

## Menopause and the Workplace – How Managers can Approach a Conversation

**Discussing an intimate health condition can be very daunting and managing a sensitive conversation around health can be difficult. A good start is to approach with empathy and understanding. Arrange an appropriate and private space to meet and allow for sufficient time to listen. Prepare for this meeting. Complete Manager training on HSeLanD. Listen carefully to what the employee is saying. Try not to make any assumptions. It is imperative to bear in mind that the menopause experience is individual to each person going through it.**

### Potential Risk Areas

Best Practice Approach	Best Practice Language
Speak calmly using supportive language	“I wanted to meet you to see how you are doing” “How are you?” “How have you been?”
<b>If there is something in particular that you have noticed in relation to the person’s demeanour in, or performance at, work, communicate this respectfully and with empathy</b>	“I notice that you have been struggling a little with your work (could be deadlines/ timekeeping etc.) and am wondering if you are ok.” “I notice there is a lot going on for you now. Would you like to tell me about it?” “Is there anything that we can do which might be helpful to you?”
<b>If the employee discloses they are experiencing menopause symptoms, recognise that it is a very personal and sensitive topic. Ask general, open ended questions rather than direct questions</b>	“I am really glad you have shared this with me. I know this is not easy” “I’ve been reading up on menopause/completed the training and I know it’s different for everyone so I’d like to hear about what you are experiencing and how I can help” “It sounds like it has been a very difficult time for you” “Could you tell me more about this if you are comfortable doing so”
<b>Take your time and be patient with the employee</b>	
<b>Assure them that the conversation is confidential unless they wish that it go further e.g. HR</b>	
You can provide supportive suggestions such as:	“Would you consider having a chat with your GP? It could be very helpful. We can also look at how we can support you in work”. “The EAP service can offer you confidential support and discuss an action plan to enhance your wellbeing”
<b>Do invite the employee for a follow-on conversation to review any accommodations that have been agreed upon. Do enquire about their wellbeing as symptoms of menopause change over time.</b>	