



Everyone Matters Guide to **Menopause**

Facilitator notes

Introductory slide

[Briefly introduce and set parameters for the discussion. An understanding that this is a safety and diversity related business topic is sufficient. Some colleagues may wish to use personal examples in which case agree parameters for confidentiality and respect]

You may have experiencing menopause first hand or know a colleague, friend, relative or team member or who is.

Today is about dismissing the taboo and dispelling the myths around this important part of life

Slide 2

Menopause is a natural life stage that every woman will progress through.

Menopause is not a condition.

Slide 3

The following factors may help explain this trend in the UK:

Women's are economically active for longer

Employers' efforts to retain skilled workers

Increases in the state pension age

The abolition of the default retirement age

.. And other many other reasons..

When symptoms last years they should not be regarded as temporary although some symptoms come and go, heighten or reduce. Every woman is different.

[Pause for discussion re years of symptoms]

Menopause should not be regarded simply as a 'middle aged' transition. Many women experience menopause at a younger age

Slide 4

Our people strategy focuses upon Great People, Great Teams

Our business drivers for building menopause awareness are:

Safety and wellbeing. Everyone home safe everyday

Which goes hand in hand with Business **Performance**

If an employee has wellbeing challenges safety to that employee, other team, our assets, customers and stakeholders may be compromised

We are operating in a competitive market. As a safe caring performance lead employer, we can build our brand reputation and attract diversity of **talent**.

Recent research suggests that females are statistically more likely to leave our organisation

Our focus is upon ensuring that Network Rail is seen, as a great place to work by everyone.

[Pause for discussion]

Slide 5

Menopause is not just for women

[Point to slide read out and ask for agreement/disagreement?]

Logically this is an important subject for everyone. Most managers are men, most colleagues are men and many male colleagues will have close female relatives who have/are experiencing menopause.

Point 4 – any surprises?

The media sometimes unhelpfully refer to the 'male menopause' or 'andropause'.

Men experience a drop in testosterone although usually a more gradual decline. Some men may experience (sometimes distressing) symptoms similar to those that women experience during menopause with certain medical conditions e.g. hypogonadism

Such symptoms in males can interfere with everyday life and happiness, as they do for many women during menopause.

Slide 6

Why is this relevant?

[Read slide points 1-4]

Observations?

What do those numbers suggest? What surprises you about those statistics?

This means there are more women in the workplace and society in general who have experienced menopause

Less of us – both men and women - will have sufficient personal or company pension funds to retire early. Therefore its highly likely more people will work until state pension age ..or beyond..

The state pension age for women increased from 60 just a few years ago to between 66-68 and is likely to increase

Slide 7

Symptoms usually last 4-8 years.

One symptom can lead to another. Hot flushes and night sweats are sometimes said to cause insomnia.

We spoke earlier about some males experiencing similar symptoms as a result of decreased testosterone levels. These can include hot flushes, breast enlargement, erectile dysfunction, anxiety, loss of confidence and others. Every man is different too.

Slide 8

The evidence also paints a consistent picture of women in transition feeling those around them at work are unsympathetic or treat them badly, because of **gendered ageism**

The Government report commissioned by the Equalities office and undertaken by the University of Leicester: The effects of menopause transition in the workplace

.. Menopause transition is also represented in the evidence as an **experience which differs from woman to woman**.

Women often do not speak up about transition-related difficulties at work as a result, especially to men and/or younger colleagues

But **no evidence compares male and female workers in mid-life**, so we cannot be sure that these findings about symptoms and other workplace experiences are specific to women

- **Leaving work – women more likely at this time**
- **Loosing job – fear that they will loose their job**
- **Fear of redundancy - fear they will be selected for redundancy**

Slide 9

So why is this important for Network Rail?

We are now at 17% (October 2018) but our diversity and inclusion strategy is to increase female representation in our workforce. It's not just a nice or politically correct thing to do. There are real business drivers: Safety, performance, diversity of thought and talent

[Discussion: re how inclusive businesses are safer and more successful]

The biggest increases in employment rates over the last 30 years have been for women aged 60-64 (from 18% to 41%) and for women aged 55-59 (from 49% to 69%). Over the same time period the employment rate gap between women and men aged between 50 and 64 fell from just under 28% to 11% in 2015 (Department for Work and Pensions/ DWP 2015).

Increased rates of employment among women aged 50 and above mean more working women than ever before will experience the menopause

As employees, we – in particular, many females - are more discerning than ever?

I want to work for an employer who cares about me. Treats me with respect. Deals with unfairness.

[Discussion: what influences your choice of employer?

Examples can include the global 'ground swell' of feminist opinion: #Metoo #timesup Gender pay gap/equal pay, enhanced maternity rights/pay, perhaps 'menopause friendly' is likely to be an indicator of a caring employer? Volunteering days? Mental health aware? Chosen charity? Flexible/agile working?]

Insomnia can lead to irritability, fatigue and poorer cognitive function (sometimes described as brain fog). Heavy periods or hot flushes are physically distressing and can be embarrassing in front of colleagues and managers. Irritability and mood swings could mean that a woman's relationships with others at work (and/or home) are affected.

A small amount of quantitative evidence indicates Hormone Replacement Therapy can alleviate symptoms affecting work. HRT is not recommended for everyone. Many women consider the well publicised risks of HRT and therefore don't wish to take it. Every woman is different.

Line managers and colleagues should allow a woman to 'describe' and not try to 'prescribe'

Slide 10 and 11

Dashboard data – might be a little out of date – nevertheless discuss re your own business areas dashboard

Slide 12 and 13

We've spoken with some of our 'Inspire' Network. This is what some female colleagues are saying.

Slide 14

One of our employees spoke out about her personal experience in October 2017 to celebrate World Menopause day

Slides 15-18

These are some scenarios which might suggest a woman – your team member, a colleague or a relative or friend needs some support:

[Read out]

What would/could you do?

You can't always identify what when a woman is going through the menopause

Some do not experience symptoms

Those that do, often do not speak up about transition-related difficulties at work.

Slide 19

Employers should consider a variety of approaches to menopause transition at work, to cater for women's differing experiences:

These are just some examples of temporary reasonable adjustments that could support an employee going through the menopause would include:

The Equality Act 2010 legally protects people from discrimination in the workplace and wider society. If an individual has a physical or mental impairment that has a 'substantial' and 'long-term' negative effect on their ability to do normal daily activities, the disability provisions of the Equality Act is likely to apply. In the case of the menopause, if the condition meets these criteria, it is likely to be covered by the Disability Provisions of the Equality Act, helping to facilitate the use of 'reasonable' adjustments for disabled people.

How many people have used our **reasonable adjustment toolkit**?

Where else can you go for help?

Slide 20

This is the Everyone guide to managing menopause in the workplace which also includes where to find more information

HR Direct have been briefed and are already helping line managers and colleagues to resolve challenges in the workplace

Validium our EAP provider can also help coach line managers and employees to have sensitive/challenging conversations

Slide 21

Menopause is now a topic of litigation

Very few cases Tiffin lost, Merchant won against her employer. In the case of Davies v Scottish Courts and Tribunal Service Menopause symptoms were defined as a disability. Menopause itself is not a disability. Every woman's experience is different.

Slide 22

Show the Network Rail menopause in minutes film

Remind attendees that the film can be viewed on line at work and home on personal or NR devices.

[Discussion: Any questions? Thank everyone for their attention and input into discussion]

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Feedback welcome

The Menopause project team have, during this project worked with NR teams around the UK including our Inspire network. We are interested in your feedback. Our objective was to raise awareness of menopause because at Network Rail everyone matters.

Let's keep the conversation going!

Karen.venn@networkrail.co.uk Janet.trowse@networkrail.co.uk Richard.peters@networkrail.co.uk

Facilitator Notes:

Question	Response	Action