

**the Hot  
Resignation**

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# 1

## Why does menopause matter?

Women continue to make up an increasing proportion of the global workforce, yet many leave their jobs due to the challenges they face during menopause.<sup>1</sup> These women are talented, powerful, and in the prime stages of their careers.

Unfortunately, this exodus is not only an economic drain on amazing, resilient talent, but also costs women the chance to pursue years of career opportunities and satisfaction.<sup>1,2</sup> These are women who may have worked hard, love what they do, and want to keep contributing to what is important to them in the workplace.<sup>2</sup>

Our aim is to provide you with the knowledge and the tools to make changes that are easy to implement—changes that move us into a more inclusive working atmosphere.

Whether you are just starting your career or have decades of experience, regardless of your gender or title, understanding menopause and how to support the challenges of menopause in the workplace is beneficial to us all.<sup>3</sup>

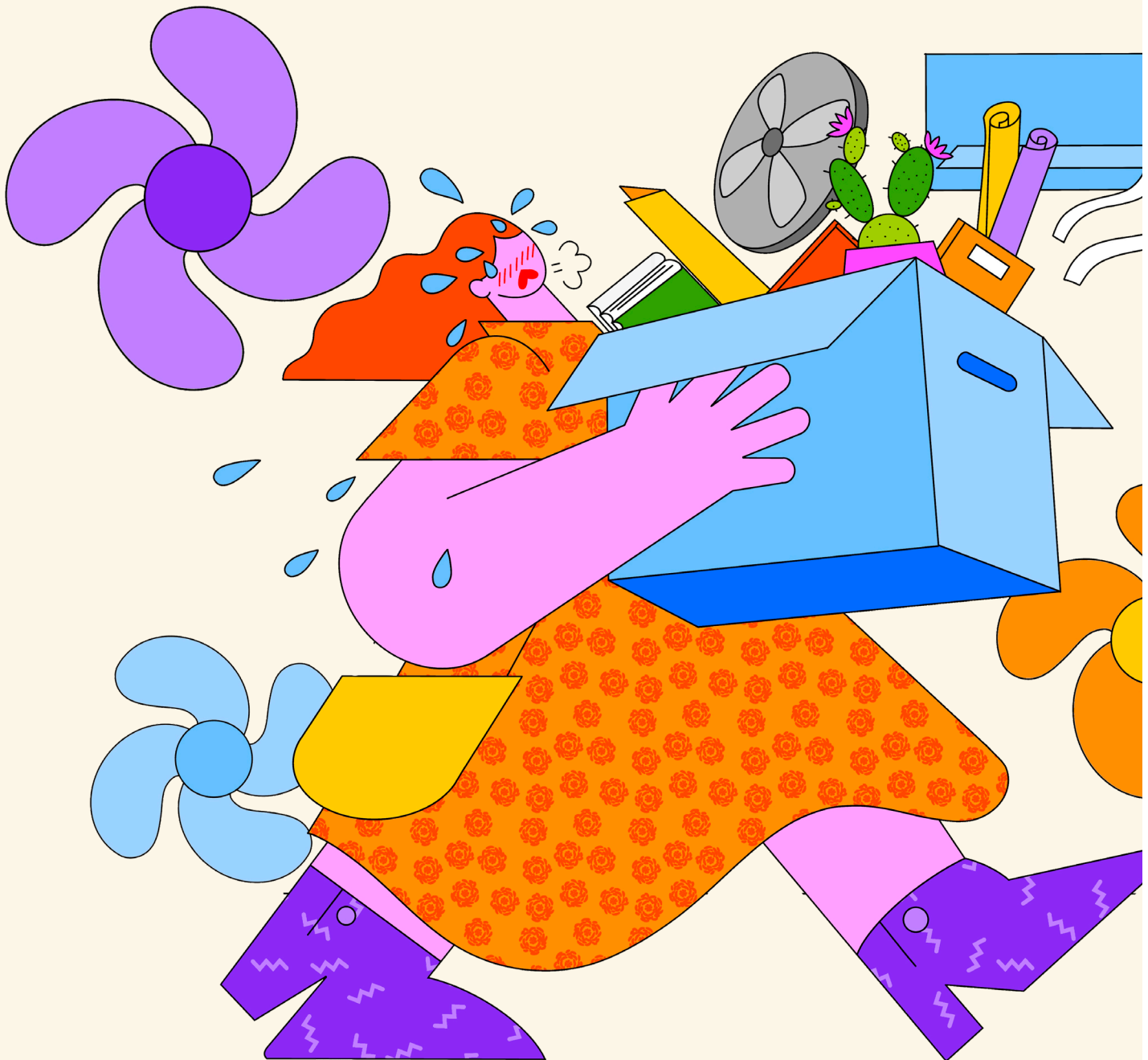


*“These women are talented, powerful, and in the prime stages of their careers.”*



2

# What is menopause?



# 2.1

## Menopause is...

Menopause is a topic most people know very little about or rarely discuss—many women don't know when to expect it or what it entails.<sup>3,4</sup> The average age of women who experience menopause is 51, but it can occur earlier, between 40 and 45, in 10 percent of women.<sup>5</sup> Sometimes menopause can occur earlier in women who have had certain surgeries, such as removal of ovaries or hysterectomy, cancer treatments, or other health conditions.<sup>3,6</sup>

Menopause is widely misunderstood.<sup>4</sup> Many people don't know that this time of transition can last up to 14 years and that it consists of 3 phases.<sup>7,8</sup>

*1 in 10  
women*  
experience menopause  
before 45 years old<sup>5</sup>

*1 in 100*  
before 40 years old<sup>4</sup>



## 2.2

# The 3 phases<sup>9,10</sup>

Most of us go through an initial phase of enormous hormonal changes in our early youth with puberty.<sup>9,10</sup>

Women specifically go on to experience a second phase of transition with dramatic hormonal changes during menopause. They may experience the strongest physical and psychological symptoms for over a decade and over 3 phases.<sup>9,10</sup>

During all three stages—perimenopause, menopause, and postmenopause—a woman's hormonal level of estrogen and progesterone continues to drop.<sup>9,10</sup>

### Perimenopause

The time leading up to menopause that can take eight to ten years. This is the time when symptoms can begin.<sup>11</sup>

### Menopause

The 12 months after a woman's last menstrual period. At 12 months, menopause has been reached.<sup>12</sup>

### Postmenopause

Typically following the 12 months after the final period, with symptoms lasting a decade or longer.<sup>13</sup>

Women of color are more likely to experience menopause earlier in life. They are also more likely to experience a wider variety of symptoms but less likely to seek medical relief in treatments like hormone therapy due to less access to medical resources or information.<sup>14</sup>

Menopause doesn't need to be dealt with alone. Family, friends, and supportive workplace allies are crucial in easing the transition.<sup>15</sup>

## 2.3

# How does it feel?

While all menstruating women experience menopause, every woman experiences it differently. Some have very few symptoms, causing very little discomfort, while some face over 30 symptoms that can vary in terms of frequency and severity in day-to-day life.<sup>8,10,16</sup>

- Hot or cold flashes
- Night sweats
- Irregular periods
- Mood changes
- Breast soreness
- Decreased libido
- Vaginal dryness
- Headaches
- Tingling of extremities
- Burning mouth
- Changes in taste
- Fatigue
- Bloating
- Joint pain
- Muscle tension and aches
- Electric shock sensations
- Itchiness
- Sleep disturbance
- Difficulty concentrating
- Memory lapses
- Thinning hair
- Brittle nails
- Weight gain
- Stress incontinence
- Dizzy spells
- Allergies
- Osteoporosis
- Irregular heartbeat
- Irritability
- Depression
- Anxiety
- Panic disorder

## 2.4

# Menopause in culture

**Every woman around the globe goes through menopause.** It's a normal part of life, and yet, there is a stigma or stereotype that continues to exist.<sup>4,17</sup>

In certain cultures, especially Western ones like the US, the loss of fertility can be perceived as a loss in sexual vitality. As women enter into midlife, many report feeling “invisible” because they believe the culture no longer values them. They often feel ashamed of their symptoms and attempt to hide them for fear of being perceived as “old.”<sup>18</sup>

This stigma compounded with the physical symptoms can make this time of transition even more difficult for women and make them more susceptible to mental health issues, especially anxiety and depression.<sup>4,17</sup>

If we as a culture can overcome the negativity surrounding menopause and see it as nothing more than a normal part of life, then we can move toward a more understanding, more open, and more inclusive society.<sup>19</sup>

*“...we can move towards  
a more understanding,  
more open and more  
inclusive society.”*





## 2.4

# It's time to talk about it

As more women continue to contribute to the workforce and as life expectancy continues to increase, the challenges around menopause in the workplace need to be addressed.<sup>19</sup>

A large number of worldwide corporations have already implemented training and policies to support women who are experiencing menopause.<sup>20</sup> The UK and Australia specifically are leading the way in creating change, and they can be a great source of knowledge.<sup>21</sup>

**Talking about menopause is the first step.** By acknowledging this life stage, we can help create an atmosphere where women no longer have to hide their symptoms or feel ashamed but can be their best selves.<sup>3</sup>



3

# Menopause in the workplace



# 3.1

## Impact on women

Imagine trying to function in your job with such a broad range of unpredictable symptoms. And now imagine trying to hide your symptoms due to the negative perceptions associated with menopause.<sup>2,19,22</sup>

**70%** of women are trying to navigate work while experiencing untreated or inadequately treated hot flashes and the consequences of hot flashes.<sup>23</sup>

**51%** of women have been concerned about how their symptoms affect their performance at work.<sup>15</sup>

**43%** are concerned about how their symptoms affected their progression at work.<sup>15</sup>

**40%** of US women said menopause required them to change the way they work, weekly.<sup>24</sup>

**26%** of US women felt that their menopause symptoms negatively impacted their career.<sup>24</sup>

A large proportion of middle-aged working women have reported that a workplace that provides support for menopause is an important factor when considering a role. Unfortunately, it has been found that 13% of women have considered leaving their jobs, with 10% following through. This is usually due to workplaces that can't accommodate their needs, or the need for health insurance attached to their jobs. But supportive workplace environments can help combat this.



# 3.2

## Impact on business

We've seen the impact menopause has on women personally, but what about the workplace? How does menopause affect businesses?

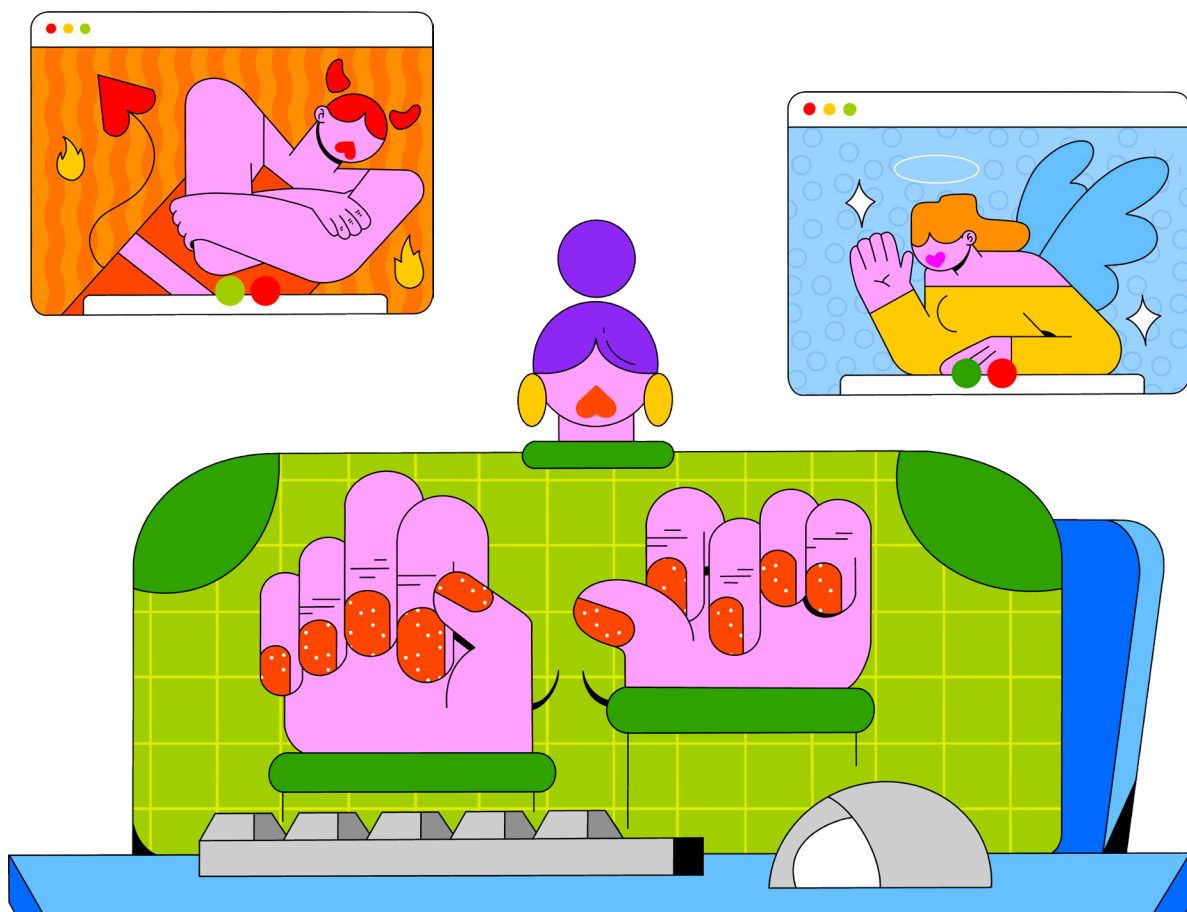
With 26% of the US workforce experiencing the negative impact of menopause symptoms and with women leaving the work force due to menopause in record numbers, the cost to businesses is significant.<sup>24-26</sup>

**\$2.2 billion a year, in fact.**<sup>26</sup>

Employers can reap the benefits of retaining, developing, and supporting diverse employees in the war for talent.<sup>15,27</sup> And small changes can make a huge impact, regardless of industry or level of employee.

Women aged 50 and over are highly experienced, adaptable, and energetic, with untapped leadership potential and in many cases 10-20 more years in the labor force. They are a growing and important segment of the workforce.<sup>28</sup>

By shifting mindsets and addressing company policy or practice, employers can view post-menopausal women as an important asset and leadership group that will bring distinctive and valuable experience and expertise to their age-diverse organizations. Recognizing women's value in mid-life is good for both employers (they have a weapon in the war for talent) and female employees (they can retain financial independence for longer through continued employment and enjoy the benefits of working later in life).<sup>28</sup>



# 3.3

## Women demand change

When surveyed, women clearly state that awareness and support of menopause in their workplace would benefit them and their companies significantly.<sup>15,29</sup>

**66%** of women think there should be more support in the workplace for women going through menopause<sup>15</sup>

Here's how many of them felt about the idea of offering support:

### **"If a company offered menopause support I would..."<sup>15</sup>**

- *feel more confident about menopause if working for this company (37%)*
- *feel more connected to the company (34%)*
- *stay with the company (29%)*
- *recommend this company to people I know who are looking for a job (29%)*

Normalizing this life stage through company policy, practice, and consideration builds company loyalty and reputation, while also increasing employee quality of work and productivity, impacting a company's bottom line.<sup>15,26</sup> It's a win-win. Feeling valued and understood by line managers may help women better cope with symptoms.<sup>24,29</sup> Many women want to work through this stage of life. They're experienced and determined, and we need to support them.<sup>28</sup>

4

# Changing the workplace



# 4.1

## How to make change

What can we do to make change?

There are 3 ways:

### 1 *Review your current organizational policies*

There's an opportunity to make change by identifying areas that could be approached or improved in your workplace. These could include:

- *Updating company policies to recognize the needs of menopausal women, or mentioning them, and ensuring these are included in onboarding documents. And, more importantly, implementing these policies*
  - *Allowing flexible working hours and allocated workspaces or privacy rooms*
- 

### 2 *Educate everyone in your organization about menopause*

Provide resources to educate all staff on the importance of supporting women experiencing menopause in the workplace. We want to ensure that they are able to feel confident in continuing in their careers and reduce any stigma surrounding this stage in life.

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### 3 *Create a cultural change*

You can start a new moment in the company by:

- *Encouraging open conversation about menopause*
- *Giving support in the workplace, including physical considerations like cooling fans for the desks*
- *Creating an environment for confidential HR conversations and assistance*

# 4.1

## How to make change<sup>30,31</sup>

Which of these considerations can you implement into your workplace?  
Which have already been implemented?

- *Company policies are updated to recognize the needs of menopausal women, including sickness or wellness leave*
- *Policies regarding menopause are included in onboarding documents, and consistently implemented*
- *Flexible working hours and allocated workspaces or privacy rooms are provided*
- *Employee training and resources for further understanding is available, specifically for managers*
- *An environment is created for confidential HR conversations and assistance*

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Let's think about how the culture of your workplace can change

- *Celebrating International Women's Day?*
- *Finding a champion for women's experience in your workplace?*
- *Setting up a safe space for women to chat?*
- *Celebrating the achievements of inspiring middle-aged women in your organization?*





## 4.2

# Managing menopause together

It's also imperative that managers know who they can talk to about understanding the needs of an employee experiencing menopause.<sup>20,31</sup>

Ensure that your leaders are supported, and empathetic in their discussions.

The tone of the discussion regarding menopause also needs to be considered.

Is it:

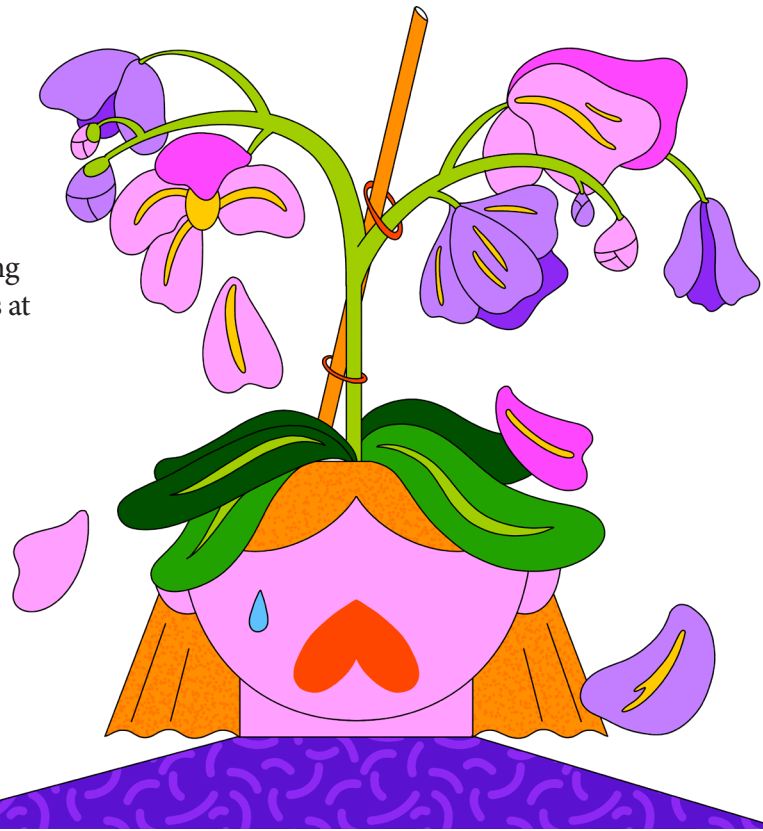
- *Positive?*
- *Understanding?*
- *Constructive?*
- *Empathetic?*

Managers may feel challenged about discussing menopause. How do you think the employees at your workplace view menopause?

- *Informed*
- *Helpful*
- *Proactive*
- *Supportive*

or

- *Uncomfortable*
- *Avoidant*
- *Negative*



Menopause is inevitable and should not be discussed in a dismissive or negative tone. Menopause should not be used to blame poor performance, to suggest retirement or a move to another role, or to shame an employee in any way.<sup>6,15,31</sup>

Being appreciative of an employee disclosing personal information that may impact the organization is important. Managers may need help in understanding how to discuss menopause and support employees.<sup>31</sup>

## 4.3

# Confidentiality and sensitivity

It's important to consider the level of information the person experiencing menopause may want to share, and being clear about who the employee is comfortable with you sharing the information with.<sup>15</sup> Some may be feeling uncomfortable enough about going through menopause, let alone sharing all their symptoms. Regardless of how much is shared, the same consideration needs to be shown.<sup>15</sup>

It's important that managers have the opportunity to work collaboratively with those experiencing menopause to ensure a healthy and productive work environment. Positivity, support, and flexibility are key.<sup>20</sup> A working plan to positively navigate menopause in the workplace for each individual who needs it, and check-ins to discuss needs, can be helpful.<sup>31</sup>

Think about ways you can work on anything that needs development.  
Are you and your managers:

- *Equipped with information?*
- *Understanding?*
- *Constructive?*
- *Willing to make considerate changes?*
- *Open to conversation?*
- *Knowledgeable about the need for HR involvement?*
- *Able to keep sensitive information confidential?*
- *Remembering to check in on the needs of those requiring changes?*



## 4.3

# What's next?

Once the needs for change or growth are identified, work with a team within your organization to make these needs into a reality.<sup>31</sup>

Think of support strategies that best suit your workplace.

- *What is the aim of your strategy?*
- *How will you measure it?*

Then, think of how it will be implemented.

- *Who will need training, and how?*
- *What needs to be discussed?*

There are also groups such as MIPO (*the Menopause Information Pack for Organizations*) that can assist with a range of resources to support conversations and facilitate change, regardless of the type of workplace.



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