



SWITCH

WE ARE JUST GETTING STARTED

WE'RE JUST GETTING STARTED ON
THE CONVERSATION ABOUT WOMEN'S
HEALTH AND THE MENOPAUSE



**JOIN US
ON 8TH OCTOBER**



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WE NEED TO TALK ABOUT WOMEN'S HEALTH, DANNY CLARKE

Birth control. Menopause. Endometriosis. Menstruation.

Only a few terms relating to women's health, and often, enough to make people so uncomfortable that they avoid the conversation entirely.

Historically, women's health has been treated as a hush-hush topic, from the inception of commercial menstrual care products that were initially a commercial failure due to squeamishness around the topic, to the reluctance to study (and disclose) the side effects of birth control.

MENOPAUSE IN THE WORKPLACE

Did you know that menopausal women are the fastest growing demographic in the workforce? Probably not – yet, nearly 8 out of 10 menopausal women are in work, according to the Faculty of Occupational Medicine.

The embarrassment around the topic means that it often flies under the radar, even though 3 out of 4 women experience menopausal symptoms, with 1 in 4 experiencing serious symptoms.

These symptoms include:

- HOT FLUSHES
- HEADACHES
- POOR SLEEP
- LOW MOOD
- ANXIETY
- LACK OF CONFIDENCE
- POOR CONCENTRATION

As an employer, aren't these concerns that you would want to address to ensure your employees aren't suffering in silence?

Perhaps it would be considered as more important if it were widely known that due to menopausal symptoms, 1 in 4 women consider leaving their jobs, and 72% of women in work say they feel unsupported.

YOU DON'T NEED TO BE AN EXPERT

One of the prevalent reasons why women often aren't supported in the workplace when it comes to menopause is a lack of confidence in line managers around the topic. Unlike maternity leave, which has clearly defined steps in the workplace, each woman's experience with menopause will be different. The best piece of advice? Understanding goes a long way.

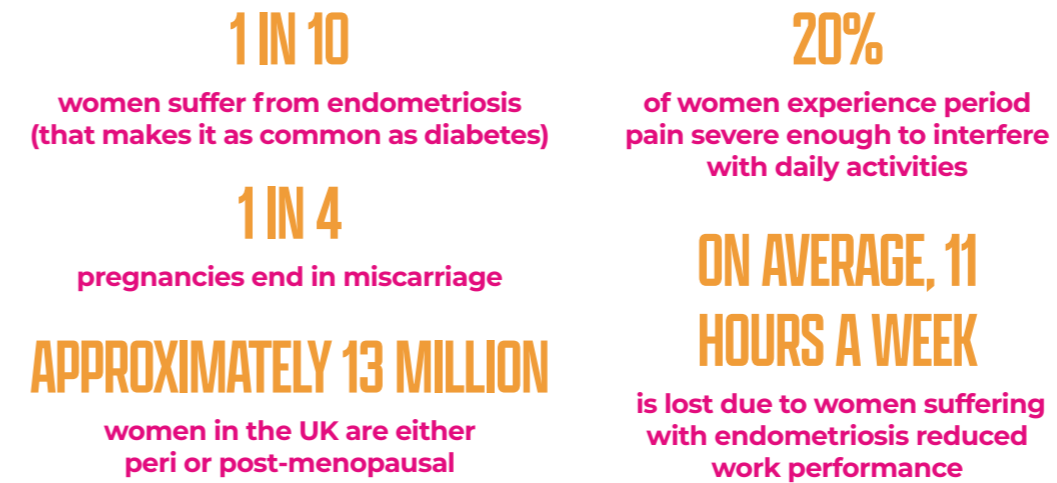
Managers who understand the range of difficulties a woman might be facing at work during menopause can then implement guidance on the support that a company can offer. It doesn't have to be complex.

Seating arrangements could be changed so a female employee is closer to air conditioning, or small desk fans could be offered in order to combat hot flushes. Another option is flexible working hours, so that women can comfortably take time to see their GP if they need to.

EDUCATION DIMINISHES STIGMA

Part of the reason that the stigma and embarrassment around women's health still thrives is because of a lack of awareness, understanding, and education.

Many of the areas of women's health that are avoided in discussions are common:



This barely scratches the surface of the multitude of barriers women face in day-to-day life and the workplace when it comes to their health, only made more difficult and distressing by the societal aversion of speaking about it.

HOW CAN IT CHANGE?

Firstly, a huge barrier to de-stigmatising women's health is language. By avoiding terms relating to women's health, we're implying that it's shameful and shouldn't be discussed, which can be detrimental to women.

If women's health isn't discussed, it becomes harder for a woman to determine what is typical, or what may be a medical condition, or point of concern.

Bupa Health Clinics found that around 11 million women have taken long-term health breaks during their working lives, and 3 million have left work due to female health problems (more than 1 million of which were because of period-related issues).

A simple, yet often overlooked solution to some of these issues would be flexible and remote working opportunities, which would allow women the comfort of working from home on days where they feel unable to cope with the office, rather than having to resort to sick leave.

Training and awareness can also go a long way for all employees, by providing women with the self-care advice to manage their symptoms better, and other employees the ability to be supportive and aware.

Primarily, workplace culture needs to change before any meaningful shift can occur, as without a judgement-free, knowledgeable workplace environment, women won't feel comfortable discussing their health, or seeking help.

'WHY YOU SHOULD GIVE A SHIT.'

Don't miss Danny Clarke speaking at Switch it Up at 2pm on 8th October.





MY TOP 10 MENOPAUSE MYTHS, NICKI WILLIAMS

Back in 2014 when I started out, menopause was not something that was spoken about, let alone all over the newspapers and magazines!

Despite so much more information and advice out there about menopause, there are STILL a lot of misconceptions and menopause myths that are confusing women today.

So I thought I'd share with you my top 10 menopause myths, because this is what I would have loved to have known when I was going through my issues in my early 40's.

MENOPAUSE MYTHS

1. MENOPAUSE HAPPENS IN YOUR 50'S

You may think you're too young to think about menopause (I certainly did!). Officially menopause is classified as one year after your last period, and on average this happens at age 51-52. But hormones start to decline and fluctuate from the age of 35 onwards (and often earlier!).

2. IT'S JUST ABOUT HOT FLUSHES

Hot flushes (or flashes) and night sweats are the most well-known (and horrible) symptoms of menopause, and are generally thought to be caused by oestrogen fluctuations in the thermoregulation part of the brain.

However there are so many more symptoms that you might not be aware are hormone-related, including weight gain, low energy, mood swings, depression, brain fog, memory loss, insomnia, stress and anxiety, low sex drive and joint pain – to name a few!

You can have some or all of these with or without hot flushes, every woman is different.

3. IT'S ALL ABOUT OESTROGEN AND PROGESTERONE

Oestrogen and progesterone decline and fluctuate during perimenopause, and it's these changes that can cause quite a few symptoms. However, there are many other hormones that can play up at this time, making it hard to know which hormones are causing what symptoms.

The most common ones I find when I'm testing clients are the Feisty 4; as well as oestrogen, you also need to consider cortisol, your stress hormone (this one can cause havoc), insulin your blood sugar hormone and thyroid, your metabolism regulator. They all interconnect and when one is out, the others can follow.

So when you take HRT as a treatment, it may resolve the oestrogen/progesterone issue, but it won't do anything for your other hormones. That's why I always recommend you get properly tested so that you know which hormones are out of balance.

4. HRT IS NOT SAFE

If you are on the right type of HRT, it's perfectly safe. The type that is associated with all the risks and side effects is synthetic oestrogen and synthetic progestins. These are in combined treatments or oral formats.

If you are taking body identical hormones that your Doctor can prescribe (oestrogen gel or patch, plus oral progesterone), there are no studies to date to suggest they carry increased health risks.

5. YOUR DIET DOESN'T MAKE ANY DIFFERENCE

Well, it might seem that way if you've gone to your Doctor and they have told you that your only solution is HRT (this happens A LOT!).

Having a healthy diet with all the right nutrients to help your hormones work properly makes a huge difference not only to your symptoms but also for your future health risks.

6. DIETING WILL HELP WITH WEIGHT GAIN

One of the biggest menopause myths is 'eat less, move more!' Low calorie and low-fat diets are the worst things for women over 40. You may lose a few pounds in the beginning, but it won't last and you'll just be malnourished – and your hormones will be all over the place.

Get away from low calorie, deprivation diets, anything 'diet' or 'low fat' – and start thinking about foods that nourish your hormones. It's your hormones that control your weight, so if you look after them, it makes sense that they will look after you back!

7. THERE'S NO POINT HAVING YOUR HORMONES TESTED

Many doctors will test your FSH and LH to see if you're peri-menopausal, and for me, that's not particularly helpful, as you can tell that from your age and symptoms! They often won't test your sex hormones as they say there's no point due to the fact that they fluctuate so much. The only testing available to them is blood tests, which aren't that helpful with hormones as it's just a snapshot of your hormone levels at that moment.

However, there is an amazing hormone test that we use to identify any imbalances. It's a urine test taken over 4 points of a 24 hour day. This not only shows your hormone levels but also how they are behaving and metabolising over the course of a whole day. It's also done in the luteal phase of your cycle where we know where your hormones should be so it's more accurate.

8. MENOPAUSE SUPPLEMENTS WILL HELP

Many women I see in clinic are taking an over the counter 'menopause' formula that is usually heavily marketed at women who are suffering. Unfortunately, they very rarely help, as they are often cheaply made, full of artificial fillers and additives, and very low in the actual vitamins and minerals that you need.

There are lots of very helpful quality supplements that a qualified health practitioner can recommend for you, safely and personalised to your own individual needs.

Do visit my collection at Live Better With Menopause for quality products and supplements that can support you.

9. YOUR PERIODS WILL BE LIGHTER

The one good thing you think might happen as you approach menopause is that your periods will be less often and a lot lighter.

WRONG!

This is another of the menopause myths. It can often be the opposite – PMS or heavy painful periods, even if you may never have suffered before. What's that all about? It's that oestrogen dominance from declining progesterone. It's like being a teenager again, without the raging sex drive!

10. THERE'S NOTHING YOU CAN DO ABOUT IT – YOU JUST HAVE TO GET ON WITH IT

NOT TRUE!

There are so many things you can do. From cleaning up your diet, to minimising your exposure to hormone-disrupting chemicals, to better managing your stress, to getting the right exercise, to taking the right supplements... some simple tweaks to your diet and lifestyle (that are pleasurable not difficult) can make all the difference to your symptoms.

If you are suffering from peri or post-menopausal symptoms, then please ASK FOR HELP. I really don't want any woman suffering in silence because either they don't know how to get help or they have been told to get on with it by the help they have already sought.

Women are so critical to everyone around them. We support and juggle like crazy to make sure everyone else is OK. Isn't it time you put your oxygen mask on first?

Please contact Nicki at: nicki@happyhormonesforlife.com and I can tell you how to get properly tested and what your options are for a better quality of life.

Happy Hormones
FOR LIFE

JOIN NICKI FOR A LIVE Q&A

On Instagram at 6pm on 13th October.

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LET'S LOOK AT THE FACTS ALL ABOUT THE MENOPAUSE

Although just one aspect of women's health, this fact sheet gives you some key facts and figures relating to the Menopause to help inform and educate.

Did you know that 100% of women will go through the menopause in their lifetime. 80% will find it a life impacting event. Only 20% will have mild symptoms.

PERIMENOPAUSE

This is the time before Menopause when women are still having periods but experiencing menopausal symptoms. It is caused by changing in hormone levels, oestrogen, progesterone and in some cases testosterone.

MENOPAUSE

This is the time when a woman's periods stop. The medical definition for menopause is 12 months after a woman's last period.

POST MENOPAUSE

The time following the Menopause when women still experience menopausal symptoms, menopause leaves a hormone deficiency that can affect a number of aspects of life but there are treatments and steps that can be taken to help reduce risks and enable women to thrive.

SYMPTOMS OF MENOPAUSE

 Disturbed Sleep	 Digestive problems	 Vaginal Dryness	 Decreased Libido	 Extreme Fatigue	 Sore Boobs
 Anxiety, Depression & Panic attacks	 Mood swings & irritability	 Irregular periods & heavy bleeding	 Weight gain	 Hair loss and brittle nails	
 Headaches	 Joint pain	 Burning mouth & gum problems	 Dizziness	 Brain fog & Memory lapse	 Itchy Skin



LET'S START TALKING ABOUT THE SUBJECT OF WOMEN'S HEALTH

In China menopause is referred to as 'The Second Spring'. A natural phase of life when a woman can thrive. When they learn to recognise and manage this hormone deficiency, either through medical treatments or more alternative therapies it can be an empowering and liberating experience.

The menopause can last around 10 years. These days women live approximately a 3rd of their lives post menopause.



MENOPAUSE AND MEN, EVERY DAY HEALTH

Many women don't know what to expect when menopause starts — and because of this, their husbands and significant others can be even more clueless.

The menopause results in often significant changes in the mood, hormones and physicality of a women and, with all these changes, it can be difficult for a partner to know what to do and, crucially, what not to do. It is possible to support and the key way in which a man can do so is through understanding, by learning what it is she is going through.

HOW TO SURVIVE HER MENOPAUSE

Consider the following tips from Everyday Health to finding peace at home:

PREPARE FOR MOOD SWINGS

Unless you're with one of the few lucky women who aren't bothered with menopause symptoms, mood swings are likely. This happens as the female hormones estrogen and progesterone surge and ebb in the body. Grumpiness can also result from poor sleep, which menopausal women experience as they deal with hot flashes and night sweats. "When you don't sleep well, everything is just kind of crazy," Gibbs says.

Flexibility is the key to dealing with mood swings, even the ones that seem to be caused by ... nothing. If your partner is steamed because you brought home the wrong brand of milk, for example, give her some space instead of getting defensive. Likewise, if she's sobbing at a cat food commercial, lend her a shoulder to cry on. And, perhaps most importantly, don't complain if she turns the thermostat to just a few degrees above freezing. "Bundle up under a blanket if you have to," Gibbs suggests.

BE PATIENT IN THE BEDROOM

Sex can, quite literally, be a sore spot for a woman going through menopause. As estrogen levels drop, the tissue in and around the vagina can dry out, making it more sensitive. "Estrogen makes the tissue soft and pliable," Gibbs says. "When women go through menopause, it just gets paper-thin. They can get cuts just from using toilet paper." Many women also tend to lose interest in sex during menopause because their levels of the male hormone testosterone, which helps fuel libido, can drop along with other hormones.

"Women have it in small amounts, and it's derived from some of the estrogen in our bodies," Gibbs says. "So we actually lose a little of our testosterone, too." The bottom line? Be patient. If your partner just isn't in the mood (again), don't press the issue. Most women's libidos usually revive after menopause is complete. If she's willing but has physical pain, suggest she talk to her doctor about vaginal estrogen creams to help relieve the dryness.

MEN, YOU ARE PART OF THIS DEBATE TOO

Join us at Switch it Up at 2pm on 8th October.

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MENOPAUSE IN THE WORKPLACE – LET'S TALK ABOUT IT

www.menopausematters.co.uk

Coping with menopausal symptoms at work can be tough and some women are, understandably, reluctant or even afraid to talk to their employer about it.

With around 4 million women aged between 15 and 65 years currently in employment in the UK, women now represent nearly a half of the UK labour force. That surely makes menopause mainstream and as important as any other occupational health issue.

WORKING THROUGH THE MENOPAUSE

- Many women find they are little prepared for the onset of the menopause and are even less equipped to manage its symptoms at work. They tend not to disclose their symptoms to their manager
- The majority of women feel they need further advice and support
- Workplaces and working practices are not designed with menopausal women in mind
- Heavy and painful periods, hot flushes, mood swings, fatigue and poor concentration can pose significant and embarrassing problems for some women, resulting in lowered confidence
- Women are often uncomfortable disclosing their symptoms and problems to managers, particularly if they are young or male.
- Where women have to take time off work to deal with their symptoms many do not disclose the real reasons for their absence
- Some women say they have to work extremely hard to overcome their perceived shortcomings due to their menopause
- Others consider working part-time, despite the concern about the impact on their career. Some even think about leaving employment altogether.

Source: UNISON's Health and Safety guide to the menopause

WOULDN'T IT BE GREAT TO SEE EMPLOYERS PROVIDING...

GREATER AWARENESS

among managers of the menopause as a real occupational health issue

PROVISION OF A CULTURE

where women feel comfortable about discussing their symptoms and what impact that has on their working lives

OPTIONS AROUND FLEXIBLE WORKING HOURS

and working arrangements to help manage symptoms

IMPROVED ACCESS TO SUPPORT

formal or informal

OPTIONS TO IMPROVE YOUR WORK ENVIRONMENT

temperature and ventilation



EVEN THE LAW CAN'T HELP ME NOW

This a short extract from one of our Storm Stories, it is a very real and intimate account of the impact peri-menopause can have on women by Kate Mahon.

SHARING YOUR STORIES

"I eventually went to my doctor when my moods became totally unbearable. One minute I would be fine and the next I would either be crying or tearing my hair out in anger. I had become a complete Jekyll and Hyde character, which is not ideal in my line of work as I deal with people who are bereaved, elderly and vulnerable. My poor husband was suffering too as he often wouldn't know what to expect when he got home from work – he must have spent all the time walking on eggshells, not sure how I would react to anything.

My doctor prescribed antidepressants, only a small dosage and, after a few months I seemed to be on an even keel again with my emotions. My periods however were still as heavy and as painful as ever and becoming quite erratic so my doctor prescribed some stronger painkillers and medication to try and curtail the heaviness of the bleeding; none of which seemed to work however.

I didn't question the anti-depressants at the time because I didn't think that I was peri-menopausal as I was too young. My mum mentioned to me that I could be in the early stages of menopause and she kept insisting I went back to the doctor. But it was only when my periods started to only appear once every few months that my doctor then decided to take blood tests to monitor my hormone levels to see if I was menopausal. The first blood test showed I was and they wanted a further one in 6 months' time to be sure, but on the day of the blood test I just came on my period after about 3 months without one, so the blood test showed my hormone levels as normal. The doctor said that they couldn't do anything and that I was fine.

I came off the antidepressants after about 6 months because although they had helped my mood swings, they weren't helping with my other symptoms and they really weren't helping my already flagging libido..."

HEAD OVER TO STORM STORIES

to read the full version and more personal accounts both blogs and videos.

HERE

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LET'S MAKE MENOPAUSE THE NEW NORMAL, SHARON MACARTHUR

There's been a lot of a talk about the 'new normal' over the last few months and while lots of things in work and life have changed, or are certain to change, there's one thing for women that has stayed the same; the menopause.

The full picture about the effects of the pandemic on mental health and wellbeing is yet to emerge, and this is something that employers will have to consider as people begin their tentative return to the workplace.

DO YOU THINK YOU'VE GOT MENTAL HEALTH AND WELLBEING COVERED?

IF YOU HAVE A WELLBEING POLICY, IS MENOPAUSE MENTIONED ANYWHERE?

IF YOU'RE NOT TALKING ABOUT MENOPAUSE, THEN YOU'RE MISSING OUT THE BIGGEST DEMOGRAPHIC OF WORKING WOMEN OVER 50.

YOU NEED TO LISTEN TO EMPLOYEES' NEEDS

During the pandemic, remote working might have helped some women who are going through menopause. They haven't had to travel, they've been able to work more flexibly, and have had more control over things like the environment they work in or what they wear.

More companies need to consider remote working as an option for employees who are going through menopause. Think about it, you get happier, more productive employees, and women get the reassurance that they're working for an employer who actually cares about their physical and mental wellbeing.

As companies rebuild and recover from the pandemic, they need happy and productive people more than ever, and you get that by being alert, and listening to their needs. Don't let any more amazing talent slip through your fingers; keep women working for you by making menopause a part of your new normal.

WOMEN'S FEELINGS ABOUT THE MENOPAUSE

If you're still not convinced that you need to take action on menopause, here's some food for thought. I asked women to tell me how menopause makes them feel.

153 women responded and even though I was expecting a lot of the responses to be negative, I was still shocked at how bad women are feeling. Read through the list on the following page and think about the fact that this is happening in your workplace, to your female employees, even if you're not aware of it.

Miss
Menopause

I ASKED WOMEN TO COMPLETE THE STATEMENT:

'Menopause makes me feel...'

Here's what they said. There were a few positive comments, but as you can see, they were mostly awful.

OLD | LOST | ERRATIC | GRUMPY | PAIN | STUPID | USELESS | NOT HUMAN | NOT LIKE ME ANYMORE | SH*T | LOOPY
CONFUSED - I'M IN A BODY I DON'T UNDERSTAND | DOWN | ALONE | NOT THE PERSON I ONCE WAS | LIKE AN IMPOSTOR IN MY OWN
BODY AND MIND | MISUNDERSTOOD | LIKE I'VE MISSED A LOT | WORN OUT | AN EMOTIONAL WRECK | LIKE A DIFFERENT PERSON
| ANXIOUS | INCOMPETENT | OVERWHELMED | OLD, INEFFICIENT, AND INVISIBLE | LIKE AN ALIEN IN MY OWN BODY | UNAWARE OF
WHO I AM | WIPED OUT | DOWNTRODDEN | CRAZY | ANXIOUS | AWFUL | KNACKERED | INADEQUATE | POWERLESS | I'VE LOST WHAT
MADE ME, ME | UP AND DOWN | NOT MYSELF | EXHAUSTED | UNBALANCED | WRECKED | BAFFLED | LIKE MY JOINTS HAVE AGED
20 YEARS OVER NIGHT | NO CONFIDENCE | INSIGNIFICANT | FRUMP, GROSS, SWEATY | DRAINED | CLUELESS | DISCOMBOBULATED
| PANICKING | INVISIBLE | HOT AND CRAPPY | HOT, SWEATY, ANXIOUS, AND FORGETFUL | RUBBISH, RUBBISH, RUBBISH! | OLD AND
CREAKY | CRAP, UGLY | SH*T, LARGE, AND BLOBBY | BORING | FREE | OLD, FAT, AND MUCH, MUCH WISER | POWERFUL | OLDER,
WISER, AND ACTUALLY VERY HAPPY. I THANK MY LUCKY STARS FOR THIS | SO MUCH CALMER, NO MORE PERIOD CRAZINESS |
FAT BUT WISE LIKE I'M STEPPING INTO MY TRUE WISE SELF. QUITE SH*T AT TIMES THOUGH | HAPPY TO HAVE GOT THIS FAR

DO YOU STILL THINK YOU'RE DOING ENOUGH?

Menopause is not an illness, but it can have a huge impact on mental and physical wellbeing. Menopause never stopped during the pandemic, but now, with the increased focus on employee wellbeing, this is the perfect time to get your ducks in a row and start the conversation about menopause.

Want to know more about how I can help you make menopause the 'new normal' in your organisation? **Get in touch!**

'MENOPAUSE THE LAST
WORKPLACE WELLBEING TABOO.'

Don't miss Sharon MacArthur speaking at
Switch it Up at 11.30 on 8th October.

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VERITY HART, FOUNDER WE ARE AFTER THE STORM

Women's Health and specifically the menopause is a hot topic at the moment.

Davina McCall's documentary 'Sex, Myths and the Menopause' is where this all started for me personally and consequently for We are After the Storm.



WE ARE AFTER THE STORM, WE ARE ABOUT CONNECTION AND WE ARE JUST GETTING STARTED.

WHY WE NEED TO SWITCH IT UP

Realising I was ill informed both as a woman and mother to 3 girls, my passion was born and I felt that We are After the Storm was a great platform to use to change the narrative on women's health, 'switch it up' if you like.

Through my research and talking to so many amazing people, I have come to realise there are so many aspects around women's health and sexual health and wellbeing that are taboo, racked with stigma and that society and the workplace are ill-educated about.

We are After the Storm wants to shine a light on all of them, so we are just getting started. This Campaign and Event focus on levelling the playing field in terms of understanding around menopause and then we aim to drive the women's health agenda bringing together as many experts as possible and raising voices in all areas.

We would just like to say a massive thankyou to all our contributors, both for the ebook, our Storm Stories and our Event.

We are after the Storm your go to place for finding the right services and support you need to help you through all the challenges and life lessons that might come your way.

WE ARE ABOUT CONNECTION

- Connecting Individuals to services and resources that can support them through times of growth, difficulty or personal change.
- Providing a platform for Service Providers to connect with the individuals they are looking to support.
- Through engaging and informative content we bring people to our site to share in the insight, gain the motivation, inspiration and support they need.
- Connect with us here: www.weareafterthestorm.com

SWITCH IT UP

WE ARE JUST GETTING STARTED

Join us online for the most far-reaching, inclusive conference on women's health there has ever been.

This is where we switch up the conversation on workplace health and wellbeing, understanding the menopause and levelling the playing field with understanding and action.

Switch it Up is being brought to you by We are After the Storm and features some of the leading voices on women's health.

WHO IS THE CONFERENCE FOR?

- Everyone
- Workplace Business Leaders
- Senior Managers
- HR Professionals
- CEOs

Anyone interested in joining the debate, learning more and engaging with the conversation.



9
Speakers



12
Talks



2
Panel Debates



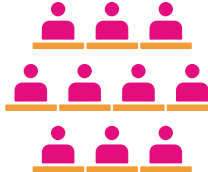
4
Workshops



20
Exhibitors



6
Expert Q&A's



2000
Delegates

ACCESS OUR E-BOOK, 'GUIDING YOU THROUGH THE STORM'

HERE

This has been designed as a helpful entry point and guide for people that may need some sort of support to help them through tough times that they are experiencing.

FIND OUT MORE

Find out more about the event and book your ticket

HERE





USEFUL LINKS

- www.happyhormonesforlife.com
- www.midlifewomenrockproject.com
- www.gen-m.com
- www.menopausematters.co.uk
- www.menopausedoctor.co.uk
- www.menopausesupport.co.uk
- www.positivepause.co.uk
- www.themenopausecharity.org
- www.healthawareness.co.uk
- simply-people.co.uk
- www.everydayhealth.com

