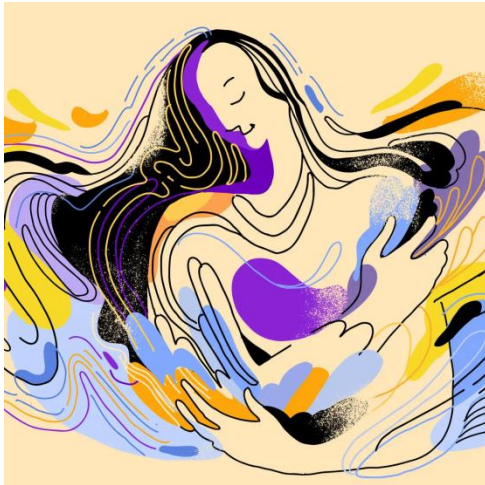




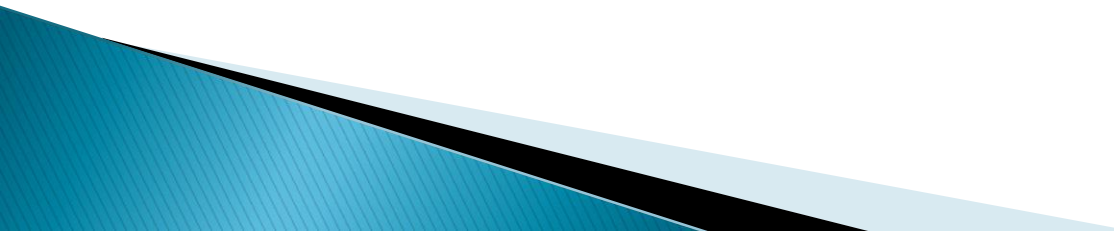
**Education
Mutual**

MENOPAUSE - Supporting Staff in the Workplace



**Dr Sandi Mann
Health Mental Health Lead
Sparta Health**

Aims

- ▶ **Understanding Menopause and Mental Health**
 - ▶ **Provide practical help and provide understanding to support employees and colleagues**
 - ▶ **Provide a wider awareness with the aim of reducing the stigma associated with menopause**
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About me

- ▶ **Chartered (Academic) Psychologist**
- ▶ **CBT Practitioner**
- ▶ **Accredited EMDR Practitioner**
- ▶ **University Lecturer Applied Clinical Psychology**
- ▶ **Author of over 20 psychology books**
- ▶ **Clinical Lead for Sparta Health**



How do we perceive menopausal women?

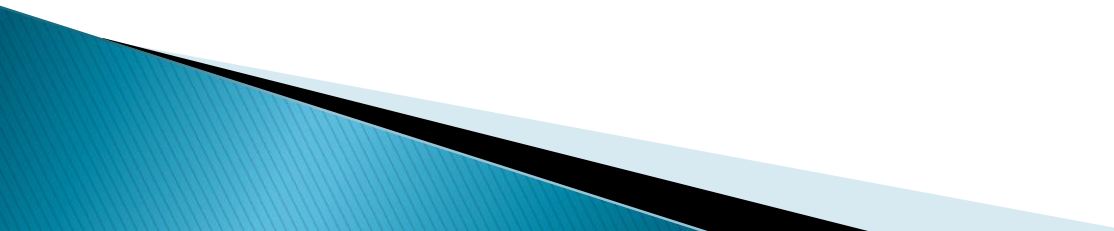
- ▶ <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RxPZh4AnWyk>



What is the menopause?

- ▶ **The menopause is a natural biological process. Put simply, the menopause is when you stop having periods and are no longer able to get pregnant naturally. It happens when your ovaries age and naturally produce lower levels of reproductive hormones. If you've had a hysterectomy and had your ovaries removed, you will immediately reach menopause. This is known as surgical menopause and can happen to women of any age.**
- ▶ **We often use the word menopause to describe when we notice our periods changing, and we start to experience menopausal symptoms, which is called perimenopause. The menopause itself is defined as the day when you haven't had a period for 12 months.**
- ▶ **The average age of menopause is 51 but it may happen sooner or later than this. Around one in 100 women experience the menopause before they reach 40.**

What is the perimenopause?

- ▶ **The perimenopause is the time when your body starts transitioning towards the menopause, and your ovaries slow down.**
 - ▶ **It can start months or years before the menopause.**
 - ▶ **You might experience irregular periods that are lighter or heavier than normal, hot flushes, mood swings, sleep problems and fatigue.**
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What are the symptoms of the menopause that might impact work?

- ▶ **Eight out of ten women have symptoms in addition to their periods stopping. The type and severity of symptoms can vary, and some are the same as the symptoms that can occur during the perimenopause. Common menopausal symptoms include:**
- ▶ **hot flashes – short, sudden bursts of heat that can leave your skin sweaty and red**
- ▶ **night sweats – hot flashes that occur at night**
- ▶ **sleep problems**
- ▶ **mood swings**
- ▶ **brain fog, forgetfulness and difficulty concentrating**
- ▶ **headaches**
- ▶ **aches and pains**

Menopause and Mental Health

- ▶ **Changing hormone levels can cause mood swings, low mood and anxiety around menopause.**
- ▶ **mood changes such as irritability, sadness, lack of motivation, aggressiveness, problems focusing, stress, difficulty concentrating, and depression.**
- ▶ **While the menopause isn't a mental health condition, it can affect your mental health. Hormone changes during the menopause can sometimes make mental health conditions worse.**

Anxiety and menopause

- ▶ **While research has clearly linked menopause and depression, the connection is less clear when it comes to anxiety**

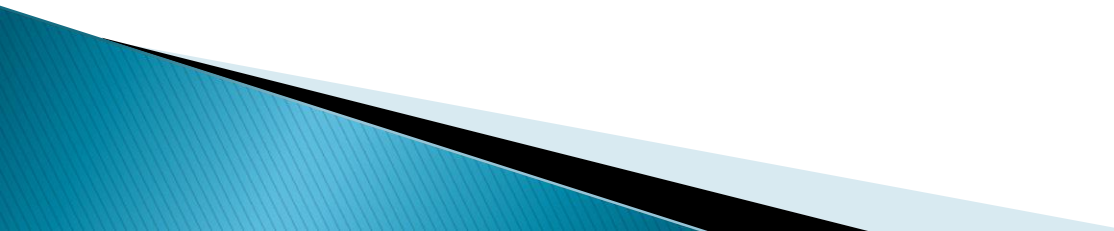


Menopause in the workplace

- ▶ **Almost 75% to 80% of women at menopausal age are in work, according to the Faculty of Occupational Health.**
- ▶ **Their infographic says that ‘the majority of women are unwilling to disclose’ menopause-related issues to line managers (most of whom were men, or people younger than themselves).**
- ▶ **And, apart from pregnancy, the management of gender-specific health issues is rarely discussed in the workplace.**

Menopause at work

- ▶ **A 2022 poll of 2,000 women** revealed that **18% were looking to leave their jobs because of menopause symptoms.**
- ▶ **This significant percentage equates to about one million women leaving the UK workforce.**
- ▶ **The most common reason for leaving was reported to be ‘the pressures put on them’ (42%).**
- ▶ **The joint second-most common reasons were a failure to receive the flexible working environment required to manage menopausal symptoms, and a lack of understanding from management (39%).**

- ▶ **Such clear evidence suggests the need to improve and for organisations to focus on menopause in the workplace through education and training, as well as the creation of guidance documents.**
 - ▶ **If business leaders emphasise the importance of recognising menopause symptoms, and how they seriously impact people's interaction with work, it could make a huge difference.**
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- ▶ **menopause is a workplace matter, and that there is a business case for supporting staff**

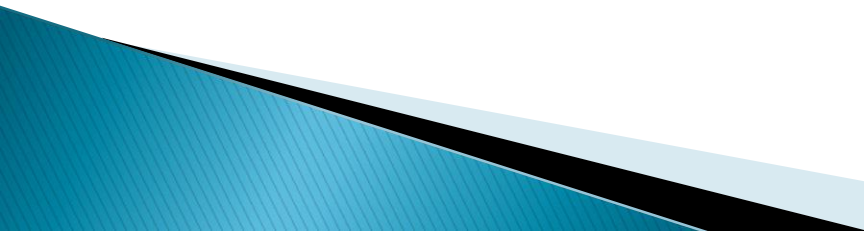


What can organisations do?

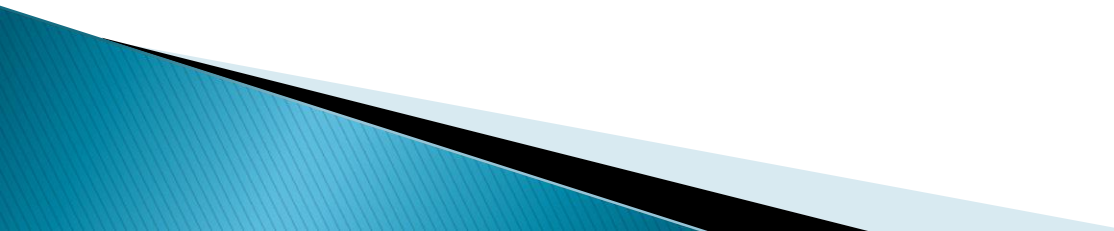
- ▶ **Make a statement**
- ▶ **Open up conversations**
- ▶ **Find practical solutions**
- ▶ **Challenge stereotypes**



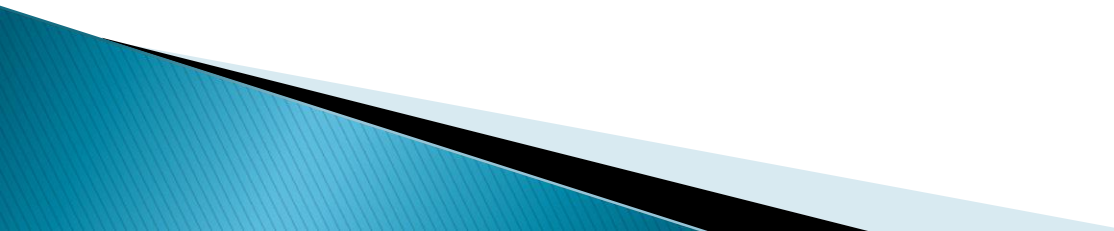
Make a statement

- ▶ **Review workplace guidance**
 - ▶ **Either have specific menopause policy or policy that recognises menopause**
 - ▶ **Have a known point of reference for staff to speak to regarding symptoms (menopause champion?)**
 - ▶ **Carry out workplace assessment to ensure symptoms are not worsened by the environment**
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Open up conversations

- ▶ **Everyone is an individual – don't assume symptoms**
 - ▶ **Normalise talk of menopause**
 - ▶ **Don't offer medical advice**
 - ▶ **Don't patronise**
 - ▶ **Don't assume your experiences will be similar to others**
 - ▶ **Involve men too**
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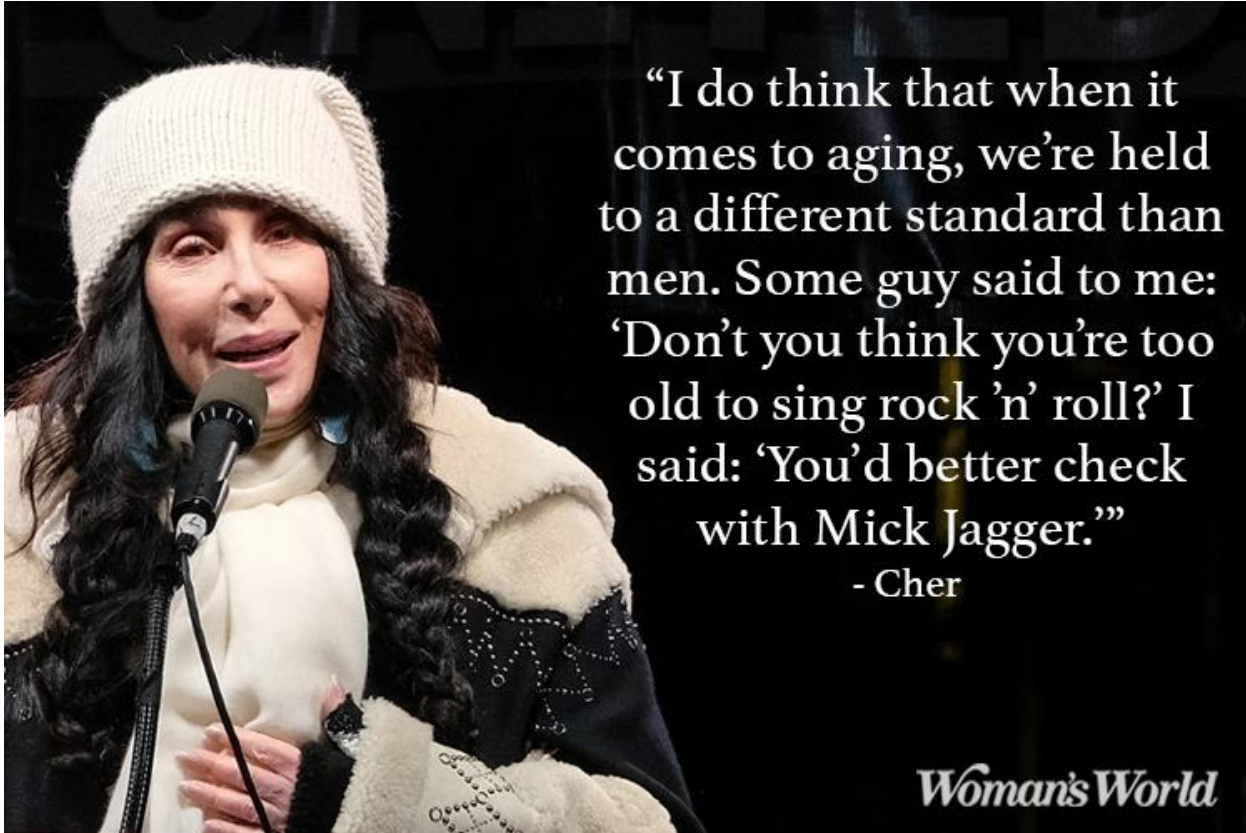
Find practical solutions

- ▶ **Open windows? Desk fan?**
 - ▶ **Clothing**
 - ▶ **Access to bathrooms**
 - ▶ **Comfortable desk etc**
 - ▶ **Time off for medical appts**
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Challenge stereotypes

- ▶ **“I will probably get shut down for saying this, but 50-plus women are often more agile and more adept at multitasking, because that’s what we have had to do over the last decades of our lives, juggling caring for older relatives with bringing up younger children. Home and work. It makes you nimble in your mindset. Nothing can replace experience, knowledge and wisdom, and you can’t buy them or study for them at university.”**
- ▶ entrepreneur Liz Earle
- ▶ <https://www.theguardian.com/lifeandstyle/2017/aug/28/meet-women-launching-startups-50s-deep-breath-jumped>


- ▶ **A recent survey of women in the UK found that almost half didn't feel comfortable disclosing their menopausal status at work, and in our own survey of nearly 100 women, about a third said they wouldn't talk about menopause at work, a third would share only with specific people, and just a third would disclose openly. (2022)**



“I do think that when it comes to aging, we’re held to a different standard than men. Some guy said to me: ‘Don’t you think you’re too old to sing rock ’n’ roll?’ I said: ‘You’d better check with Mick Jagger.’”

- Cher

Woman's World

A photograph of Sharon Stone speaking into a microphone. She is smiling and looking upwards. She is wearing a black sleeveless top and large, ornate gold and purple earrings. The background is dark. The text is overlaid on the right side of the image.

“It’s not like 50 is the
new 30. It’s like 50 is
the new chapter.”

- Sharon Stone

Woman's World

Women who reach success post menopause

- ▶ In 2021 US business magazine Forbes released its inaugural “50 over 50” power list of women making professional breakthroughs in later life, from the powerhouse Netflix producer Shonda Rhimes to veteran diplomat Madeleine Albright.

And in the UK











Resources...

- ▶ <https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/menopause/symptoms/>
- ▶ <https://www.nice.org.uk/guidance/ng23/chapter/recommendations#long-term-benefits-and-risks-of-hormone-replacement-therapy>
- ▶ https://www.cipd.co.uk/Images/menopause-guide-2022_tcm18-55426.pdf
- ▶ <https://publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm5803/cmselect/cmwomeq/91/summary.html>
- ▶ https://www.menopausematters.co.uk/menopause_at_work.php
- ▶ <https://www.womens-health-concern.org/help-and-advice/factsheets/menopause/>
- ▶ <https://thebms.org.uk/>
- ▶ <https://www.bacp.co.uk/bacp-journals/bacp-workplace/april-2018/work-life-and-the-menopause/>
- ▶ <https://www.bacp.co.uk/bacp-journals/private-practice/december-2019/menopause-matters/>
- ▶ <https://www.bacp.co.uk/about-therapy/what-therapy-can-help-with/menopause/>
- ▶ <https://www.balance-menopause.com/>