

Menopause Newsletter

April 2023 Volume 9



Welcome to the latest Menopause Newsletter.

Now commissioned by the Health and Wellbeing Team, we'll be sharing information sources, advice routes, and personal stories to support our wonderful colleagues experiencing menopause and peri-menopause. In this issue:

- Menopause and mental health
- Ways to reduce stress
- CBT to manage symptoms
- Manager's corner
- Further reading
- Menopause in real life

Looking after our mental health during the menopause

Declining hormone levels during the perimenopause and menopause can result in changes to mental health and emotional well being. Symptoms such as mood swings, irritability, sleep disturbance, anxiety, fatigue, memory or concentration difficulties can be distressing causes of stress. Stress arising from symptoms or other sources can in turn worsen menopausal symptoms. Fortunately there's a variety of ways to help manage menopausal symptoms, stress levels and look after your mental wellbeing. Here's some carefully selected sources of advice and suggestions plus information about where and when to seek professional help.

Mental Health UK have information about Mental Health and the menopause <https://mentalhealth-uk.org/menopause-and-mental-health/> which contains information about symptoms, self-care and how to get more help. Mental Health UK also describe how the menopause can affect people with existing mental health conditions, for example increase anxiety <https://mentalhealth-uk.org/blog/how-can-menopause-affect-your-mental-health/>

You can also find more information about looking after your mental wellbeing during the perimenopause and menopause from **Balance** who have a free booklet to download:

www.balance-menopause.com/menopause-library/mental-health-and-emotional-wellbeing-in-the-perimenopause-and-menopause-booklet/ The booklet includes advice on ways to maintain healthy wellbeing and manage stress - what they describe as a "self-care kit bag". Suggestions include breathing techniques, mindfulness, establishing helpful routines, diet and habits, keeping active, finding time for hobbies that restore us, and staying in touch with friends and family.



You can find more information about the psychological symptoms of the menopause and tips how to help manage them at **RockMyMenopause**

<https://rockmymenopause.com/get-informed/symptoms/#psychological-symptoms>

In **Henpicked's** menopause podcast about stress Consultant and Psychotherapist Columba Urey suggests having a positive mindset to the menopause can be helpful

<https://open.spotify.com/episode/7klRm6DjgRTjcJzbE3XAYv>



Menopause stress busters/managing symptoms

Uplifting resources for the NHS from the NHS

It's me time.

A collection of recommended apps, websites, podcasts, all selected by NHS colleagues.



<https://library.nhs.uk/staff-learners-and-employers/uplifting-resources/>

Free digital resources to aid relaxation and wellbeing

- Yoga Pilates
- Headspace
- Soundscapes for Well Being
- Music For Well-being
- Sleepio
- Tingles (relaxation)
- Happy Place (Fearne Cotton)
- Poetry

NHS Inform in Scotland has a guide to Menopause and your mental wellbeing www.nhsinform.scot/healthy-living/womens-health/later-years-around-50-years-and-over/menopause-and-post-menopause-health/menopause-and-your-mental-wellbeing/ Use their guide to identify treatment options that work for your symptoms.



Wellbeing Live: Mindfulness for SWFT and GEH staff

Led by the SWFT Psychology Team

Wednesdays 12-12.30pm via MS Teams

mindfulness

Contact hwb@swft.nhs.uk for a joining link

CBT to manage menopausal symptoms

The **Women's Health Concern (WHC)**, the patient side of the British Menopause Society, have a helpful factsheet on Cognitive Behaviour Therapy (CBT) which can be used to manage some of the symptoms of the menopause such as stress, anxiety, low mood, hot flushes and night sweats, sleep problems and fatigue:

www.womens-health-concern.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/02/02-WHC-FACTSHEET-CBT-WOMEN-FEB-2023-A.pdf The fact sheet explains how physical symptoms are linked to our feelings, thoughts and behaviour, and suggests CBT techniques to help with different symptoms. Techniques suggested to help manage distressing hot flushes and night sweats include paced breathing, relaxation and managing worrying thoughts. You'll also find practical tips to aid sleep.

A list of **WHC factsheets** on other aspects of the menopause can be found at www.womens-health-concern.org/help-and-advice/factsheets/



In your Health and Wellbeing pack <https://bit.ly/3DcxzFR> you'll find links to staff support and employee assistance programmes, chaplaincy services and support provided by other organisations.

There's also advice on how best to help colleagues who may be struggling and a collection of useful resources about the menopause.

Recovery and Wellbeing Academy Courses

The **Recovery and Wellbeing Academy** www.recoveryandwellbeing.co.uk/ is an initiative from Coventry and Warwickshire Partnership NHS Trust and Coventry and Warwickshire Mind. They offer a wide range of workshops, and bite-size videos designed to empower your mental health and wellbeing, delivered mostly online via Zoom with some face-to-face sessions.

The Menopause and Mental Health 2 hour session is run by South Warwickshire and Worcestershire Mind and is aimed at anyone experiencing hormonal changes that may be affecting their mental health, or who may want to know more about the subject to support others. Go to www.recoveryandwellbeing.co.uk/Courses and scroll down to T (it's listed under The!) to book on.



Managers' Menopause Corner

Information to enable compassionate management of staff experiencing the menopause.

The **Patient** website has a useful article <https://patient.info/news-and-features/how-menopause-can-affect-you-at-work> which discusses the impact of symptoms such as inability to concentrate, brain fog, anxiety and reduced confidence. The article has an estimated reading time of 5 minutes but there's links to the reports referenced in further reading, including the NHS guidance below:

NHS England also have guidance to help NHS organisations, line managers, and those working in the NHS understand more about the menopause. To learn how you can support colleagues experiencing menopause symptoms see the guide **Supporting our NHS people through menopause: guidance for line managers and colleagues** www.england.nhs.uk/long-read/supporting-our-nhs-people-through-menopause-guidance-for-line-managers-and-colleagues/

Supporting Transgender colleagues

Appendix 3 of **Supporting our NHS people through menopause: guidance for line managers and colleagues** www.england.nhs.uk/long-read/supporting-our-nhs-people-through-menopause-guidance-for-line-managers-and-colleagues/ has useful information about supporting transgender, non-binary, and intersex colleagues with the menopause.



RockMyMenopause has a transgender health section at <https://rockmymenopause.com/get-informed/transgender-health/>

At **QUEER / LGBTQIA+ MENOPAUSE** www.queermenopause.com/ you'll find information and links to resources for LGBTQIA+ people and health practitioners.



Further reading

Books available to borrow or reserve from your Trust library

Click on the title to view the online library catalogue or visit

www.healthlibrariesmidlands.nhs.uk/

Coveney, P. (2021) *Menopause yoga : a holistic guide to supporting women on their menopause journey*. London: Singing Dragon.

Henderson, A. (ed.) (2021) *Natural menopause : herbal remedies, aromatherapy, CBT, nutrition, exercise, HRT*. London: Dorling Kindersley

Hunter, M. (2021) *Living well through the menopause : a self-help guide using cognitive behavioural techniques*. London: Robinson

Lees, K. (2022) *The trans guide to mental health and well-being*. London: Jessica Kingsley.

Newson, L. (2021) *Preparing for the menopause*. Milton Keynes: Penguin Random House.

Williams, M. (2011) *Mindfulness : a practical guide to finding peace in a frantic world*. London: Piatkus.

Menopause in real life

In this section we'd like to share real life stories from our wonderful staff of their menopause experiences. If you'd like to share your story (anonymously if you'd prefer), pass on some good advice, and let your colleagues know they're not in this alone, then contact hwb@swft.nhs.uk



Whilst we're waiting for your real-life stories to come through, take a look at the experiences of Elizabeth and Priya who both experienced mental health issues as a result of the menopause. These are shared on the Mental Health UK web site at:

<https://mentalhealth-uk.org/blog/how-can-menopause-affect-your-mental-health/>



Support for you

For more information about menopause support within the Trusts please contact the Staff Health and Wellbeing Team

Email: hwb@swft.nhs.uk
Twitter: @GEH_SWFT_HWB



This newsletter has been produced for the Health and Wellbeing Team by the Clinical Librarians from GEH and SWFT Libraries. Many thanks to colleagues who have shared links to useful resources. For more information about accessing quality information resources please get in touch- Lisa.Mason@geh.nhs.uk or Rayanne.Byatt@swft.nhs.uk