

Mental Health in your Workplace: Topics and Issues

Menopause

How can menopause affect mental health?

Did you know eight out of ten women experience symptoms of menopause that affect their mental health and wellbeing? These symptoms can include:

- Hot flushes – short, sudden bursts of heat that can leave your skin sweaty and red
- Night sweats – hot flushes that occur at night
- Sleep problems
- Mood swings
- Low mood
- Anxiety
- Irritability
- Brain fog, forgetfulness and difficulty concentrating
- Headaches
- Aches and pains

For women with a history of mental illness such as depression, bipolar or schizophrenia, menopause is more likely to cause more or worse symptoms. This may not mean that they have to stop working, but they are likely to need some extra support at work.

Support for an employee experiencing difficult symptoms of menopause may be similar to the support you would give an employee with sleep problems, anxiety and depression (especially as menopause often causes some of the same symptoms.) It's important to remember that confidential, open conversations to address the employee's needs and wellbeing is one of the best sources of support that you can give as an employer. You may also signpost to a GP if your employee is not already receiving help for their symptoms.

Reasonable adjustments for employees experiencing menopause may include:

- Reduce or change working hours
- Allow home working
- Increase rest breaks
- Reduce stress factors- facilitate conversations with employees about their individual needs
- Provide memory aids, e.g. organisers and written job instructions
- Provide check ins and one to one support if needed
- Provide a cooler uniform
- Moving to a cooler part of the office or providing a fan for a fan
- Allowing use of technology, for example setting up reminders on a mobile phone
- Provide access to cold drinking water
- Make personal storage space available for sanitary items and medication
- Offer flexible working times to combat issues caused by sleep disturbance
- Review ventilation around workstations
- Move to a quieter workspace and allow a quiet place for rest breaks
- Provide training and education on the symptoms and effects on mental health for other members of the team

Sources and further reading

[Menopause | Mental Health Foundation](#)

[Mental health and the menopause | DPT](#)

[National Education Union \(neu.org.uk\)](#)

[Menopause and the workplace | NHS inform](#)