



Let's talk about *menopause*



accord



How to have a menopause conversation *with your manager*

Talking about the menopause has been taboo for way too long. We're working with your employer to break down barriers to normalise conversations that should lead to positive change.

Here are some tips we think will help when you need or want to have your own meaningful conversation with your line manager:

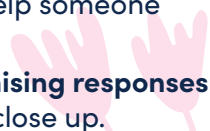


1. **Think about what you want to say**, and what you want to happen. Being prepared with a few notes will help you get the best out of the conversation.
2. **Rehearse the conversation** if you're feeling unsure what to say – close friends or partners offer a safe space to practice.
3. **Book a suitable time** – don't spring the conversation on your manager, and don't make assumptions about their knowledge or comfort with the subject. Book a room if you're in an office, even if you're having the chat online. A private space gives you safety from being overheard and avoids embarrassment.
4. **Keep a diary of your symptoms** – jot down how they're affecting you both physically and mentally. Try and mention specific examples wherever possible. This gives you a good basis to explain to your manager how you're being affected and will help identify the types of support that may be useful.

- 5. Be clear and don't feel embarrassed** to open up. Explain what is happening, the situation and how it's affecting your work. Remember that every woman will go through the menopause at some point, and that there are estimated to be 4.4 million women over the age of 50 in work... what we're saying is you're not alone.
- 6. Offer a solution** – make suggestions on what would help manage your symptoms at work. Take a look at the support that's available to you as a colleague or use our menopause guidance page to find out about what support is available outside of your employer.
- 7. Follow up** – give your boss time to digest what you've said. They are unlikely to be an expert on the subject and may need to refer to guidance or support themselves. So, suggest a time to have a follow-up meeting to talk about next steps.

How to have a menopause conversation *as a manager*

If you're a line manager, you can help normalise conversations about menopause too. Research has shown that 70% of women feel uncomfortable talking about menopause at work. Here are some tips we think will help you to make it easier for colleagues to talk openly about menopause and help identify the support need :

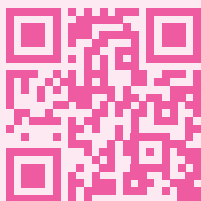
- 1. Ask questions** – simple, open and non-judgemental questions will help someone open up.
 - 2. Avoid judgemental or patronising responses** – this will cause someone to close up.
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3. **Speak calmly** and maintain good eye contact.
4. **Avoid interruptions** – switch off or mute phones and other distractions.
5. **Give the colleague ample opportunity** to explain the situation in their own words.
6. **Be patient** – silent pauses don't need to be filled, let the colleague tell you what they need to in the way they feel comfortable
7. **Focus on the person**, not the problem.
8. **Show empathy** and understanding.
9. **Encourage the colleague to talk** – if you can see something is wrong, don't just ignore it.
10. **Listen** actively and carefully.
11. **Make a note** of any actions agreed and share these with the colleague or ask them to share a note of actions with you.
12. **Read up** on menopause and the sources of support that are available.

Talk to our *menopause advocates*

We have a team of trained menopause advocates across our membership who offer support and guidance for those going through the menopause, or simply seeking advice. If you want to speak to one of them, scan the QR code below for contact details.

*scan me for
advocates:*



www.accord-myunion.org/menopause

Menopause *support*

Employers have started to wake up to the needs of those experiencing the menopause. Most of our members are covered by some form of menopause policy, so the first thing we'd recommend is to look at the policy and support that's available to you through your employer.

Here are some of the more general things that your employer can also do to help:

1. **A temporary change to your working pattern** – this might include later start or finish times, or additional breaks. This simple change can help those experiencing extreme fatigue.
2. **Working from home** – being able to work from home can help after a disrupted night or through heavy periods. Switching your camera off during online calls also provides some control during hot flushes.
3. **Helping you keep cool** – allowing you to move to a cooler desk or area, or having desk fans available can really help.
4. **Moving about** – being able to walk about where possible can help with aches and stiffness. Going somewhere more private will also give you more control during a hot flush.
5. **Managing stress** – many of the menopause symptoms can make activities feel impossible. Talk to your manager about what you feel might help reduce your stress.
6. **Adjusted travel** – being able to avoid public transport at peak times can help manage anxiety.
7. **Uniforms** – where you have a business uniform, make sure you have enough items so that you can change as often as you need to.

scan me for support:



Common menopause *symptoms*

3 in 4 people who are going through menopause will experience symptoms. There are at least 50 menopause symptoms, ranging from the more common ones below, to less common. And people are affected differently.



Poor
memory



Brain
fog



Headaches



Hot
flushes



Tiredness



Joint
pains



Mood
changes



Anxiety



Heart
palpitations



Low
confidence



Problems
sleeping



Night
sweats

1 in 4 will consider leaving the workplace because of their menopause symptoms. We're working to reduce that figure. Menopause shouldn't mean the end of your career. You still have so much to contribute to the workforce. Get in touch if you need individual support by calling the Accord helpline on **0118 934 1808**.

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