

Creating an Open Environment: A Guide for Managers and Supervisors

Signaling that you are open to hearing and addressing your team members' needs is the first step in creating a workplace that embraces menopause—and any health issue—as a normal part of life. Here are some tips for creating an open environment where people feel comfortable sharing their experiences and what they need at work.

Know That Menopause Support at Work Is Welcome

Some people may hesitate to ask for help because of the stigma associated with menopause. They may also fear discrimination or teasing if they ask for an accommodation. Overall, however, many people do want to address menopause at work. According to an AARP survey, most employers (73%) and over half of women (54%) agree that employers need to do more to support workers in menopause.¹

Talk to Everyone— Don't Single Anyone Out

Don't assume who is experiencing menopause based on age or gender identity. Just invite the conversation, and be there for anyone who takes you up on it. You might say to your team

- “Our organization is learning about a program called Making Menopause Work. The idea is to support people who have symptoms that affect them at work. If you want to know more or need support, please talk to me or another manager.”
- Feeling nervous? You could say: “This is a new topic for me, and it feels a little uncomfortable. It might be for you, too. But the truth is that menopause is natural and affects more than half of the population. There are things we can do here at work that will help people who have symptoms. Many of those things will help all of us, too.”

You can also use these tips to increase understanding and support for other people in your life experiencing perimenopause and menopause: your partner, siblings, friends, children, parents, and others.

The Menopause Society, a trusted resource for more than 35 years, is here to help employers and teams realize the benefits of supporting workers leading up to and through menopause. We created Making Menopause Work from a scientific consensus report² developed by clinicians, researchers, labor attorneys, and patient advocates. For the full set of resources, please visit menopause.org/workplace.

Let Strengths Be Your Guide

As a manager or supervisor, your job is to see and support your team members and to elevate their strengths. Start there. You might say

- “You’re so good at [insert skill or action], and I’m noticing that you are struggling a bit. Is there anything you need?”

For people experiencing menopause symptoms, the inconvenience, discomfort, and pain are real. Their needs are legitimate. If they share with you, listen first, then recognize and validate their experience. You might say

- “Thank you for sharing that. I hear what you’re saying.”

Think together about solutions. You might say

- “What might help you feel better at work?”
- “You mentioned that it’s hard to concentrate in the afternoon. What if we created another break or a flexible schedule?”
- “You mentioned that you get really hot on the production line. Would a different uniform help? What if we brought in a fan?”

Remember that most menopause symptoms are temporary. Supporting an employee through this transition helps you keep a great worker for the long term. You might say

- “You’re a valuable team member, and I’d like to support you the best I can. We want to help you stay well here at work.”

Thank you for modeling an open and supportive culture. You are helping to retain employees through menopause and, ultimately, improve all workers’ productivity, health, and safety.



References

- 1 AARP. The Economic Impact of Menopause: A Survey of Women 35+ and Employers. January 2024. www.aarp.org/content/dam/aarp/research/topics/work-finances-retirement/employers-workforce/menopause-workplace.doi.10.26419-2Fres.00720.001.pdf
- 2 The Menopause Society Menopause and the Workplace Advisory Panel. Menopause and the workplace: consensus recommendations from The Menopause Society. *Menopause* 2024;31:741-749