

Navigating Menopause in the Workplace



UNIVERSE

Navigating Menopause in the Workplace

Menopause is when periods stop due to lower hormone levels. It usually affects women between the ages of 45 and 55, but it can happen earlier or later as well. Because of surgery, illness, or other medical conditions some people could enter menopause at a much younger age.

The experience of menopause may be difficult for some because the associated symptoms can affect daily life, including employment. Due to the distress caused by symptoms and their impact on productivity, it is important to be aware of how to navigate menopause at the workplace. Although workplaces are expected to have measures in place to support those going through menopause, many do not.

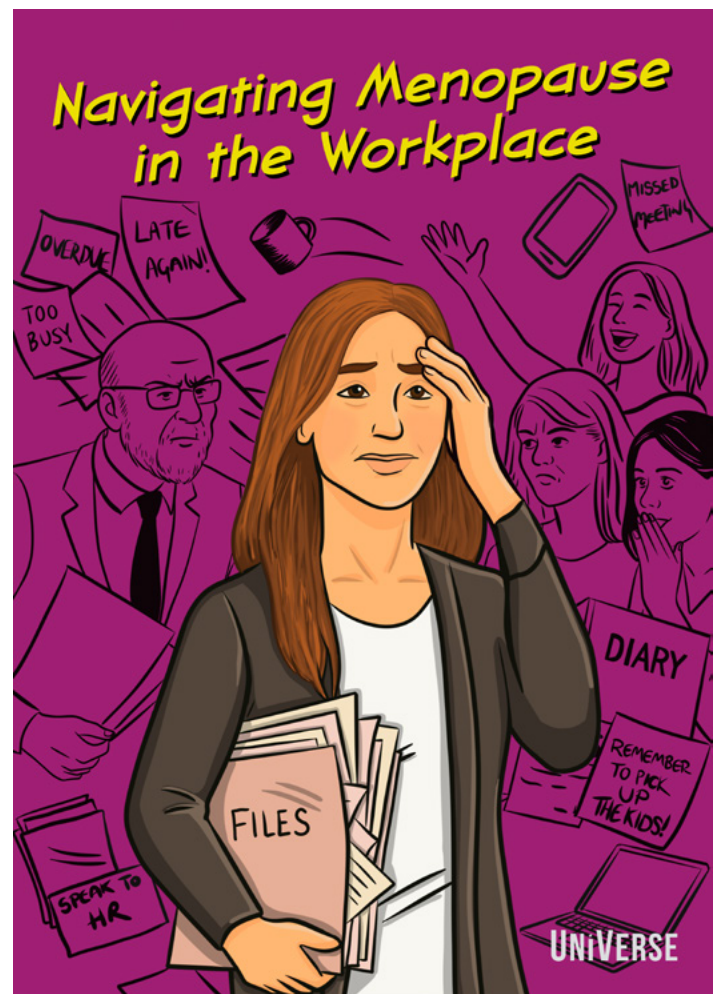
A group of researchers from the University of Aberdeen recently interviewed employed women about their experiences of menopause and its impact on work. Participants reported they often had to reduce work hours, take absences, or even consider changing/leaving jobs due to the symptoms and a lack of support and understanding from the workplace. They were reluctant to discuss any difficulties at work because of a fear of discrimination. Participants also suggested how workplaces can become more aware of these challenges and provide better support.

This comic is designed to raise workplace awareness of the menopause by presenting a story from the interviews through a fictionalised yet authentic account. You will read about menopausal symptoms, their impact and suggestions on how to navigate through them in this comic. We hope this story will enhance understanding and empathy towards menopausal employees at work, while combating the stigma and facilitating open discussions.

Chithramali Rodrigo
University of Aberdeen, 2026

Written by: Dr. Chithramali Rodrigo and Prof. Chris Murray
Artwork by: Katy Stone
Lettering & Design by: Phillip Vaughan
Consultants: Linda Engles, C. Psychol, Prof. Louise Phillips, Dr. Jacqui Hutchison, Claire Robertson
With thanks to: Sally Leech and Deborah Garlick from Henpicked, Stuart Hall from the University of Aberdeen and Dr Atiyah Kamran from NHS Grampian

This project was funded by Henpicked's Menopause and Menstruation Friendly Employer Awards. With special thanks to Menopause Friendly sponsors and members.

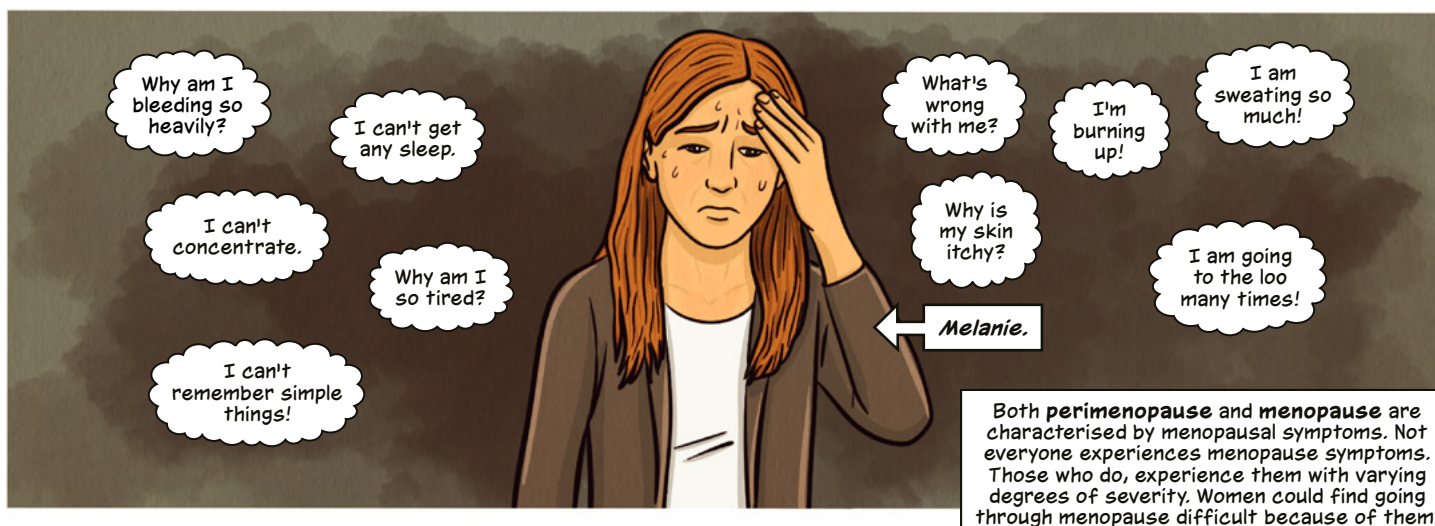
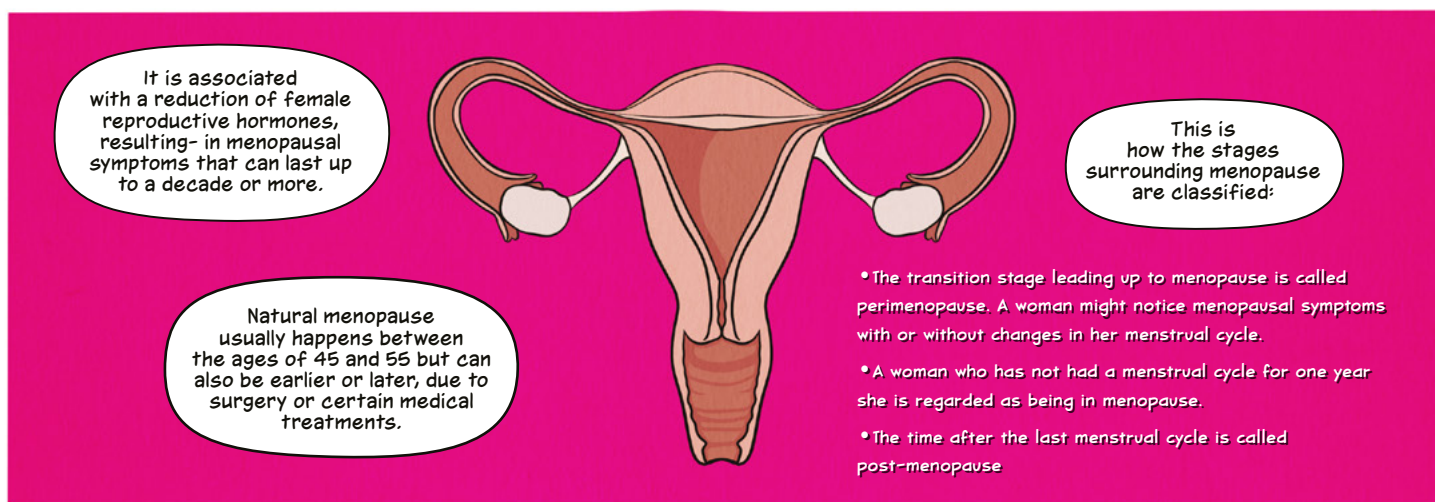
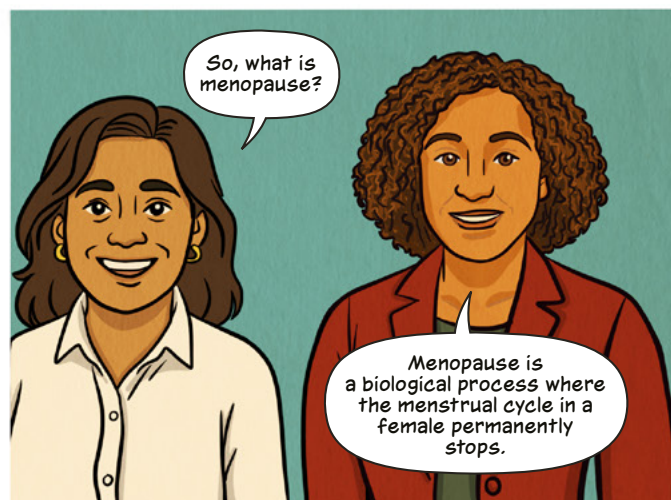


Note:

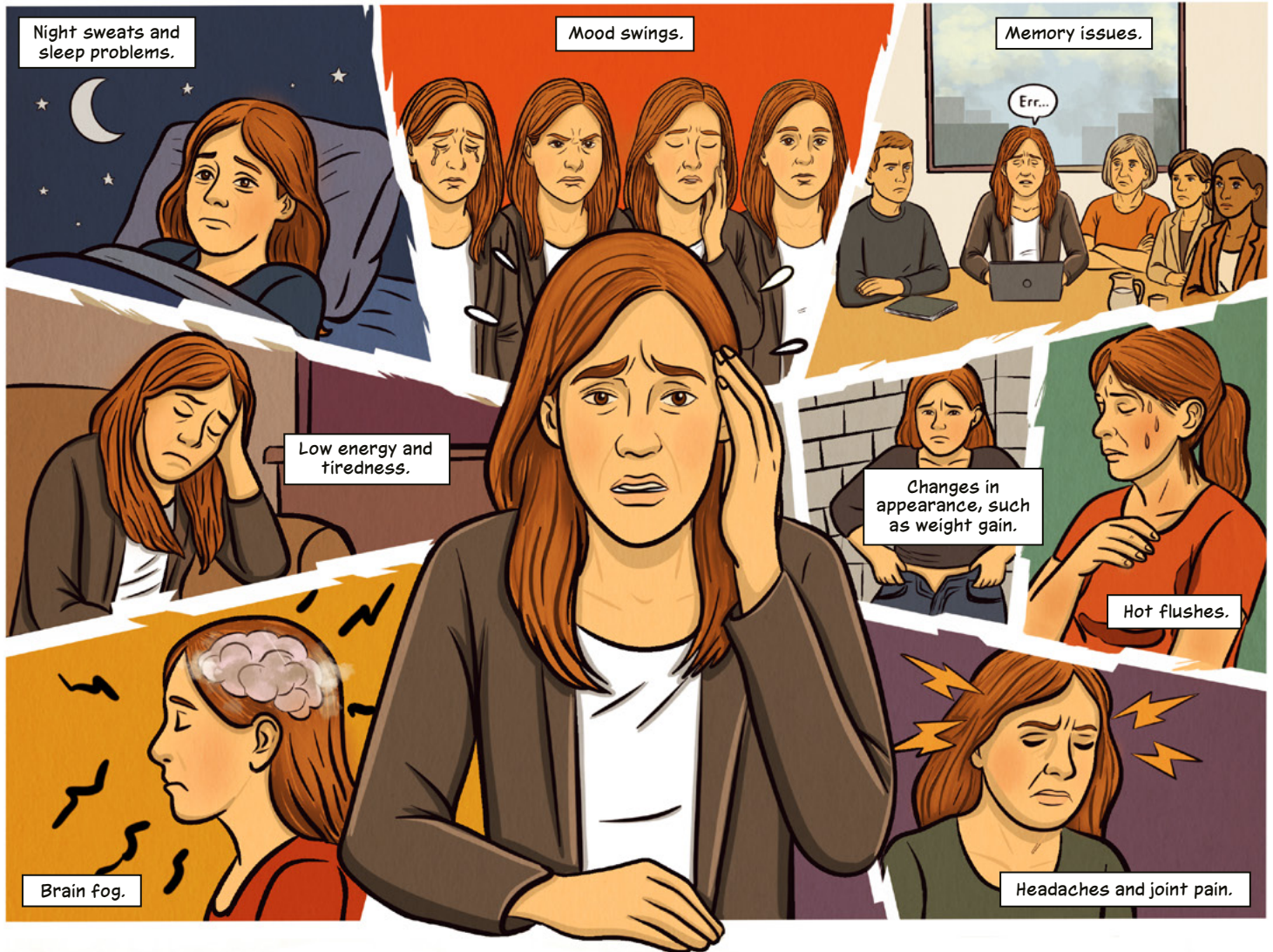
This research was conducted with women. We also recognise that others can experience menopause, or symptoms similar to menopause, as a result of medical conditions or treatments.

All medical information in this comic is in accordance with NHS-menopause web pages, National Institute of Healthcare Excellence (NICE) guidelines and British Menopause Society recommendations.





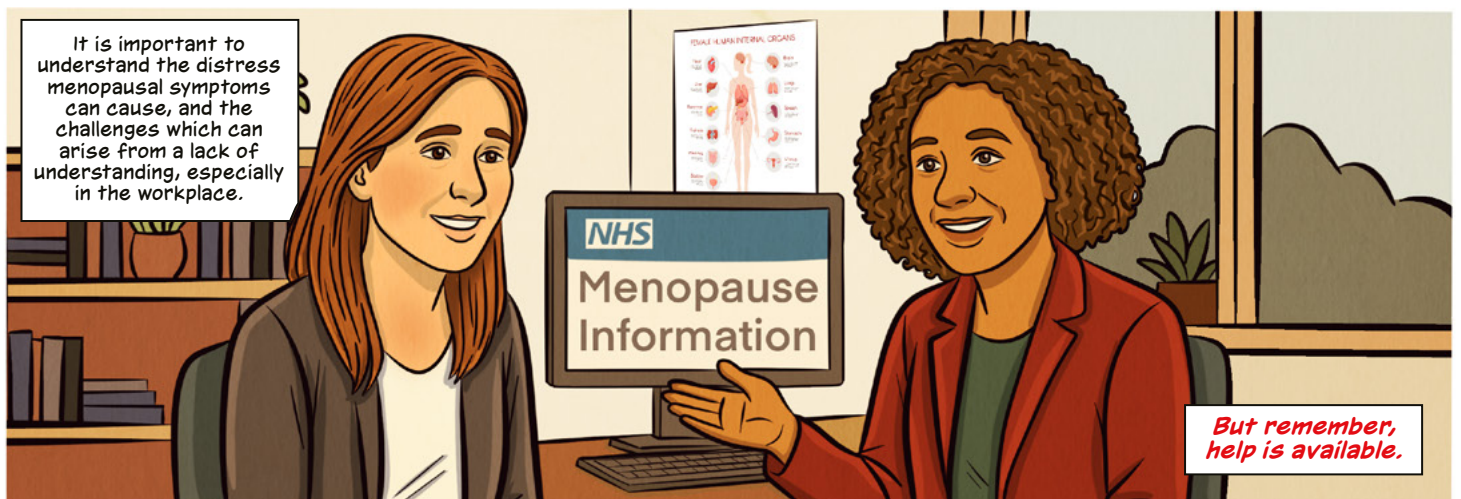
These are the most common menopausal symptoms...



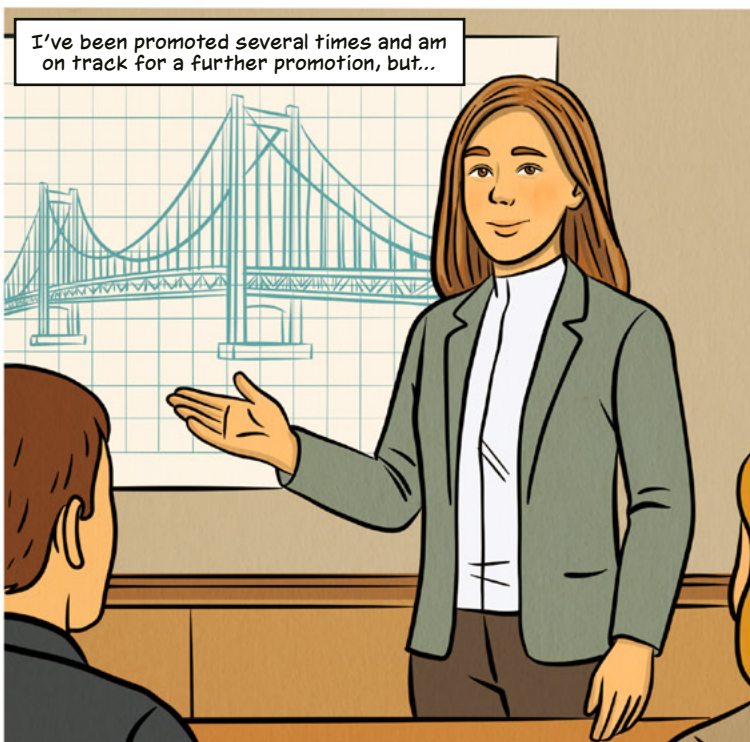
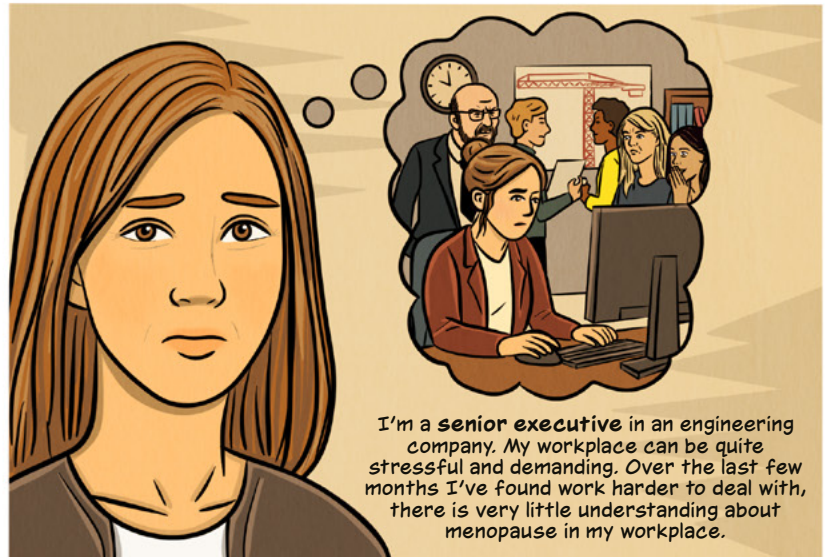
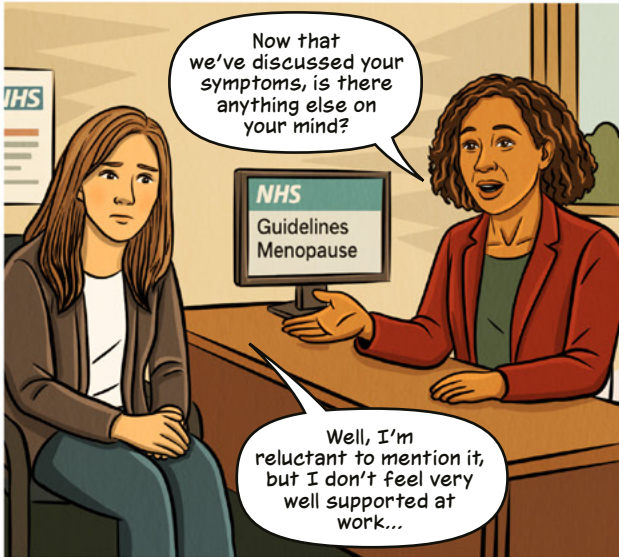
NOT EVERYONE EXPERIENCES MENOPAUSE SYMPTOMS AND THOSE WHO DO EXPERIENCE THEM WITH VARYING DEGREES OF SEVERITY.

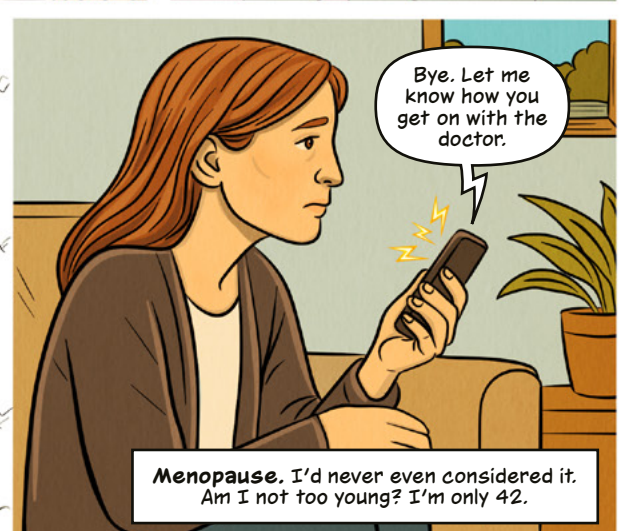
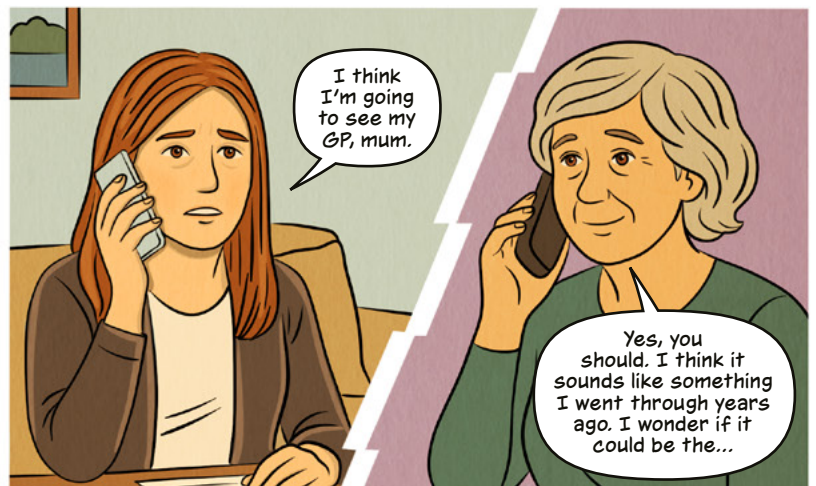
HORMONAL CHANGES CAN LEAD TO LONGER-TERM HEALTH PROBLEMS, SUCH AS OSTEOPOROSIS AND CARDIOVASCULAR DISEASE

A FOCUS ON POST-MENOPAUSAL HEALTH IS NECESSARY



Melanie's Story





So, I did what anyone would do before making a doctor's appointment - I took to the internet!

BLUEIT

Ask the receptionist who is the best to talk to about menopause. It might not be your usual doctor! It could be someone like the practice nurse.

Prepare for your doctor's appointment. Keep a list of your symptoms, your menstrual cycle, how you're feeling and any changes you've noticed. Write them down and take them to your appointment.

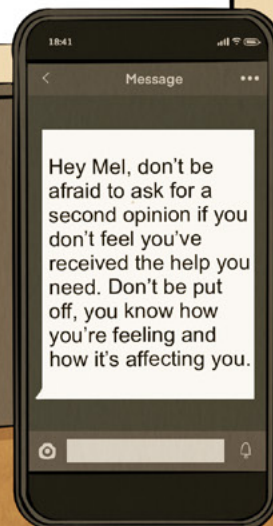


NHS MENOPAUSE

The guidance for patients is useful to read before you see your healthcare practitioner, so you know what to expect. Here is the link to the NHS website <https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/menopause/>



SCAN ME



Hey Mel, don't be afraid to ask for a second opinion if you don't feel you've received the help you need. Don't be put off, you know how you're feeling and how it's affecting you.

So, here's what you should ask your doctor about...



SO YOU THINK YOU ARE GOING THROUGH MENOPAUSE?

BRITISH MENOPAUSE SOCIETY

Women's Health Concern is the patient arm of the British Menopause Society

HENPICKED

You might be asked if you'd like to try hormone replacement therapy (HRT)

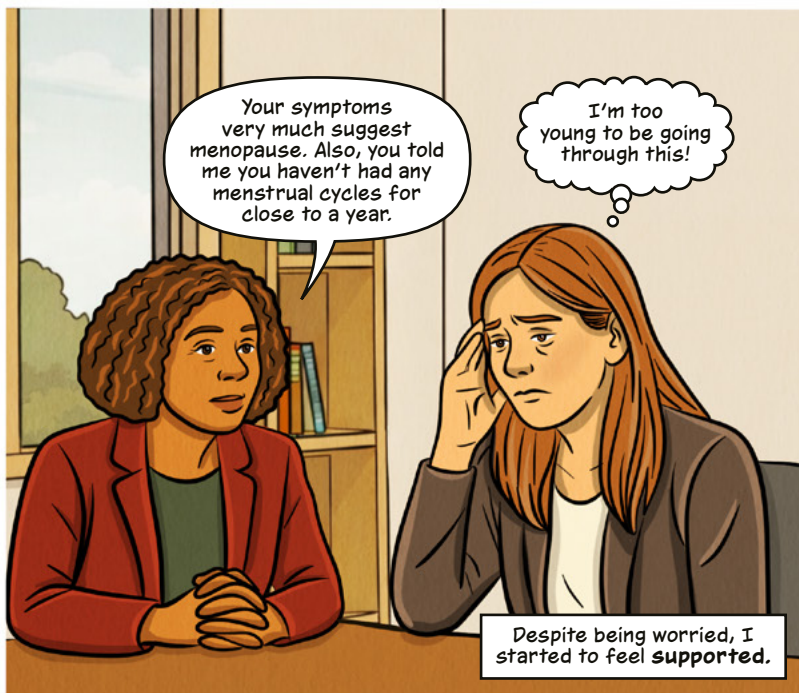
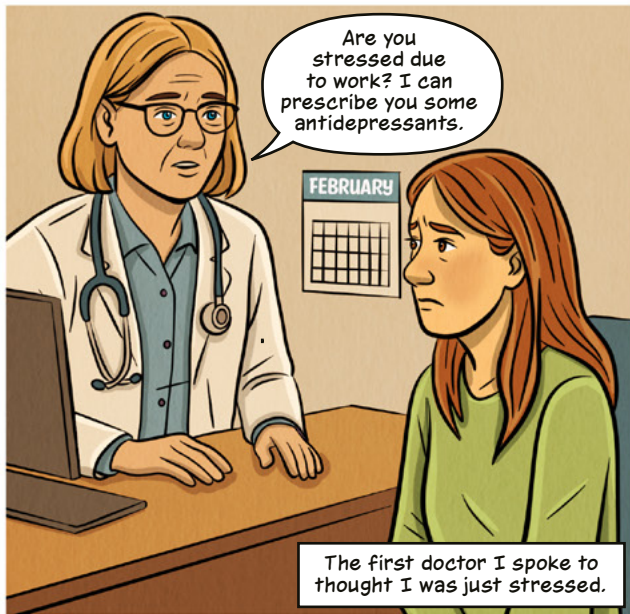
Like

Comment

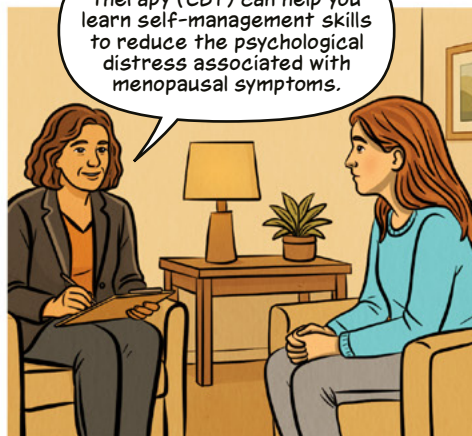
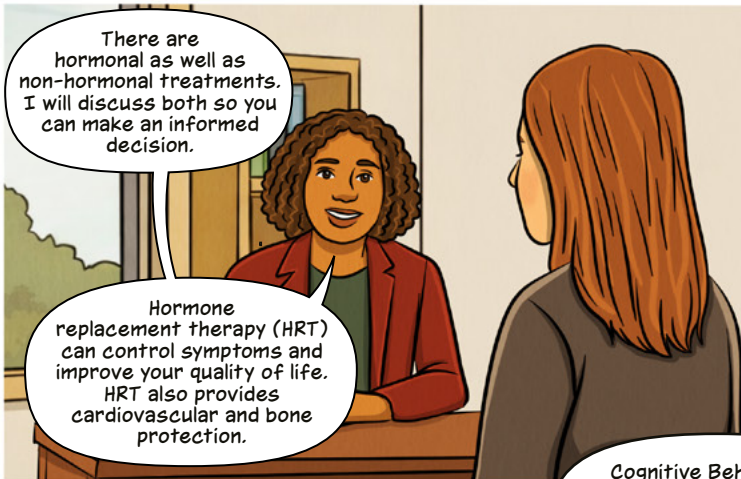
Share



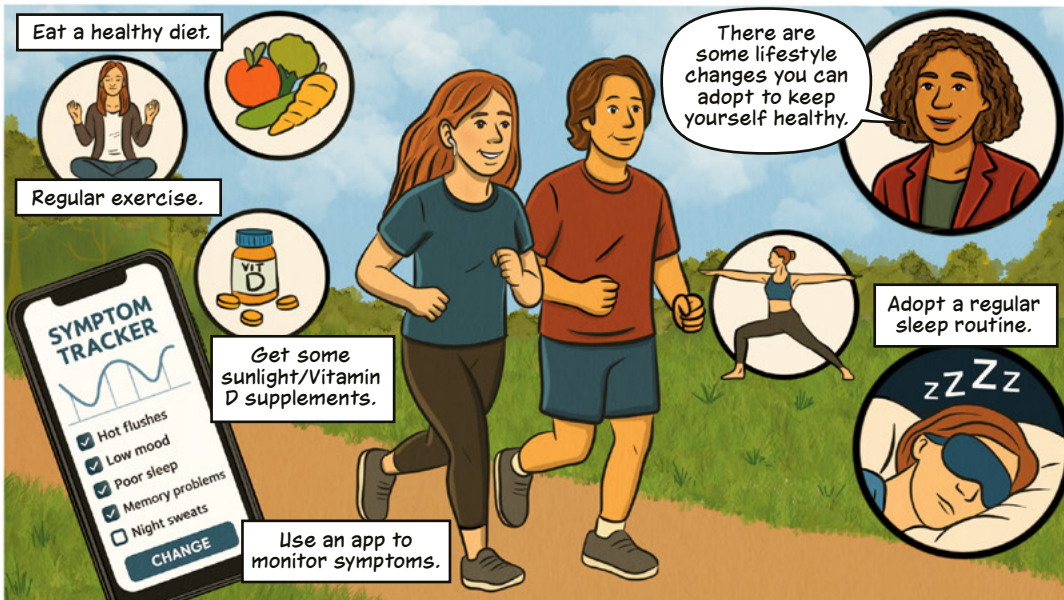
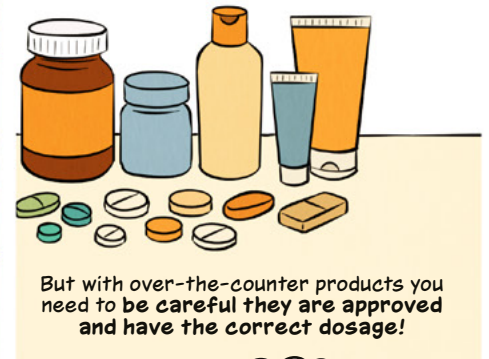
SCAN ME



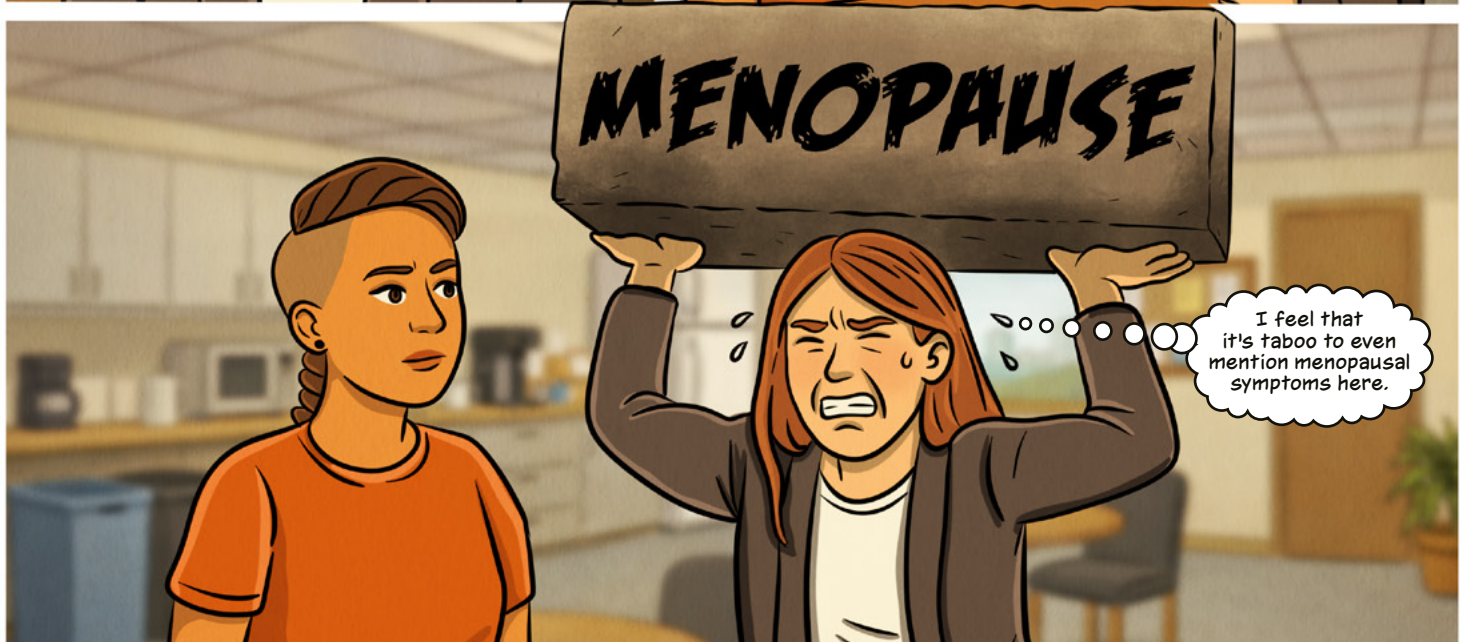
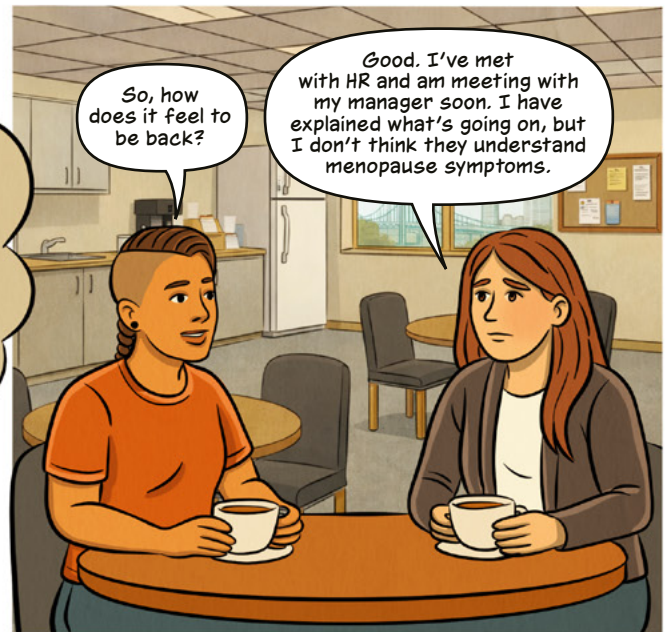
Treatment Options



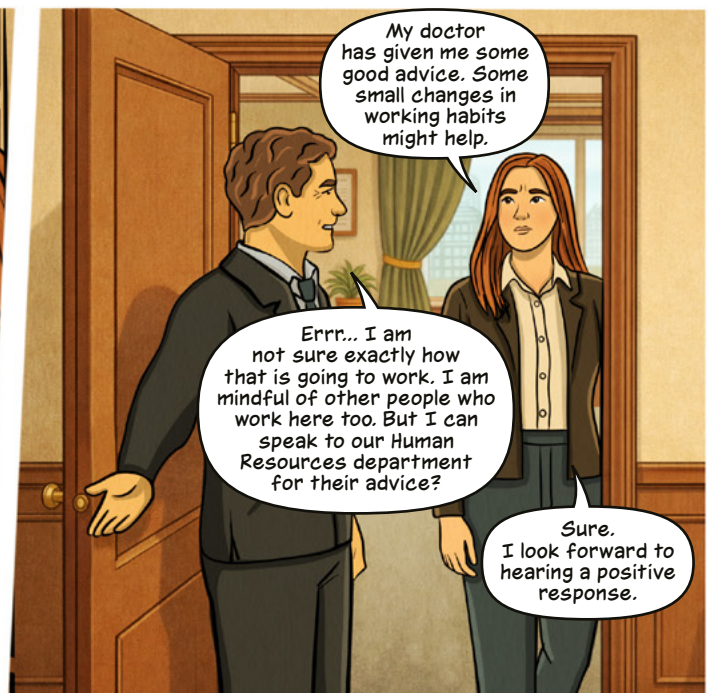
There are also non-hormonal alternatives that might help people with minor symptoms, who do not wish to take HRT or have risk factors that prevent them from taking HRT.



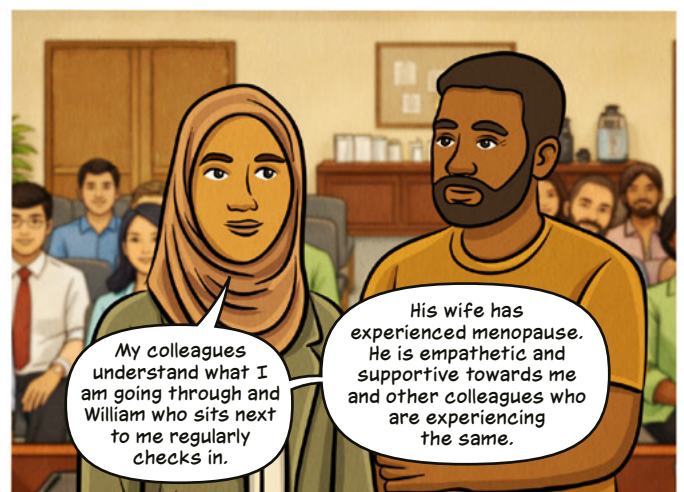
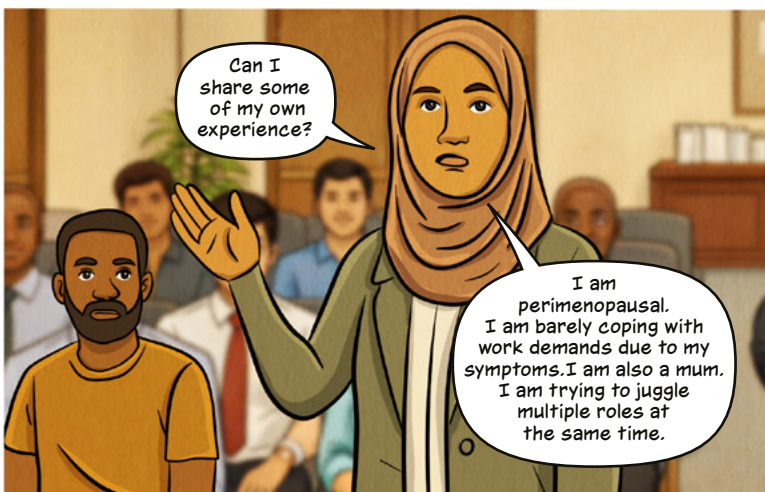
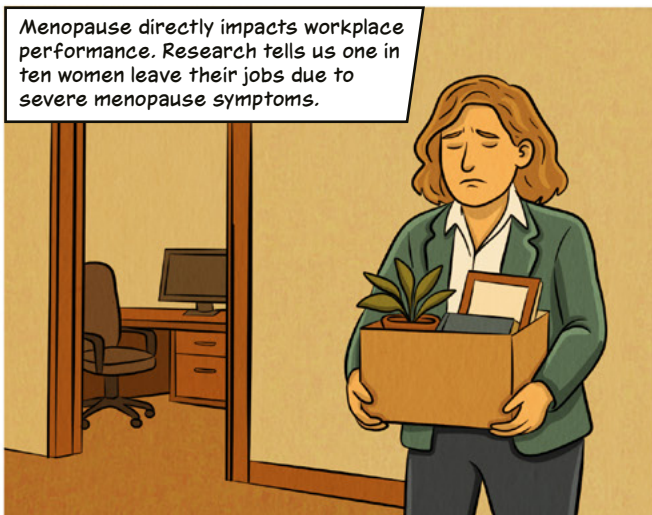
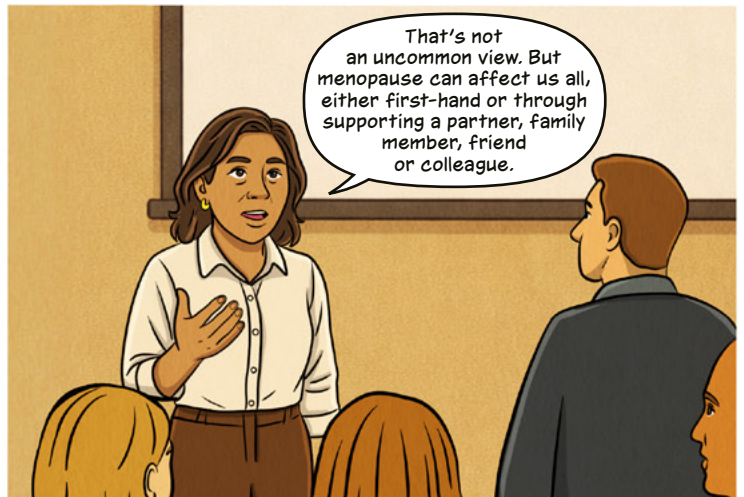
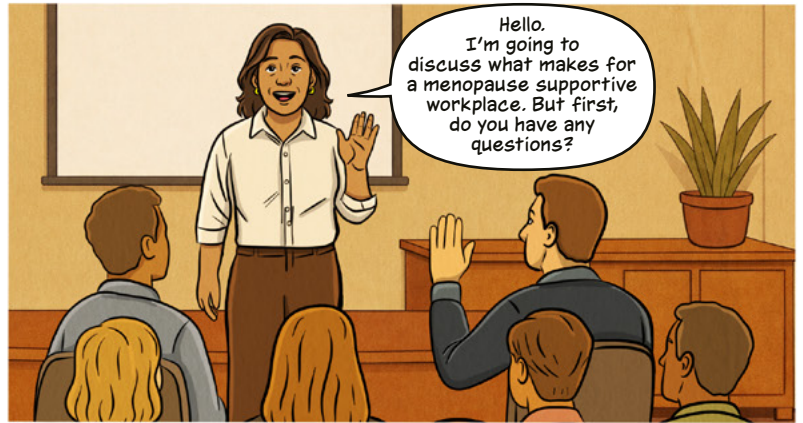
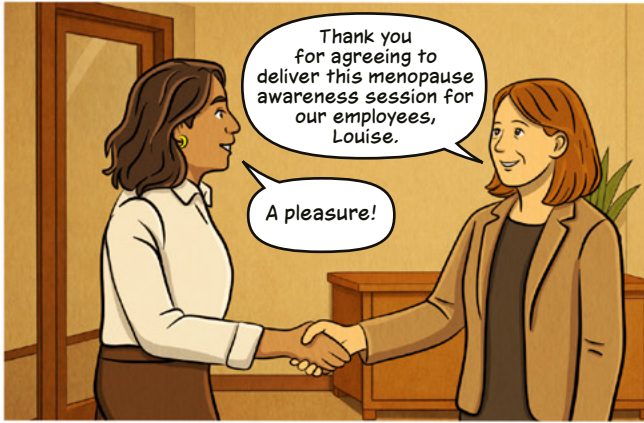
Melanie Returns to Work

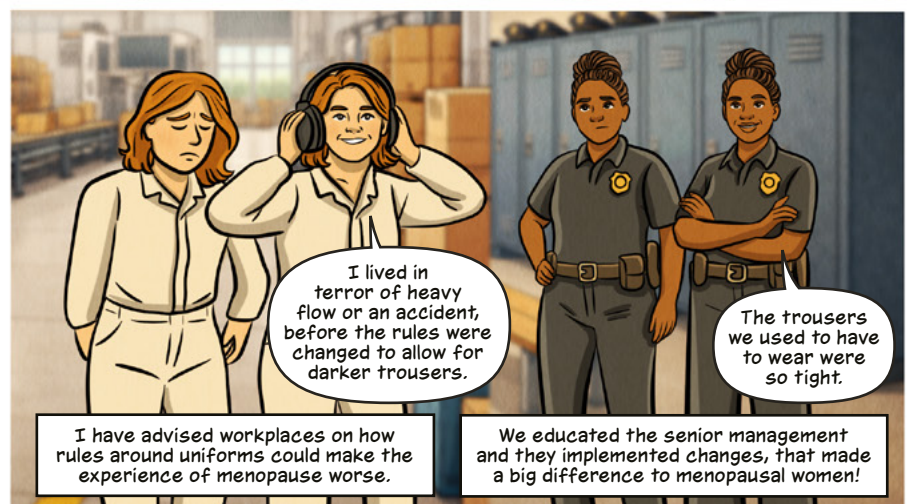
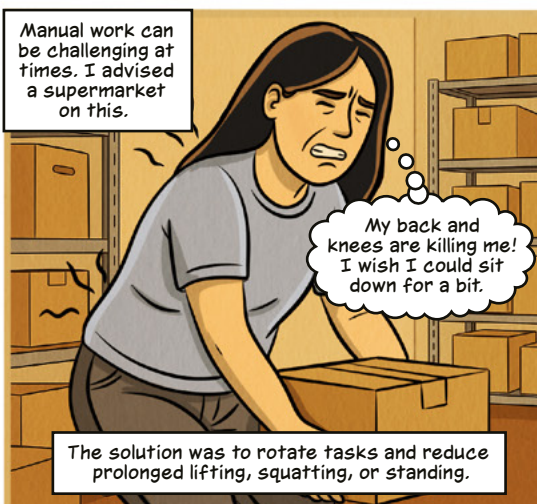
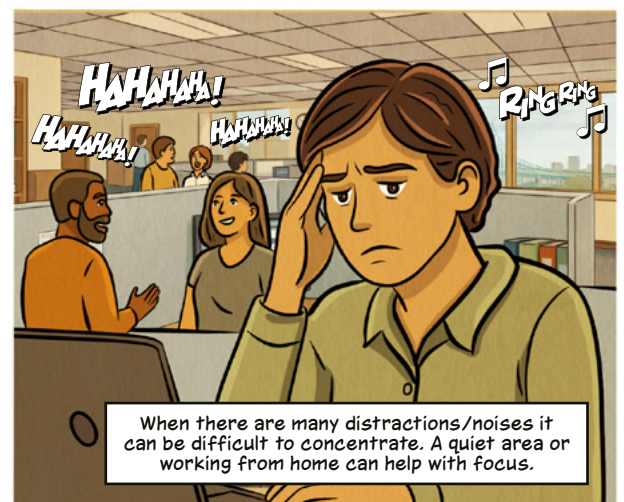
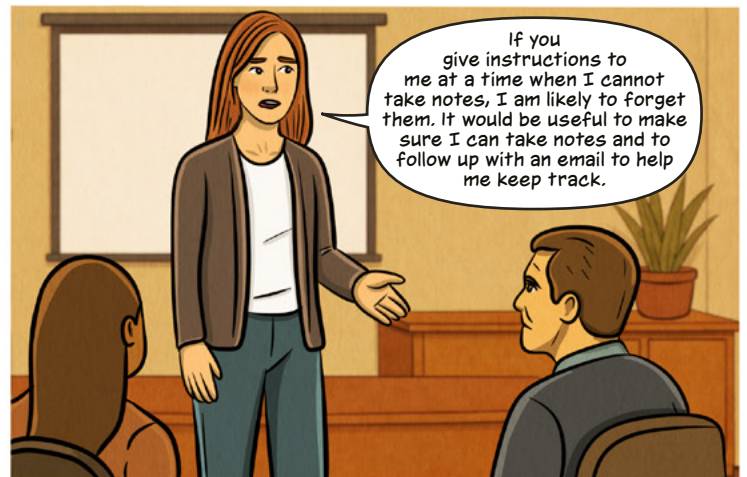
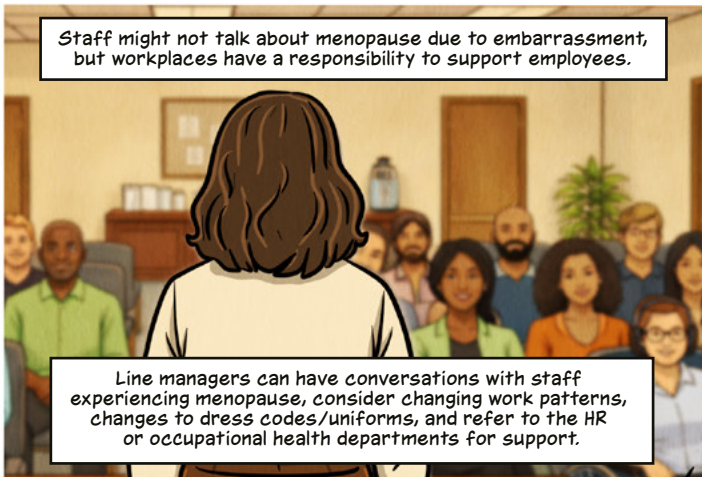
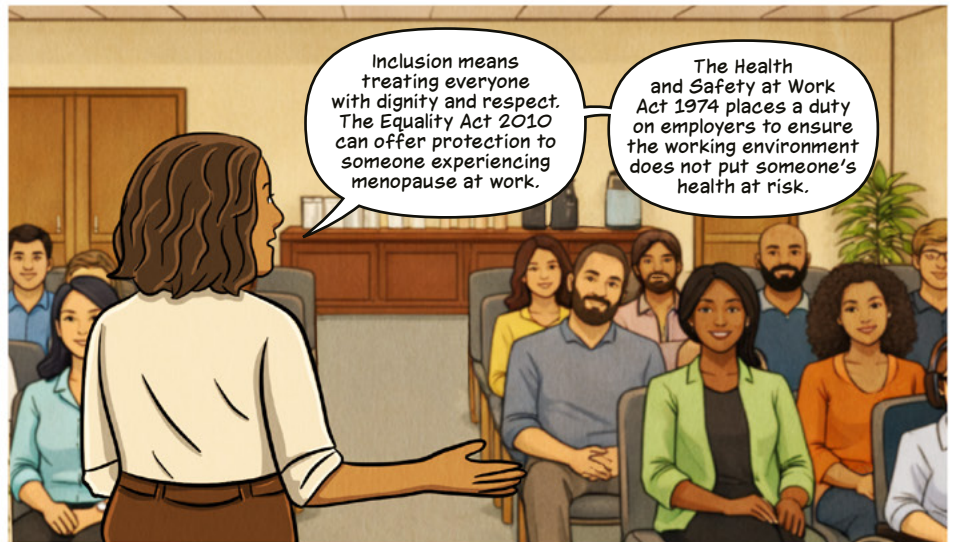


Melanie meets her line manager

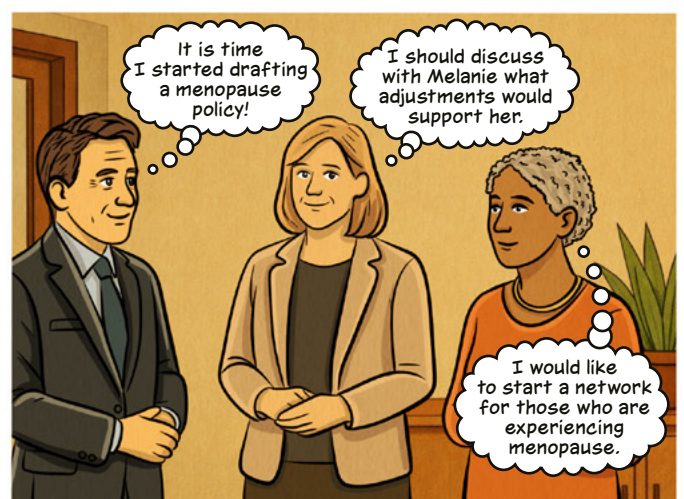
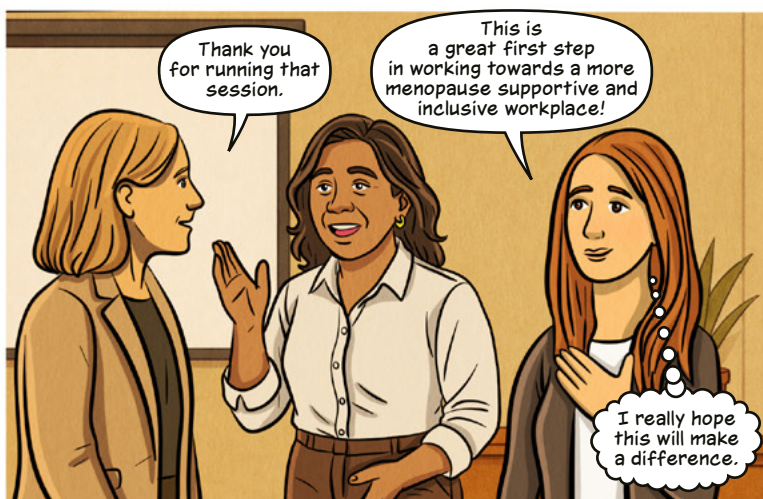
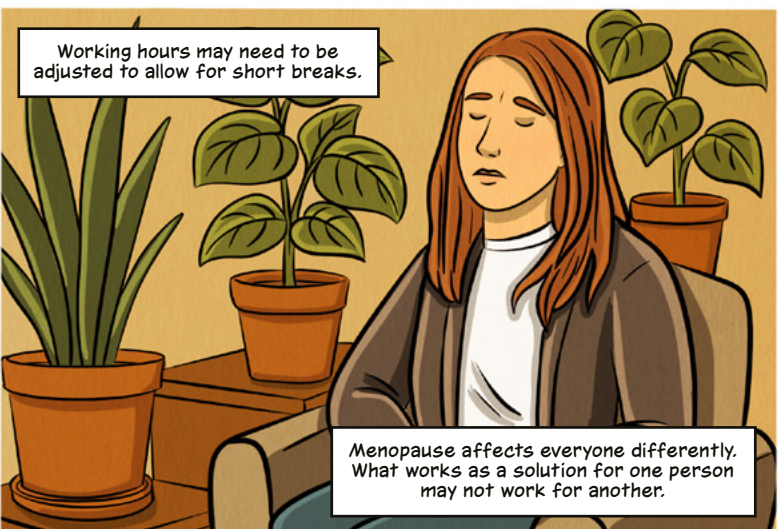
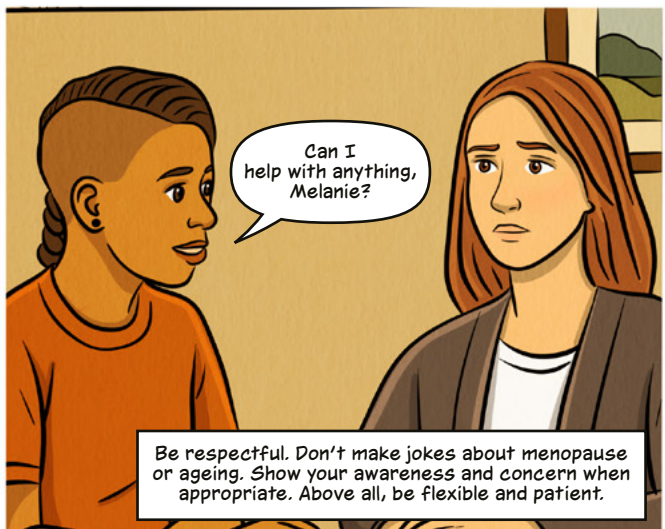
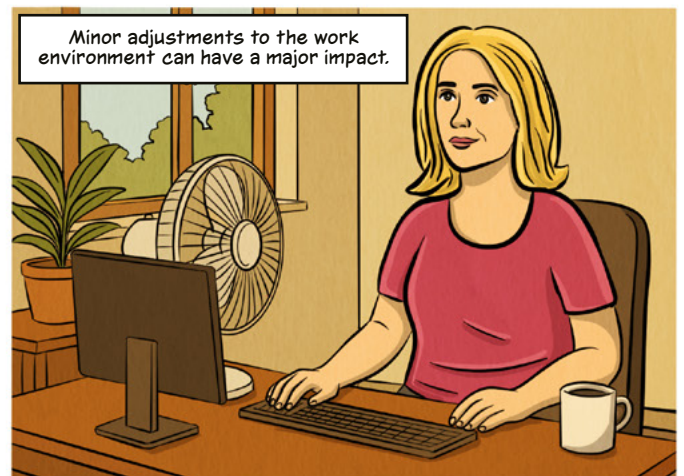
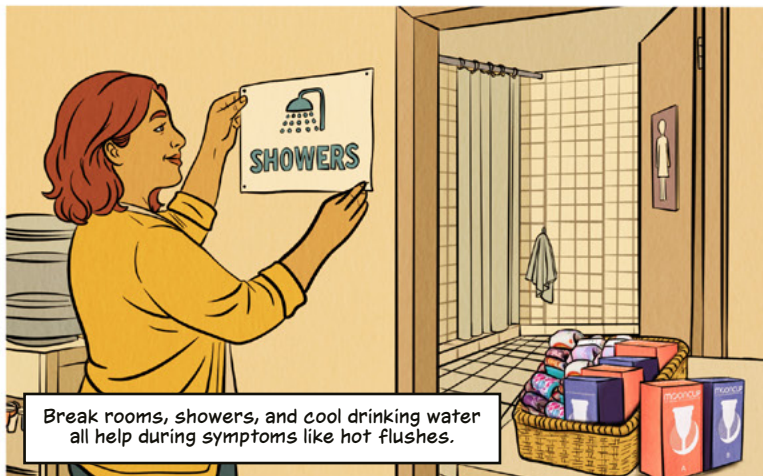
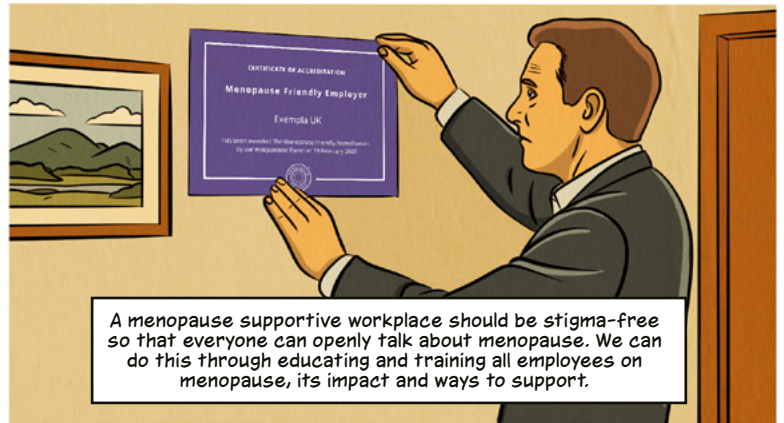


The Awareness Session

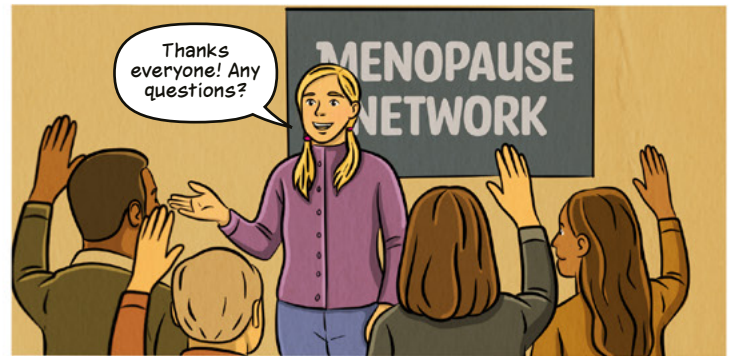




A menopause friendly workplace



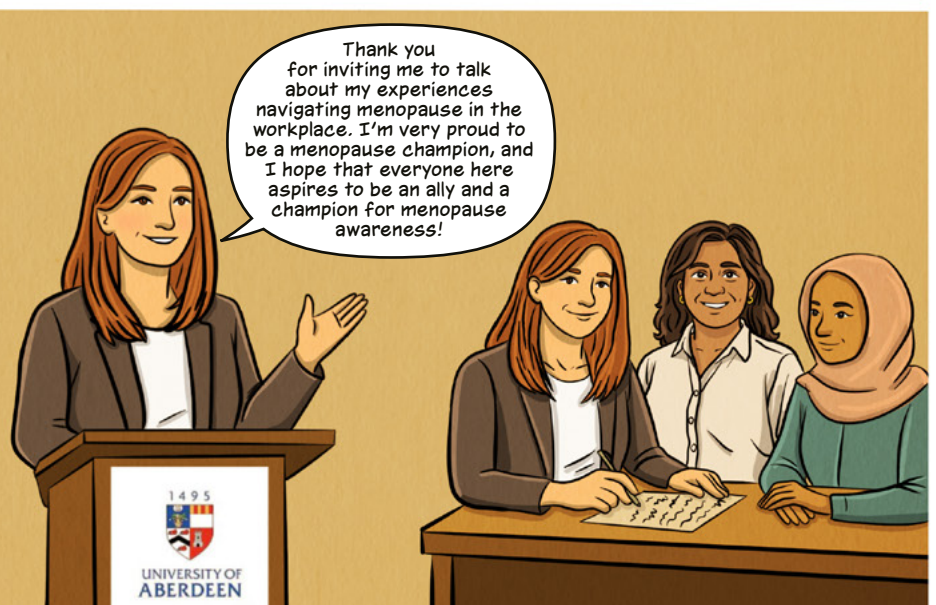
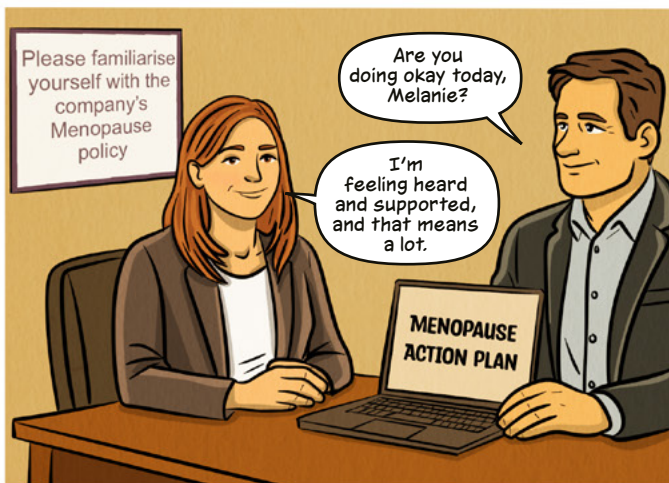
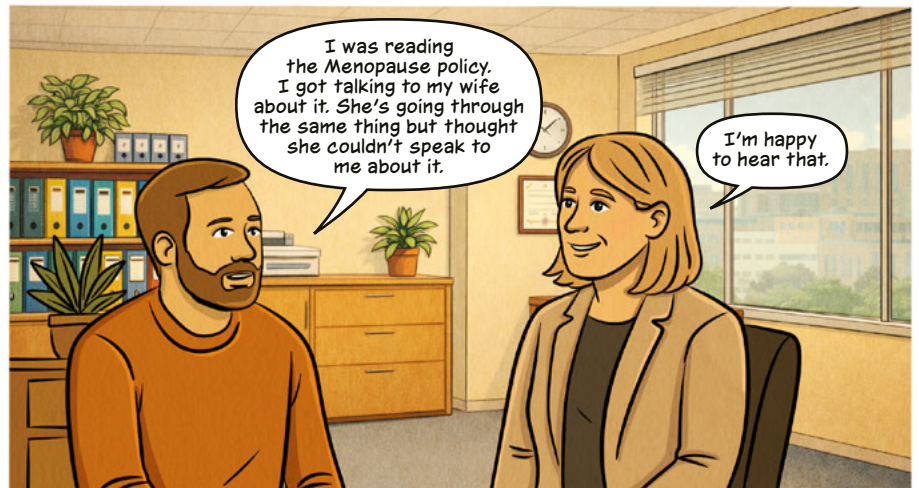
Sometime after the awareness session



Email

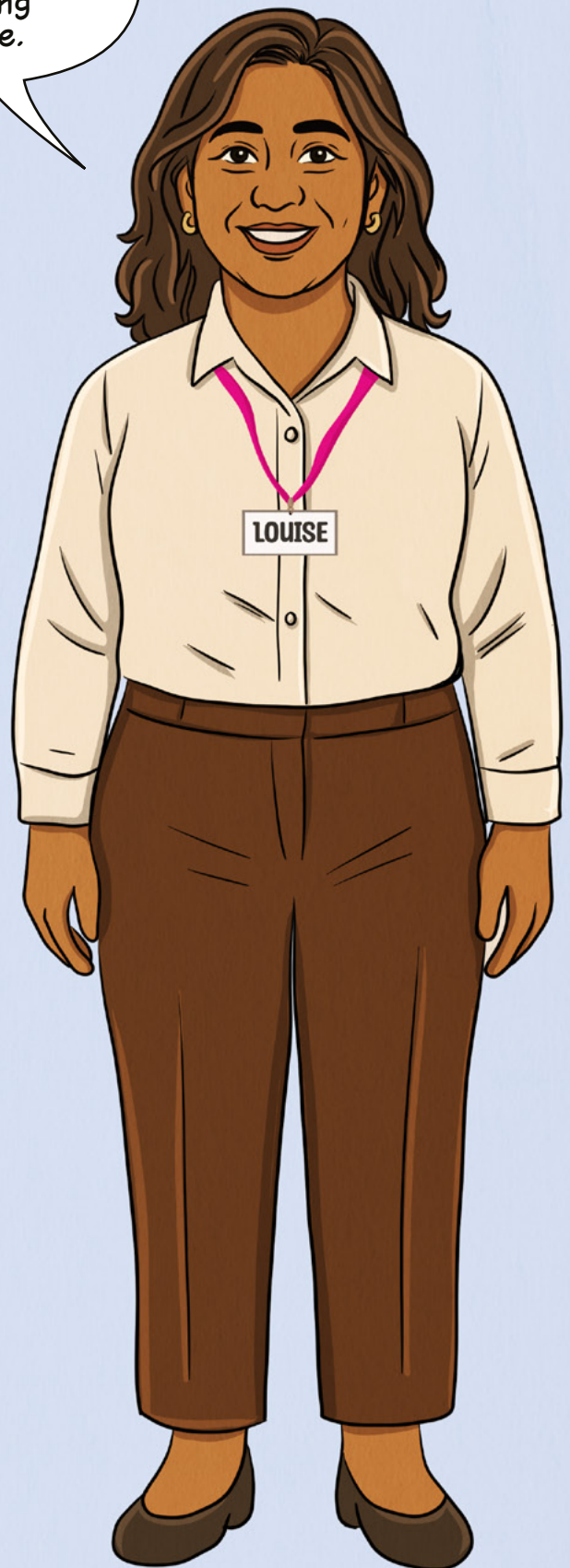
Dear colleagues, please find attached our new Menopause policy for the workplace. If you have any questions, please feel free to contact me.

Send



Everyone in the workplace has a role in supporting those experiencing menopause.

- Employers are responsible for ensuring that menopause support measures are effectively in place, creating an inclusive, stigma-free work environment.
- Line managers should offer the opportunity for a confidential conversation to anyone wanting to discuss their menopause experience. They should follow up with an individual work plan and know where to refer employees for more support.
- HR Managers should offer guidance to managers on the interpretation of the institutional menopause policy. Staff can approach HR directly about their menopause symptoms if they wish. HR should also monitor and evaluate the implementation and effectiveness of the menopause policy.
- Occupational health departments can carry out a holistic assessment of individuals to determine if menopause is impacting their well-being. They can refer those requiring further care, monitor their progress, and provide additional signposting if necessary. They may also provide support and advice to HR and Line Managers in determining and agreeing adjustments and changes at work, if required.
- Menopause champions should be trained, recognised and empowered to start networks and support groups where employees can feel safe to express themselves and share resources.
- All employees are obliged to treat each other with respect and empathy. This extends to all conditions and circumstances. Negative attitudes and behaviours cannot be tolerated and should be challenged.
- Everyone is unique. Transgender employees, for example, may or may not experience menopause and might not identify with the language that we use. Ethnicity is another important factor to consider. All communication about menopause should recognise and respect diversity and difference.





Workplaces should develop policies and practices in line with the laws governing the treatment of individuals experiencing menopause.

How menopause friendly is your workplace? Check here:
Free Menopause Resources for Employers Menopause Friendly UK
<https://menopausefriendly.co.uk/free-resources/#download-now>

- Develop a menopause policy or clear workplace guidance, setting out your commitment to supporting colleagues and outlining practical steps that make a difference.
- Create a culture where menopause is treated as a normal workplace topic. Make it easier for people to speak about what they're experiencing and to ask for support if they need it.
- Provide training for line managers, HR and Occupational Health so they understand the facts and feel confident providing appropriate support.
- Consider reasonable adjustments where symptoms are affecting someone's working life. Small changes to working hours, environment, workload or uniform can make a significant difference.
- Introduce menopause champions to raise awareness, signpost support and help maintain momentum across the organisation.
- Consider setting up a menopause support group or network where colleagues can share experiences, learn from one another and feel less alone.
- Remember that menopause can affect people earlier than many expect and can also impact partners, families and colleagues. The key is ensuring everyone feels informed and supported.

Resources for healthcare professionals

- NICE Guideline Menopause: Identification and Management (NG23) (2024, 2015) is the guideline advising healthcare professionals in the UK on identification and management of menopause.
<https://www.nice.org.uk/guidance/ng23>
- The British Menopause Society (BMS) is the specialist authority for menopause and post reproductive health in the UK.
<https://thebms.org.uk/>

Resources for individuals

- RCOG Women's Voices is an online group of members of the public who want to use their experience to improve women's health services.
<https://www.rcog.org.uk/for-the-public/rcog-engagement-listening-to-patients/womens-voices-involvement-panel-wvip/>
- NHS Inform is Scotland's national health information service.
<https://www.nhsinform.scot/healthy-living/womens-health/older-years-around-50-years-and-over/menopause-and-post-menopause-health/menopause>

Resources for workplaces

- Menopause Friendly UK is working to make workplaces menopause friendly.
<https://menopausefriendly.co.uk/>
- Equality and human rights commission.
<https://www.equalityhumanrights.com/guidance/menopause-workplace-guidance-employers>
- BS 30416:2023 is a set of guideless offering practical guidance to support employees.
<https://www.bsigroup.com/en-GB/insights-and-media/insights/brochures/bs-30416-menstruation-menstrual-health-and-menopause-in-the-workplace/>



You are not alone in this journey! Here are some sources of support and helpful resources for menopause.

Contributor Biographies

Chithramali Rodrigo is a Doctor in Public Health Medicine with a keen interest in women's health. She is currently pursuing her PhD at the University of Aberdeen, School of Psychology. She has experience in co-creating and promoting health education material and has published research on menopause, addressing issues such as menopause-specific quality of life and workplace-based interventions to support those experiencing menopause. This comic was created as part of her PhD work.

You can read more about her work on workplace-based interventions for menopause here:

<https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/full/10.1177/20533691231177414>

Chris Murray is Professor of Comics Studies and English in the Division of Humanities, University of Dundee and Director of the Comics Studies Creative Research Hub and UniVerse Comics. He has collaborated with comics artists to produce several comics for research and engagement purposes, including adaptations of Mary Shelley's Frankenstein, Lord Byron's poem 'Darkness', Karel Capek's R.U.R., Olaf Stapledon's Odd John, several stories by Robert Duncan Milne, and many healthcare and public information comics.

Katy Stone is an artist, illustrator and comics creator whose work is centred on the emotional depth of human portraits and the atmospheric beauty of Scottish landscapes, rendered in striking black and white ink pointillism. Her unique perspective is shaped by a rich background in ecology and conservation, holding a bachelor's degree and having worked as a ranger, wolf handler, and horticulturalist. She has worked on a series of educational comics about forensic science and is co-creator of a horror/science fiction anthology comic - Singularity.

Insta: [katy_stone_illustration](#)

Phillip Vaughan is Senior Lecturer in Technical Art & Visual Effects at Abertay University and Head of Partnerships at the CoSTAR Realtime Lab, a Virtual Production Film Studio in Dundee. Professional work includes productions with the BBC, Sony, DC Comics, Warner Bros, EIDOS, Jim Henson Company, DC Thomson and Rebellion. Published work includes Braveheart, Farscape, Star Trek, Wallace & Gromit, Tom & Jerry, Commando, 2000AD and Superman. He is the co-creator of Singularity, a horror/sci-fi comic launched on Kickstarter with Katy Stone.

Other contributors

Linda Engles is a Chartered Occupational Psychologist and Chair of Menopause Network at University of Aberdeen.

Louise Phillips is a Professor in Psychology with a special interest in aging, cognition and social functioning at the University of Aberdeen.

Jacqui Hutchison is a Doctor in Psychology with a special interest in social cognition at the University of Aberdeen.

Claire Roberston is a Doctor in psychology with experience in producing health comics.

Deborah Garlick is the founder and CEO of Henpicked.

Sally Leech is the Director of Henpicked: Menopause in the Workplace.

Stuart Hall is an Equality Diversity and inclusion partner at the University of Aberdeen.

Atiyah Kamran is a Consultant Gynaecologist and Menopause Specialist at the Aberdeen Royal Infirmary, NHS Grampian.

Production of this comic was funded by Henpicked, an organisation recognised for supporting women and organisations through menopause. For further information on menopause support visit: <https://henpicked.net/>

We'd love to hear what you think about this comic. Please take this short survey:





This comic is designed to support individuals going through menopause. You are not alone in experiencing menopause symptoms, and for many, menopause has implications in the workplace. These issues are addressed here, and guidance is provided on possible sources of support.

This comic is also intended as a useful source of information for managers and employers. It aims to highlight the experiences of menopause in the workplace and foregrounds the legal and ethical obligations of managers and employers to support those affected by menopause.

This story also helps other staff in the workplace to understand their important role as colleagues and how they can show empathy towards co-workers who are going through this life transition.

It is hoped that you can become a better menopause champion through reading this story and reflecting on the experiences that it communicates.