



Empowering women in the workplace

Creating a supportive and open working environment has never been more important, especially after a difficult few years for businesses and their employees.

Hybrid working has meant that many teams haven't been in the same place for more than two years and the level of connectedness is different in terms of how employees interact. Being physically remote too, even if for just part of the working week and working from home can have a real impact on how well we can spot when our colleagues may be struggling.

For women in the workplace having a supportive and understanding environment becomes even more poignant when they begin experiencing perimenopause and menopause symptoms.

At MetLife we recently conducted research to further understand the impact that perimenopause and menopause symptoms can have on working women's lives in an attempt to help break the taboo.

Although it's a difficult and deeply personal subject that people understandably may not wish to discuss, the sheer impact that some symptoms can have on people's day to day lives means that businesses must create an environment where employees feel comfortable and can speak up. Whether you know someone experiencing symptoms or want to advocate on someone's behalf, showing them support by being there when they need it, can go a long way to helping someone feel understood and less alone.

Research Methodology: MetLife UK sampled 355 women in full-time and part-time employment, and who have gone through or currently going through either perimenopause or menopause. The research was carried out by Censuswide in February-March 2022. While some other genders may experience perimenopause or menopause, the sample was limited to women for the purposes of the research.

To help other businesses, MetLife has shared four tips to support and empower women in the workplace experiencing symptoms:

1

Provide mentoring and training programmes to support women's promotion and growth

Women remain less likely to ask for a pay rise or promotion than male counterparts and our research clearly highlights that women feel their symptoms have held them back from progressing in their career. By providing mentoring from senior members of staff or skills-based training this can help women to better understand their worth. Investing in training and mentoring now will also be beneficial in the longer term as senior employees can then mentor the next generation of the team.

2

Review gender policies and offer unconscious bias training

The language used in internal communications can have a big impact on how employees view a business. Take the time to regularly review your gender and diversity policies and make sure that as a business you are not perpetuating any unsuitable practises. Employers should also be proactive in providing unconscious bias training and outlining to staff how they can best support colleagues managing symptoms.

3

Offer flexible working practices

The events of the past two years has given businesses a chance to reflect and reset their way of working. Home working while offered in some workplaces before has now become an industry standard, so businesses need to consider whether this is something to embrace permanently or on a more hybrid scale. Especially for members of staff that may be experiencing particularly intense symptoms, introducing more flexible working practices can really help them to manage their workload.

4

Involve men in the conversations

perimenopause and menopause we must all be part of the conversation. From CEOs to interns, we all have experiences and ideas that should be brought to the table and considered. Encouraging both men and women to engage and find solutions to create a more inclusive working environment that works for everyone makes it more likely to succeed in the long-term. Helping those experiencing symptoms to know how they can speak to is also crucial, our research shows that one in ten (10%) women experiencing symptoms haven't talked to anyone about it. In more positive news 22% feel that they can turn to their friends at work to speak about their experience.

Join the conversation today

To really open up the conversation around perimenopause and menopause we must all be part of the conversation. From CEOs to interns, we all have experiences and ideas that should be brought to the table and considered. Encouraging both men and women to engage and find solutions to create a more inclusive working environment that works for everyone makes it more likely to succeed in the long-term. Helping those experiencing symptoms to know how they can speak to is also crucial, our research shows that one in ten (10%) women experiencing symptoms haven't talked to anyone about it. In more positive news 22% feel that they can turn to their friends at work to speak about their experience.

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