



MENOPAUSE IN THE WORKPLACE



HANDLE DIFFICULT CONVERSATIONS
AT WORK WITH CONFIDENCE

Created by Sarah Russell on behalf of the Gender Equity Team (fka Women's Initiatives Committee) 2024

INCLUSIVE LANGUAGE

In addition to women, menopause can affect any employee with a menstrual cycle which can include the following:

- Trans people, defined as people whose gender identity differs from the sex they were assigned at birth
- Intersex people, which includes those born with reproductive or sexual anatomy that doesn't fit traditional "female" or "male" definitions
- Non-binary people, which includes those who don't define themselves as strictly male or female

CREATING AN INCLUSIVE CULTURE AND PROVIDING SUPPORT



Encourage open communication about menopause and treating it as a health issue like any other. The more openly and easily we talk about menopause the less of a taboo it is.



There are formal training programs and support systems designed to accommodate menopausal people experiencing menopause. We need to provide all employees with tools to handle difficult conversations.

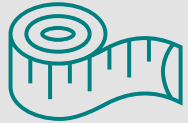


Sends a message that we value all employees equally. Inclusivity boosts morale & productivity and is a mark of a forward-thinking organization.

CREATING AN INCLUSIVE CULTURE AND PROVIDING SUPPORT



We must lead with empathy, recognizing that menopausal people's experiences are diverse, and their needs vary. Let's encourage open conversations about menopause, dispel myths, and foster understanding.



There is no 'one-size fits all' when it comes to supporting your colleagues going through menopause. Every menopause sufferer will have different symptoms, for different lengths of time, and with varying degrees of severity. There needs to be a range of options and that menopause is a topic that managers and colleagues feel comfortable talking about.



Considering the financial implications, we can drive the necessary changes to foster a culture that supports menopausal people navigating menopause while maximizing the potential contributions of a diverse and empowered workforce.

BENEFITS OF HAVING THIS DIFFICULT CONVERSATION AT WORK

- Difficult conversations can be challenging, but they ultimately lead to growth on your team.
- Approach sensitive subjects with empathy and care, you can make an uncomfortable discussion productive and come to a positive outcome.
- Have open communication about menopause and treat it as a health issue like any other.
- The more openly and easily we talk about menopause the less of a taboo it is.
- Lead with empathy, recognize that menopausal people's experiences are diverse, and their needs vary.

Source: <https://workleap.com/blog/difficult-conversations-at-work/>

Source: <https://www.forbes.com/sites/committeeof200/2024/04/11/how-to-build-a-menopause-inclusive-workplace/>



IMPROVED EMPLOYEE ENGAGEMENT SAVES TIME AND MONEY

- Higher morale
- Improves work culture
- Increased performance and productivity
- Less workplace stress
- Better working relationships with colleagues
- Stronger workplace relationships
- Lower absenteeism
- Higher retention of your valuable talented colleagues
- It makes us a more attractive place to work
- We would be seen as a forward-thinking organization

SUPERVISOR GUIDANCE TO HANDLE DIFFICULT CONVERSATIONS

1. SET THE TALKING POINT IN ADVANCE

Give the other person advance notice of what you would like to discuss.

2. FOCUS ON FACTS, NOT FEELINGS

Dig into what you're feeling so you can understand and share your thoughts clearly.
Try to separate what you know from what you think or feel.

3. CREATE AN ENVIRONMENT FOR TRUST AND HONESTY

It is important to foster a sense of trust and mutual respect.
Have regular feedback exchanges to help people feel more comfortable and candid with you.

4. ASK OPEN-ENDED QUESTIONS

Ask questions to explore, don't assume what the employee is thinking.

5. AIM FOR UNDERSTANDING ABOVE CONSENSUS

You may not see eye-to-eye but find a sense of understanding.
Be empathetic and listen to their perspective.

6. FIND A SOLUTION TOGETHER

Wrap up by setting clear action items.
Follow up.

EMPLOYEE GUIDANCE TO HANDLE DIFFICULT CONVERSATIONS

1. REQUEST A MEETING

When you make the request keep your message as simple as possible.

Example: *"I would like to talk about X. When would be a good time for you?"*

2. SHIFT YOUR MINDSET

Try thinking of the meeting as an opportunity to have a constructive conversation.

3. GATHER YOUR THOUGHTS

Think through what you want to say and think of possible solutions.

4. BE COGNIZANT OF YOUR LANGUAGE AND TONE

A calm demeanor can help a difficult conversation go smoothly.

5. ADDRESS THE ISSUE DIRECTLY

Immediately express your appreciation for meeting with you. Shift the conversation to the purpose of the meeting, show them that you respect their time.

6. ACTIVELY LISTEN TO YOUR BOSS'S PERSPECTIVE

Be open and receptive, ask for clarification if needed, avoid becoming defensive.

7. REACH A SOLUTION

You may have different viewpoints, ask if there is anything that would encourage them to reconsider.

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

EMPLOYEE ASSISTANCE PROGRAM

EAP 608-266-6561

<https://www.cityofmadison.com/employee-assistance-program>

PROHIBITED HARASSMENT AND/OR DISCRIMINATION POLICY

Civil Rights 608-266-4910

APM 3-5 <https://www.cityofmadison.com/mayor/apm/3-5.pdf>

WORKPLACE ACCOMMODATIONS

Human Resources 608-266-4615

APM 2-22 <https://www.cityofmadison.com/mayor/apm/2-22.pdf>

FMLA INQUIRIES

Human Resources 608-266-4615

<https://www.cityofmadison.com/human-resources/benefits/family-medical-leave>

ORGANIZATIONAL DEVELOPMENT COURSES

<https://www.cityofmadison.com/human-resources/organizational-development/courses/course-catalog>

OCTOBER 18

**IS WORLD MENOPAUSE
AWARENESS DAY**



Thank you



REFERENCE LIST

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