

The value of menopause networks and why this matters

Jacqui McBurnie, NENC ICB Menopause Lead

Menopause definition

Menopause: A biological stage in a woman's life that occurs when she stops menstruating and reaches the end of her natural reproductive life. Usually it is defined as having occurred when a woman has not had a period for 12 consecutive months (for women reaching menopause naturally). The changes associated with menopause occur when the ovaries stop maturing eggs and secreting oestrogen and progesterone.

Perimenopause The time in which a woman has irregular cycles of ovulation and menstruation leading up to menopause and continuing until 12 months after her final period. The perimenopause is also known as the menopausal transition or climacteric.

Postmenopause The time after menopause has occurred, starting when a woman has not had a period for 12 consecutive months.

<https://www.nice.org.uk/guidance/ng23/chapter/Recommendations#diagnosis-of-perimenopause-and-menopause>

Menopause myths can perpetuate the feeling of being alone

- Menopause is a natural process?
- Menopause is an issue just for women?
- HRT is scary/causes cancer?
- Do I have early dementia
- I'm too young?
- I'm still having periods

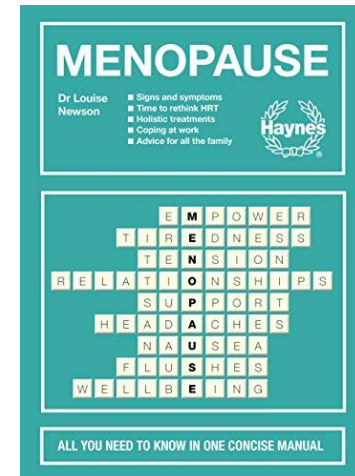
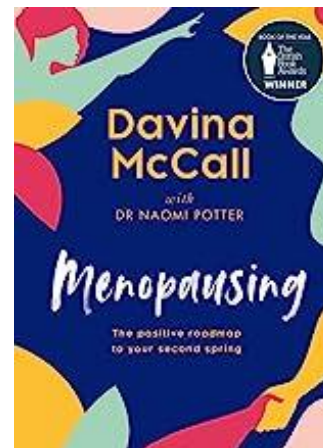
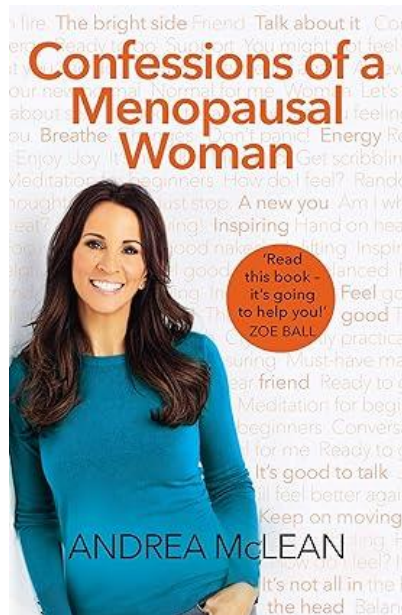
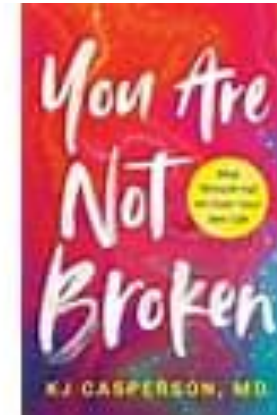
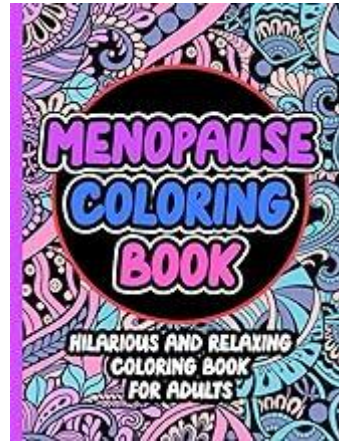
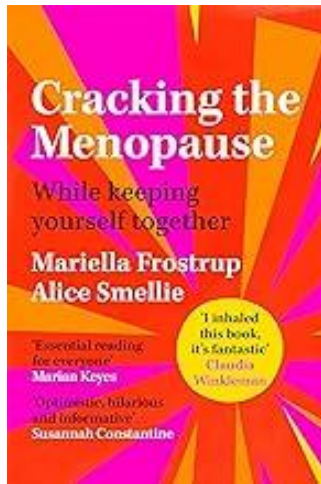


The rationale: the economic participation of women

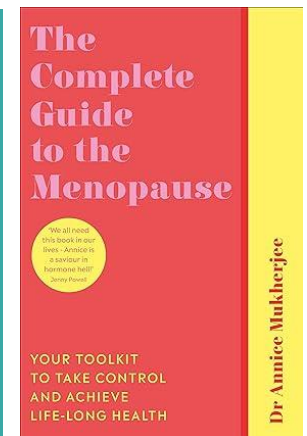
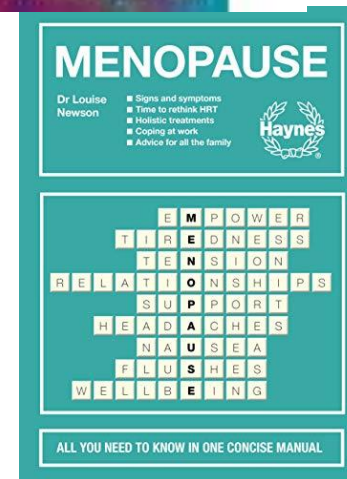
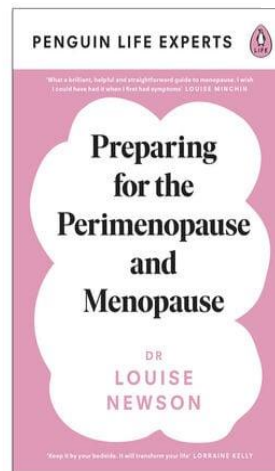
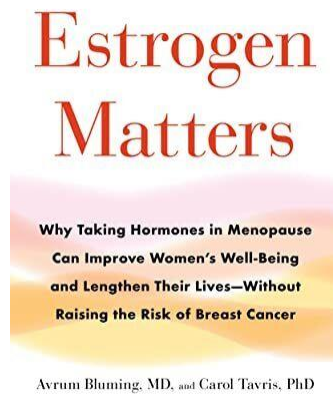
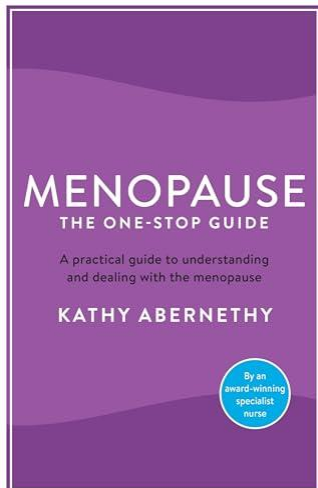
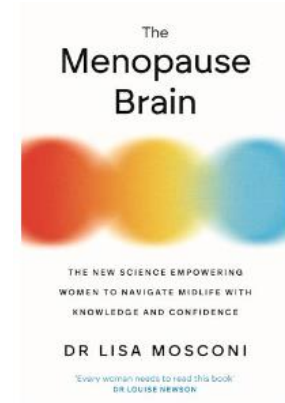
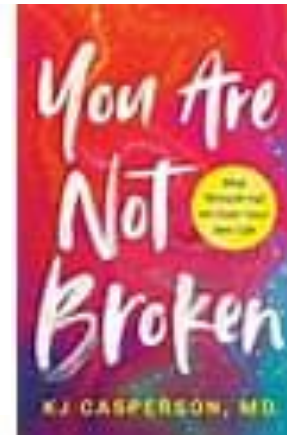
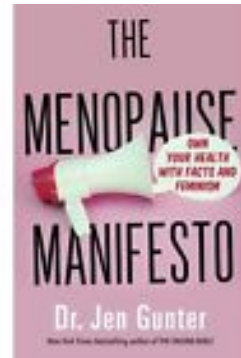
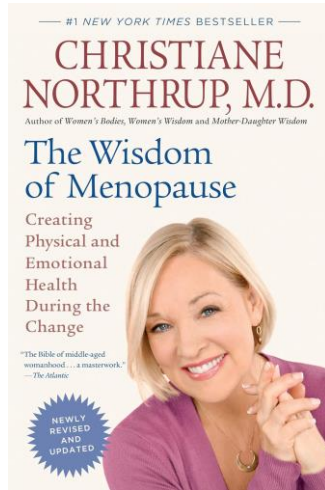
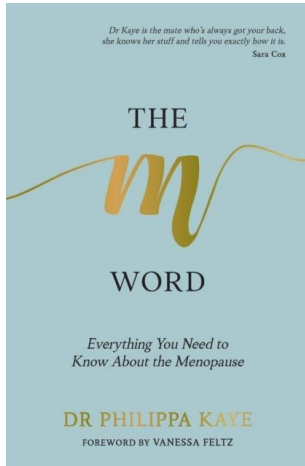


- **77%** of the NHS workforce is recorded as female
- Approximately **80%** of those affected have problematic symptoms that affect them at work;
 - **69%** experience anxiety or depression due to menopause
 - **84%** experience trouble sleeping
- **10%** who worked during the menopause have left a job due to their symptoms according to the Fawcett Society.
- Research from CIPD around 10% say they feel discriminated against at work due to menopausal symptoms

Seeking info



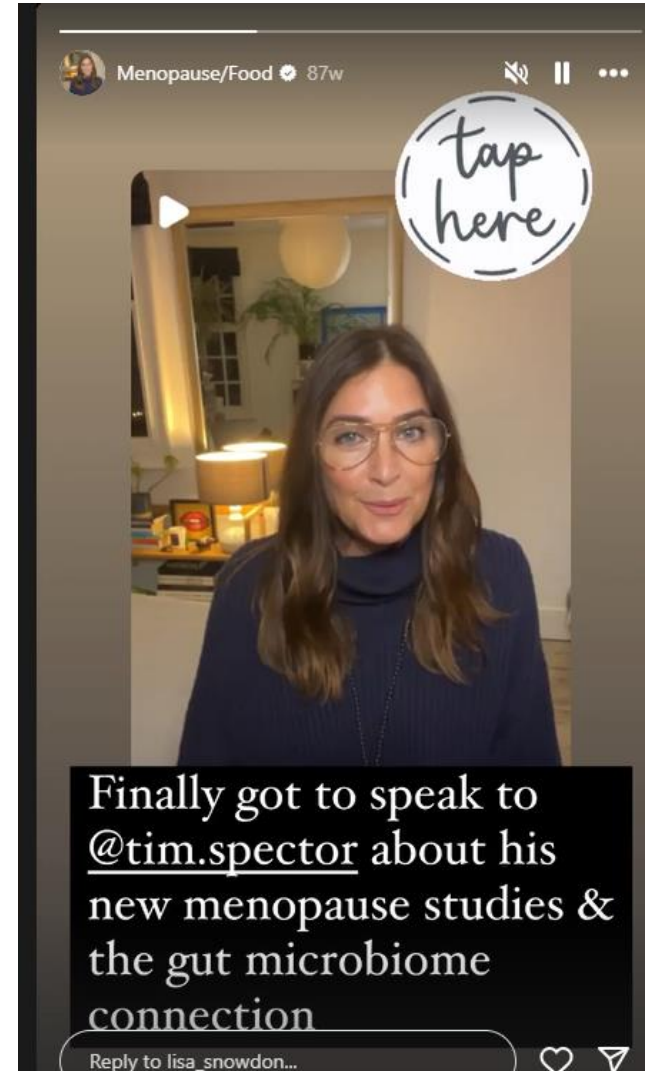
Menopause raises questions



Resources and signposting

There are a number of celebrity hosted webpages or Instagram accounts re menopause you can find easily via searches depending on your preference; Meg Matthews, Davina McCall, Gabby Logan, Lorraine Kelly, Mariella Frostrup, Lisa Snowden, Penny Lancaster

It is important that we use the medical, clinically based information for our decision making. Celebrity groups, Facebook and support groups are helpful for us to share experiences and gain support. These should ideally not guide our decision making.



Where are the most reliable resources for decision making?

There is a wealth of clinical and nutritional expertise; this is helpful for safe, **clinically based decision making**

- The British menopause Society has a patient facing and a clinical platform, both offer research based advice, guidance and education in varied formats; [British Menopause Society - Women's Health Concern \(womens-health-concern.org\)](https://www.britishmenopause.org) TV: [BMS TV | British Menopause Society \(thebms.org.uk\)](https://www.bms-tv.com)
- The Balance website was established by Dr Louise Newson, a GP specialist and leading menopause campaigner; [Balance - Homepage \(balance-menopause.com\)](https://www.balance-menopause.com)

What do networks do best?

LISTENING to the biggest struggles!!

- Mental health; including anxiety
- Poor sleep, sleep disruption which drives low mood and feeling constantly exhausted

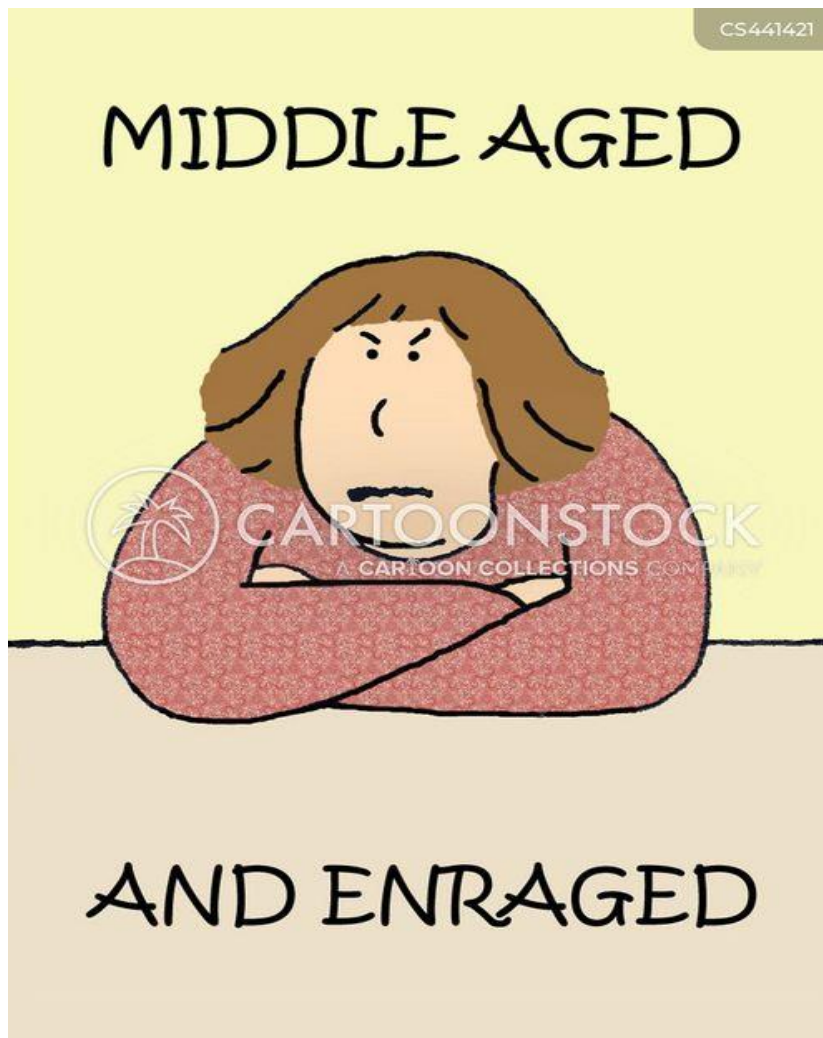
SHARING resources

- Developing a library of resources that is responsive based on members issues, requests and/or discussions

RESPONDING

- You said – we did!

Symptoms of menopause: could I start a network?



Where do I start?

1. Ask colleagues about their menopause journey
2. Ask your manager if you could be supported to hold a meeting
3. Ask colleagues to join you; share the time and place
4. Pick a working day and a quiet area

Meet, talk, listen, share resources and agree to meet again. Agree how you will share invites.

Building your local network



- Consider if you can have a staff intranet page and paste links to the BMS info
- Consider accessibility of info; a good range of types of info is critical and can help maximise the number of colleagues who can use this info; recordings, language, sight and hearing loss, autism, ADHD, specific groups etc
- Link with other networks; do you have a LGBTQ+ network, a Women's network, a Carer's network, a BAME or Muslim network or other groups who you can seek support from and you can share your resources with
- Ask for guest speakers; enhance some of your meetings whilst keeping some meetings as a 'safe space' for members to share experiences and access informal support
- Ask for members to support the growth and input into the group or network; this broadens the scope, topics, info and the work!
- Feed in political and clinical developments; ask if there's anyone with a particular interest in these elements to keep things updated
- Identify a senior Champion at work – especially a Director or Executive manager to 'sponsor' the network

- [Andrews PW, Thomson JA Jr, Amstadter A, et al \(2012\) Analysis of Whether Antidepressants Do More Harm than Good](#)
- Professor Pauline Maki underlines the process for [Treating perimenopausal depression](#)
 1. Explore previous episodes of mental health
 2. Differentiate and treat if this is a hormonal response
- A recent Cambridge study gives guidance into [Severe mental illness and the perimenopause](#)
- [New research to explore the impact of menopause on autistic people | Bournemouth University](#) - as discussed around neurodiversity, gender identity and menopause.
- [MindEd Hub](#)
- [Mental Health Training Resources - elearning for healthcare \(e-lfh.org.uk\)](#)
- [Mental health resources and guides | NHS England | Workforce, training and education \(hee.nhs.uk\)](#)
- [Self Help Leaflets - Cumbria, Northumberland, Tyne and Wear NHS Foundation Trust \(cntw.nhs.uk\)](#)
- [Working definition of trauma-informed practice - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](#)