243 458

Email: assistance@workplaceoptions.com

Website: www.workplaceoptions.co.uk -

username - queenmary

password employee



Tips for how to talk to your GP about menopause

If you are suffering from menopausal symptoms to the point they're getting in the way of you enjoying life, it's time to talk to your doctor. But, sometimes, that's easier said than done. Below are some helpful, straightforward tips to help you get the best from your appointment:

- Don't wait
- Read the NICE guidelines
- Prepare for your appointment
- Keep a list of all your symptoms
- Ask the receptionist which GP is best to talk to about menopause
- Ask for longer appointment
- Don't be afraid to ask for second opinion
- Ask if there is a menopause clinic in your area
- Take your partner or a friend with you.



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.



Queen Mary 2030:

**The most inclusive
university of its kind,
anywhere**

Legal Context: Equality Act 2010



Gendered stigma around the menopause

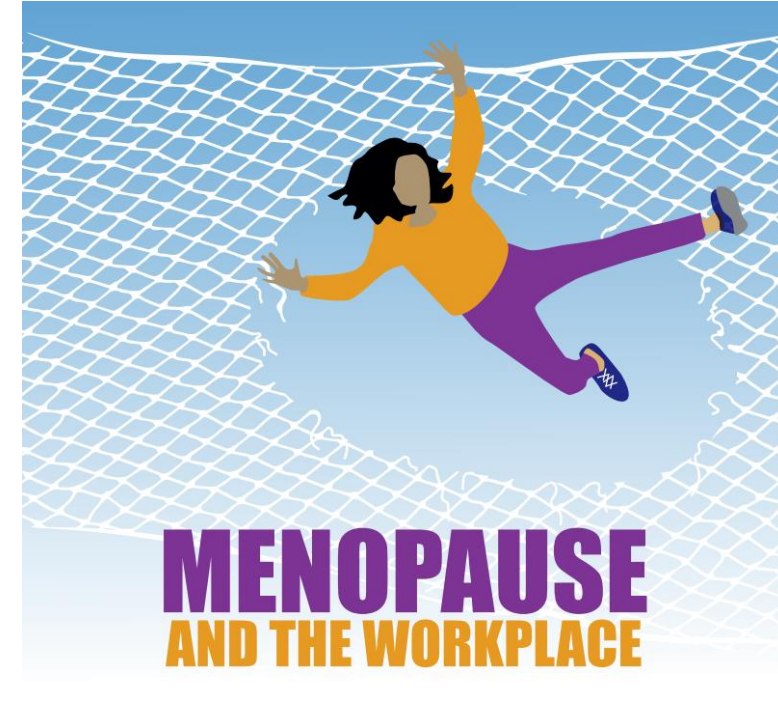
Fawcett Society, Menopause and the Workplace Report, 2022

41% have seen menopause or menopause symptoms treated as a joke by people at work.

Among women who had taken time off due to menopause, 39% cited anxiety or depression as the main reason on their sick note, rather than share their menopause status.

In this environment of stigma, almost half (45%) of women haven't spoken to their GP surgery about their symptoms.

One in ten women who worked during the menopause have left a job due to their symptoms



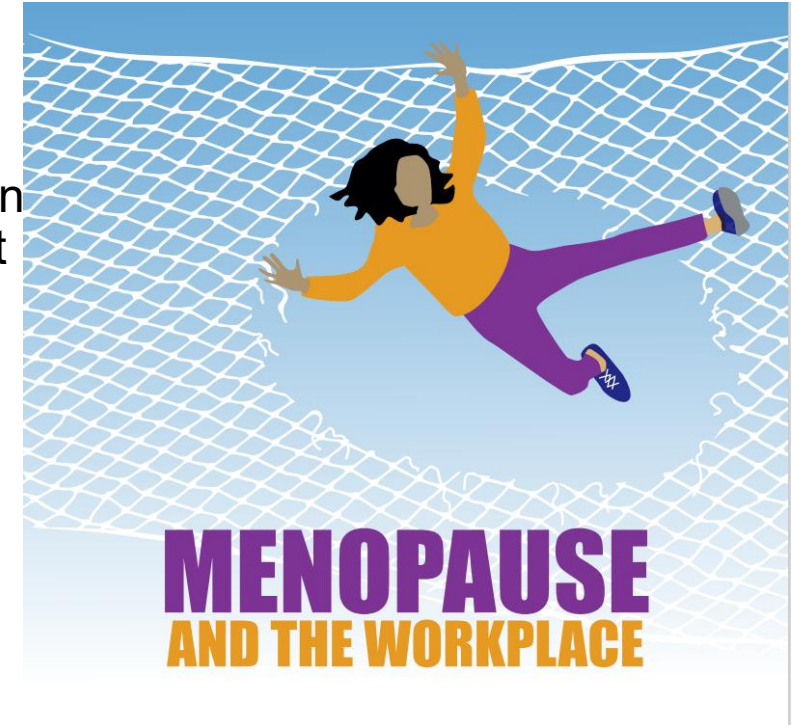
Gendered stigma around the menopause

House of Commons Women and Equalities Committee Menopause and the Workplace Report

“damaging taboos and stigmas [...] can prevent women from seeking help and can reinforce beliefs that debilitating symptoms are ‘normal’ or something that must be endured”.

There is a “normalisation” of women’s pain and menopause symptoms.

Menopause in general is understudied and downplayed as a “life event.”



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
- Visibility and understanding
- Language can be alienating
- Experiences in healthcare settings
- Conversations around symptoms
- 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. More than eight in ten disabled women going through the menopause reported difficulty sleeping (92%), brain fog (85%), joint pain or stiffness (82%), or anxiety or depression (82%) as somewhat or very difficult.
- 22% of disabled women said they had left a job due to their menopause symptoms compared to 9% for non-disabled women



Neurodiversity and the menopause

The experience of the menopause will be different for those who are neurodiverse, some examples include:

- Symptoms
- Route to menopause diagnosis
- Experience of receiving diagnosis and support
- Experience and feeling towards the menopause
- Adjustments and support needs
- Increased challenges “masking”
- New neurodiverse diagnosis



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:
 - Differences in the timing of the menopause transition
 - Differences in types of and severity of symptoms
 - Healthcare disparities
 - Cultural differences
 - Occupational factors



‘a non-binary person in menopause may not recognise the signs because we aren’t told about them, or public information is so offputtingly excluding that people may simply feel it doesn’t apply to them’

Tania Glyde – Queer Menopause Collective



On the whole, they are keeping things to themselves because they have that double whammy of being an older woman and a black woman (...) Racism has not gone away. Black lives matter; black lives still matter. Certainly from my research, women are saying, “I have not told anybody and I am not telling anybody.”

Karen Arthur – Menopause whilst Black Podcast

Any Questions ?

