



5 minute manager's guide: Having a supportive conversation about menopause

Research tells us that some people can find it hard to talk to their manager about how menopause is affecting them. However, your role as their manager is there to help them be at their best at work. To help you both, preparation is important. This will result in a much better conversation and outcome for both you and your colleague.

Opening up the conversation. Talking with your team about menopause and the support available within your organisation can be a great way to demonstrate you want to support anyone experiencing symptoms.

Focus on the positive. A positive mindset and approach are central for managers to ensure conversations are supportive experiences for you and your colleagues. When a colleague talks about menopause, make sure you communicate that it's not a problem for you or for the organisation. It's also okay not to have all the answers during your first conversation, you can offer reassurance that you will find answers for your next conversation.

Offer support. Support can come in a number of different forms: some employees may just want an empathic ear, while others may want something more formal.

Time and location. Make sure you have the time and space for a confidential discussion that allows the opportunity to raise concerns, worries and steps forward. End the conversation by agreeing the next steps.

Develop a working plan. Menopause is a unique experience and each colleague may need different support. Ask your colleague what they feel might improve their symptoms at work.

Review regularly. At the end of the meeting put a time in the diary to meet again, whether that's to agree a way forward, to monitor progress or update.

The effects of menopausal transition can change over time, so support may need to change to accommodate this.

It can be hard when you suspect someone is experiencing menopause symptoms but they haven't talked to you. Wait for your colleague to share what they're experiencing. Bringing it up yourself could be viewed as confrontational or offensive. And, as managers, we are not here to diagnose, but to support.

Reflect back what you are seeing. If you observe a colleague struggling or not seeming themselves, ask how they are or is there anything you can help with. Knowing you care and want to support can provide great reassurance to all your colleagues.

Above all, it's in both your best interests to find a good solution. All anyone wants is for your team to be fit and well so they can do their job to the best of their ability.

