

Committee Secretary
Community Affairs Committee
Department of the Senate
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Parliament House
CANBERRA. ACT 2600

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Friday 22 March 2024

Submission to the Standing Committee on Community Affairs inquiry into issues related to menopause and perimenopause.

To the Senate Inquiry Committee,

Thank you so much for instigating this inquiry and I appreciate the opportunity to make a formal submission to it. My submission is dedicated to everyone who has shared their stories about their menopause journey with me, which has included all genders and ages. Their openness and vulnerability inspire me daily to continue to support their wellbeing during this time.

I am a wellbeing scientist and practitioner focused on mentoring professional women during their menopause journey through the business I founded – Strong into Superb. My passion on supporting wellbeing during menopause grew when I was perimenopausal and studying for my Master of Applied Positive Psychology, also known as wellbeing science. I then became post-menopausal due to the removal of my ovaries in 2021 and there was limited support for the hormonal impact this had on my life. Thankfully, I did not have cervical cancer. However, this meant I was not 'eligible' for support through the Ovarian Cancer society and nor did my surgeon offer any post-surgery support for menopause. This increased my passion to support wellbeing for all during menopause, so that others could have the evidenced-based support that I did not. In February 2024 I started the first pop-up Menopause Cafés (Cafés) in Canberra, both in person and online, which occur monthly. The Menopause Café movement started in Perth, Scotland, in 2017 and has spread worldwide, with volunteers now hosting pop-up events in the UK, Bahrain, Mexico, USA, Austria, India, and Australia. These cafés are aimed at breaking down the stigma around menopause and increasing awareness of the impact of the menopause on those experiencing it, their family, friends, and their colleagues. For further information on these Cafés and feedback on their effectiveness in supporting people during menopause, please refer to Appendix A.

My submission relates to the Inquiry's Terms of Reference (a) to (i), with the following key points:

1. Wellbeing of an individual impacts, and is impacted by, all the people, workplaces, groups, societies, cultures within which it takes part¹, there is complexity in understanding the conditions that help wellbeing thrive^{2,3}, and there is shared

responsibility of individuals, organisations, and communities to improve wellbeing of all.⁴

2. A woman's menopause continuum is influenced at the individual level by her biological and psychological functioning, demographics, and lifestyle choices. Her menopause continuum is also influenced through her relationships, work and the society and culture in which she lives. The influences of these factors means that every woman's menopause continuum is unique, acknowledging the multiplicity of individual and socio-factors impacting a woman's menopause continuum that may affect her quality of life.^{5,6}
3. Women's positive menopause continuum experiences are rarely sought.⁶
4. The menopause continuum is not experienced the same worldwide, given the influence of psychosocial and sociocultural factors on a woman's wellbeing.^{7,8} Geographical and racial backgrounds of women appear to determine their likelihood of having symptoms and how they are experienced: the reasons why, in addition to the six factors that may influence every woman's experience, are not yet fully understood.⁹
5. The menopause continuum is not experienced the same within a country, as even if women's demographics are similar in other ways, the experience of women who lived through a particular cultural era may not be comparable to a woman from a different generation.¹⁰
6. Women who migrate to a new country appear to report similar menopause continuum symptoms and attitudes that are dominant in their new country as opposed to their previous country.¹¹
7. There is a scarcity of research on how a woman's menopause experience affects the wellbeing of her family unit and her communities, and vice versa.

I make the following recommendations to the Inquiry (in no order of priority):

- A. Capture women's positive menopause continuum experiences and start sharing their stories.
- B. Educate children in high school about menopause.
- C. Ensure that there is a standard approach in measuring and evaluating vasomotor and genitourinary symptoms, including the efficacy and effectiveness of clinical and non-clinical interventions.
- D. Have information targeted at women's partners about menopause, and this includes same-sex partners.
- E. Have not-for-profit community-based support groups where all ages and genders can come and discuss all things menopause by adopting nationally the pop-up Menopause Cafés (for further information on these Cafés and feedback on their effectiveness in supporting people during menopause, please refer to Appendix A.)
- F. Normalise menopause and destigmatise it through embracing women's aging through promoting that women are valued as they age, and that menopause is a natural part of life.
- G. Promote evidence-based wellbeing pathways to support wellbeing during the menopause continuum at work, so that women grow through it rather than just getting surviving and/or being resilient.
- H. Provide evidenced-based information to all families about menopause to destigmatise it. Have this information in multiple languages and culturally appropriate.

- I. Provide information on menopause to service businesses who are in close contact with women so they can promote fact and evidence-based menopause information. For example, hairdressers, beauticians, and shop assistants in women focused stores.
- J. Provide women from 35 onwards information about the menopause continuum to help her support her wellbeing before and during it based on evidence-based information, ensuring it discusses the reasons why each experience is unique due to her biological and psychological functioning, demographics, and lifestyle choices, and influenced through her relationships, work and the society and culture in which she lives.
- K. Research how a woman's menopause experience impacts the wellbeing of her family unit and her communities, and vice versa.
- L. Research the effect on family wellbeing during menopause and identify evidence-based wellbeing pathways to support it both proactively and reactively.
- M. Women from 35 years of age are eligible for subsidised bone density screening to identify any potential impact on bone loss during menopause continuum and action to address any concerns found.

Terms

In this submission I use the following terms:

- *Family unit*, includes a couple, inclusive of a woman with children; a woman who is a single parent; and a woman who may or may not be in a relationship, and has close friendships that are active, loving, emotionally intimate, trusting, supporting, and long term.
- *Family wellbeing*, a multifaceted construct, including an individual assessment of their family's wellbeing along with the family's interdependent sense of wellbeing.^{12,13}
- *Menopause continuum* encapsulates a woman's lived experience in transitioning to being non-reproductive naturally with the commencement of perimenopause, or by it being induced through medication or surgery, to the end of experiencing postmenopausal symptoms.
- *Wellbeing pathways* are events, interventions, and/or actions that positively impact a person's wellbeing experience.
- *Women* are inclusive of people who are transitioning genders from female to male and non-binary people.

What is Wellbeing?

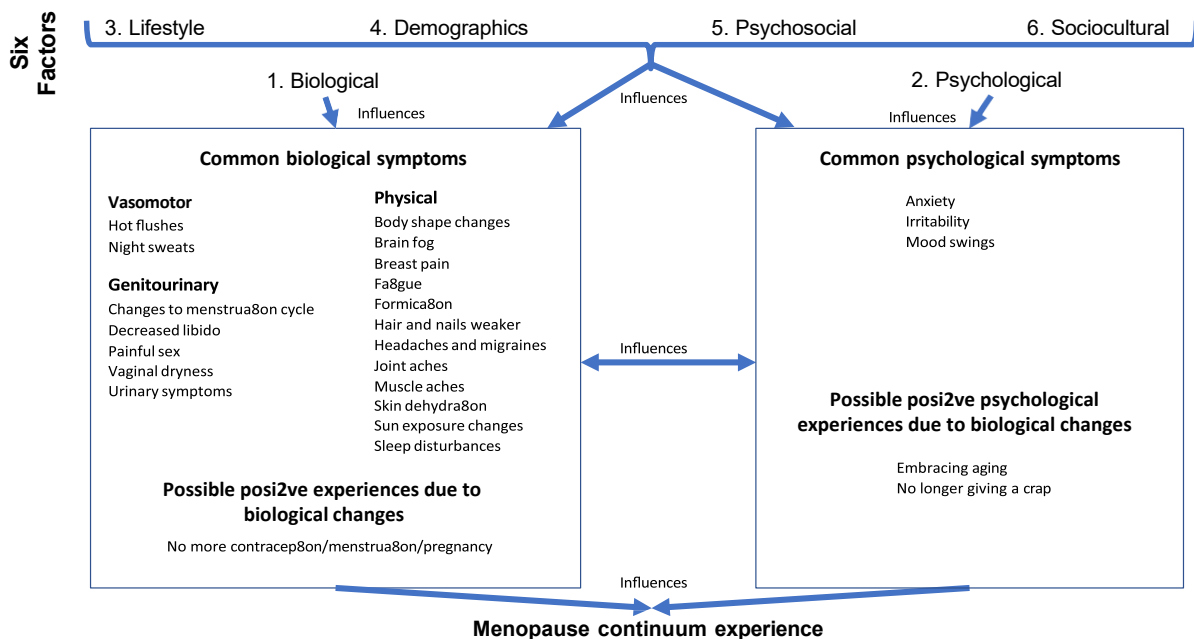
Wellbeing, from the lens of positive psychology, is at the heart of helping individuals and communities thrive and surprisingly there is no agreed definition for wellbeing.¹⁴ I have chosen to use a definition that focuses on the individual wellbeing: "wellbeing can be understood as how people feel and how they function both on a personal and social level, and how they evaluate their lives as a whole".¹⁵ Research suggests that the wellbeing of an individual impacts, and is impacted by, all the people, workplaces, groups, societies, cultures within which it takes part¹, there is complexity in understanding the conditions that help wellbeing thrive^{2,3}, and there is shared responsibility of individuals, organisations, and communities to improve wellbeing of all.⁴ Wellbeing science "is the scientific investigation of wellbeing, its antecedents and consequences".¹⁶ As this field grows, so has the identification

of evidence-based ways to guide, support and educate people to create the best possible wellbeing journeys for themselves, their families, workplaces and groups. Wellbeing through the lens of positive psychology excludes wellness concepts that require clinical support such as medical healthcare, health products such as nutritional supplements and medication, food, and personal care products.¹⁷

Menopause Continuum Impact on a Woman’s Wellbeing

There six factors that may impact a woman’s lived experience through her menopause continuum (refer Figure 1). At the individual level, there are four factors: biological and psychological functioning, demographics, and lifestyle choices.^{10,18-21} Fifth, psychosocial refers to how her social structures and practices influence her social, spiritual, emotional and mental health.⁵ Finally, sociocultural refer to how her socioeconomic status and her cultural and societal influences that may impact her health, behaviours, thoughts and feelings.²² These factors may influence a woman’s biological and psychological symptoms during her menopause continuum.

Figure 1
Model of Six Factors That May Impact Women’s Menopause Continuum Experience



Note. These symptoms may be due to more than hormonal changes.

As woman’s biological changes may result in vasomotor symptoms, hot flushes and night sweats, and physical symptoms such as joint pain, fatigue, and brain fog.^{10,21} She may also be affected by genitourinary symptoms, such as vulvovaginal dryness and pain during sex.²³ Psychologically, she is more likely to suffer from depression and vasomotor and genitourinary symptoms if she has a history of mood disorders, views menopause negatively, had adverse experiences during childhood, lacks effective coping mechanisms, and/or has a low level of self-compassion.¹⁸⁻²⁰

Her risk of experiencing biological and/or psychological symptoms is also influenced by the other four factors: lifestyle, demographics, psychosocial, and sociocultural. For example,

this risk may be due to a lifestyle that includes limited exercise, cigarette smoking, significant alcohol intake and/or being overweight.^{10,19} Demographically it may be due to having lower literacy and education levels^{24,25} and/or their geographical and racial background.⁹ Psychosocially it may be due to a negative attitude toward menopause and/or aging, being under stress, and/or having limited support.¹⁸ Socioculturally, it may be due to unemployment or experiencing workplace issues.²⁴

Recent surveys of women's quality of life during their menopause continuum indicate that they do not always feel good nor function well as they are bothered by biological, psychological, and social symptoms including: dissatisfaction with their personal life, feeling depressed, having difficulties in sleeping, and accomplishing less than before the start of their menopause continuum.^{26,27} The length of time a woman may experience biological and/or psychological symptoms could also impact a woman's wellbeing during her menopause continuum. For women who experience menopause continuum biological and psychological symptoms, it is suggested they are experienced on average for 7.5 years during menopause transition and 4.5 years after a woman's final menstrual period.^{28,29} However, these findings may not be reliable, as there has been no standard approach in measuring and evaluating symptoms, including the efficacy and effectiveness of clinical and non-clinical interventions.^{11,30,31} Finally, it is posited that symptoms may last longer given there is limited cross-sectional data available and postmenopause symptoms are not often followed up.⁹

Conversely, positive experiences for some women are that it is a relief to be in her menopause continuum and embracing the menopause continuum as a normal life transition with no need to be concerned about pregnancy and menstruation postmenopausal.^{6,11} Women's attitude towards her menopause continuum may even be more positive after they have finished it, counter to their perceptions beforehand.³² However, a woman's positive menopause continuum experiences are rarely sought.⁶

The menopause continuum is also not experienced the same worldwide, given the influence of psychosocial and sociocultural factors on a woman's wellbeing.^{7,8} Geographical and racial backgrounds of women appear to determine their likelihood of having symptoms and how they are experienced: the reasons why, in addition to the six factors that may influence every woman's experience, are not yet fully understood.⁹ Further, it is also not experienced the same within a country, as even if women's demographics are similar in other ways, the experience of women who lived through a particular cultural era may not be comparable to a woman from a different generation.¹⁰ Women who migrate to a new country appear to report similar menopause continuum symptoms and attitudes that are dominant in their new country as opposed to their previous country.¹¹

Wellbeing pathways with research suggesting that may alleviate menopausal symptoms at the individual layers include:

- Reducing psychological symptoms through self-compassion³³⁻³⁵, family and social support^{36,37}, practicing yoga^{38,39}, and increasing physical fitness^{35,40}.
- Improving vasomotor and/or urogenital symptoms by practicing yoga³⁸, increasing physical fitness^{35,40}, and self-compassion⁴¹.
- Improving anxiety, fatigue, and sleep through foot massage⁴².

In summary, a woman's menopause continuum is influenced at the individual level by her biological and psychological functioning, demographics, and lifestyle choices. Her menopause continuum is also influenced through her relationships, work and the society and culture in which she lives. The influences of these factors means that every woman's

menopause continuum is unique, acknowledging the multiplicity of individual and socio-factors impacting a woman's menopause continuum that may affect her quality of life.^{5,6}

Recommendations

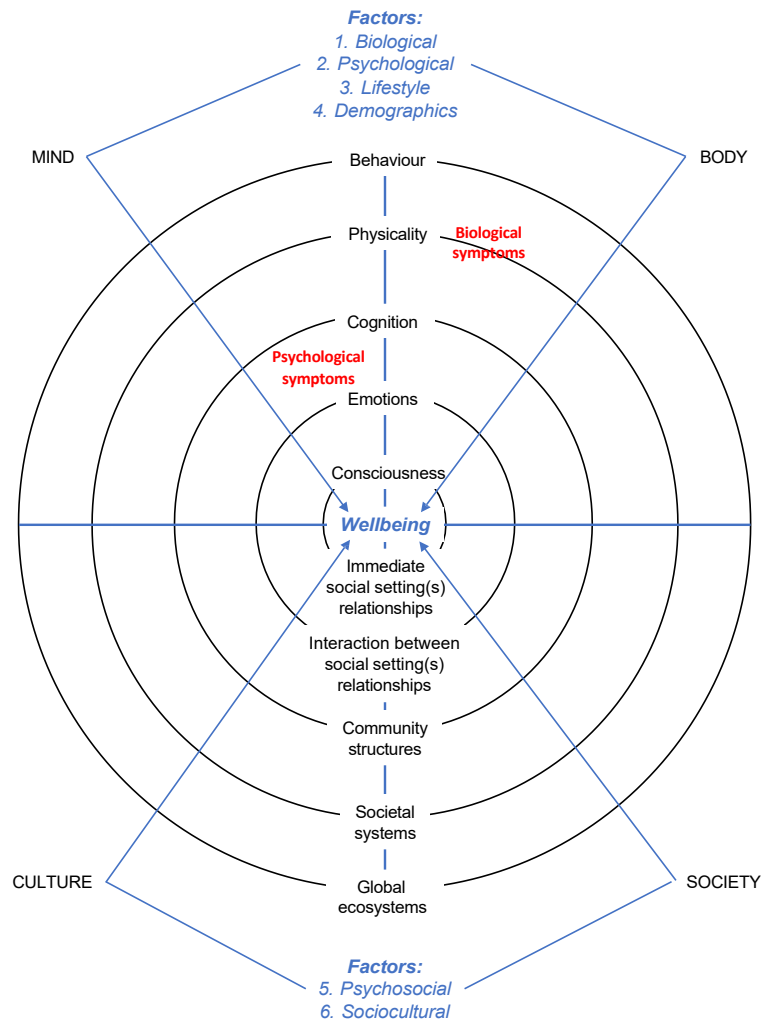
- Capture women's positive menopause continuum experiences and start sharing their stories.
- Ensure that there is a standard approach in measuring and evaluating vasomotor and genitourinary symptoms, including the efficacy and effectiveness of clinical and non-clinical interventions.
- Provide women from 35 onwards information about the menopause continuum to help her support her wellbeing before and during it based on evidence-based information, ensuring it discusses the reasons why each experience is unique due to her biological and psychological functioning, demographics, and lifestyle choices, and influenced through her relationships, work and the society and culture in which she lives.
- Promote evidence-based wellbeing pathways to support wellbeing during the menopause continuum, so that women grow through it rather than just getting surviving and/or being resilient.
- Normalise menopause and destigmatise it through embracing women's aging through promoting that women are valued as they age and that menopause is a natural part of life.
- Women from 35 years of age are eligible for subsidised bone density screening to identify any potential impact on bone loss during menopause continuum and action to address any concerns found.
- Have not-for-profit community-based support groups where all ages and genders can come and discuss all things menopause, as per the pop-up Menopause Cafés (for further information on these Cafés and feedback on their effectiveness in supporting people during menopause, please refer to Appendix A).

Menopausal Continuum Wellbeing Impact on Others Wellbeing

Women's wellbeing is also impacted by, and impacts, the wellbeing of her family, friends, community, and society within which she lives.^{1,4} This interaction is visualised in Figure 2. The first factor, biological, influences, and is influenced by, the physicality layer. The second factor, psychological, influences and, is influenced by, the layers of: consciousness, emotions, cognition, and behaviour levels. Lifestyle and demographic factors influences, and is influenced by, all individual layers. The fifth factor, psychosocial, influences, and is influenced by, the immediate social setting relationships and their interaction. The sixth factor of sociocultural, influences, and is influenced by, the immediate social setting relationship to social systems inclusive.

Figure 2

Multidirectional Influence on Women's and Others Wellbeing During Menopause Continuum



Note. Adapted from “The complex creation of happiness: Multidimensional conditionality in the drivers of happy people and societies,” by T. Lomas and T. J. VanderWeele, 2021, *The Journal of Positive Psychology*, 18(1), p. 19 (<https://doi.org/10.1080/17439760.2021.1991453>).

Recommendations

- Promote evidence-based wellbeing pathways to support wellbeing during the menopause continuum at work, so that women grow through it rather than just getting surviving and/or being resilient.
- Normalise menopause and destigmatise it through embracing women's aging through promoting that women are valued as they age, and that menopause is a natural part of life.
- Provide information on menopause to service businesses who are in close contact with women so they can promote fact and evidence-based menopause information. For example, hairdressers, beauticians, and shop assistants in female focused stores.

- Have not-for-profit community-based support groups where all ages and genders can come and discuss all things menopause, as per the pop-up Menopause Cafés (for further information on these Cafés and feedback on their effectiveness in supporting people during menopause, please refer to Appendix A).

Why Family Wellbeing Needs to be Supported During the Menopause Continuum

It is suggested that a woman's menopause continuum marital satisfaction and attitude towards her menopause continuum is affected positively the more their partner is educated about the menopause continuum.⁴⁴ Research has also shown that high levels of family support decreases a woman's psychological distress during her menopause continuum.³⁶ These points in turn may influence the family's wellbeing during menopause.

There is a dearth of literature on the impact of the menopause continuum on family wellbeing. Yet, in 2021 within Australia there were 5.5 million couples with children and 1 million lone parents with children, where over 800,000 women were the lone parent.⁴⁵ When a woman is in her early forties, she is entering the so called 'sandwich years', where she may enter the menopause continuum, have dependent children, be a carer of elderly parents, be in a relationship, and be working.⁴⁶ In 2021, the Australian median age for a woman to be married is 27.2 years, at separation is 39.1 years, and at divorce is 42.8 years.⁴⁷ Single parent families headed by a woman, of which there were over 800,000 in Australia in 2021⁴⁷, and are often financially vulnerable.⁴⁸

In 2019, the mean age for an Australian woman to have her first child was 29.7.⁴⁹ Australia, a higher income country, has an average age for her natural final menstrual period of 50 years⁵⁰ and, with menopause continuum negative symptoms being experienced on average for 7.5 years prior to her final menstrual period^{28,29}, suggests that the mean age of her first child at commencement of menopause continuum may be 12.8 years. This is the age when children are in early adolescence, a period of biological changes and psychological development and includes sensitivity to stress within the family context.⁵¹

For those women with children, a parent's physical and mental health has been shown to impact the whole of the family system and its functioning, which in turn impacts their children's wellbeing.¹² When a parent is physically and mentally healthy, it is suggested that they have better parenting skills due to more effective emotion regulation, decision making, life satisfaction and stress management, and contributes to supporting child wellbeing.¹² A parent's coping mechanisms and warmth to their children predicts their children's ability to cope and level of wellbeing in adulthood.⁵² Children's mental health is negatively impacted by family conflict and positively associated with the positivity of both parents.⁵³ Parenting beliefs and level of involvement are also different by nationality, culture, and gender.⁵⁴

Single people, including those who are separated, divorced, or widowed, have higher life satisfaction if they have positive relationships with self and others.⁵⁵ These positive relationships also provide reciprocal protective mental health support in helping to mitigate experiences of depression and stress.^{12,56}

Newland¹² identified three interrelated factors are foundational to improving family wellbeing: (a) family members' individual wellbeing; (b) *family self-sufficiency* where a family can meet their own basic needs; and (c) *family resiliency* in which family relationships and personal growth are strengthened through positive management of conflict and stress. This suggests that if a woman's wellbeing is negatively impacted during her menopause continuum, it may negatively impact the wellbeing of her family. So, I suggest that both the

number of family members providing support along with the positive quality of this support shapes a family member's wellbeing, the families wellbeing, and wellbeing of society ^{13,56}.

Recommendations:

- Research the effect on family wellbeing during menopause and identify evidence-based wellbeing pathways to support it both proactively and reactively.
- Provide women from 35 onwards information about the menopause continuum to help her support her wellbeing before and during it based on evidence-based information, ensuring it discusses the reasons why each experience is unique due to her biological and psychological functioning, demographics, and lifestyle choices, and influenced through her relationships, work and the society and culture in which she lives.
- Educate children in high school about menopause.
- Provide evidenced-based information to all families about menopause to destigmatise it. Have this information in multiple languages and culturally appropriate.
- Have information targeted at women's partners about menopause, and this includes same-sex partners.
- Have not-for-profit community based support groups where all ages and genders can come and discuss all things menopause, as per the pop-up Menopause Cafés (for further information on these Cafés and feedback on their effectiveness in supporting people during menopause, please refer to Appendix A).

If you would like to discuss any part of my submission you may contact via

Your sincerely,

Felicity Brazil

Appendix A – Menopause Cafés Overview and Feedback

Pop-up Menopause Cafés (Cafés) are aimed at breaking down the stigma around menopause and increasing awareness of the impact of the menopause on those experiencing it, their family, friends and their colleagues are held both face-to-face and online. The Cafés are a discussion group, open to all ages and genders: no talks, no experts, topics are chosen by participants, and discussions are confidential.

The Menopause Café is a UK charity, and the movement started in Perth, Scotland, in 2017. The charity also organises an annual Menopause Festival, #FlushFest.

Rachel Weiss, founder of the Menopause Café charity, says, “The Menopause Café is for everyone who wants to talk about the menopause, to share their stories, experiences and questions - all made that little bit easier with tea and cake.

“Unfortunately, many people feel that they should just ‘get on with’ the menopause, with some never talking to their friends or family about it. People can come along and just listen, or join in the discussions, hopefully leaving with a clearer sense of the impact of the menopause on those who are experiencing it, alongside their families, friends and colleagues.”

Kirsty Wark, patron of the Menopause Café Charity, says “I am delighted to be a patron of this charity which is dedicated to get everyone talking about the menopause. This is the way to a healthier, happier future”.

The Menopause Café Charity creates spaces for conversations about menopause, to normalise this transition stage by:

- Supporting volunteers worldwide who host pop-up Menopause Café events, open to all regardless of age or gender. People, often strangers, meet online or in person, to drink tea, eat cake and talk menopause. There are no speakers or experts.
- Holding in the UK an annual Menopause Festival, #FlushFest, with medical speakers, entertainment and a range of creative workshops, where participants can learn and laugh together, finding their tribe.

Public Menopause Cafés worldwide include:

- USA: Connecticut, California, San Francisco Bay
- Australia: Canberra, New South Wales, South Australia
- Austria: Steiermark
- Canada: Alberta, Winnipeg
- Switzerland: Bern
- Spain: Tenerife
- Northern Ireland: Belfast, Larne
- Wales: Carmarthen, Cardiff
- England: Exeter, London, Nottingham, Crewe, Chester, Lichfield
- Scotland: Perth, Dundee, Dunkeld, Glasgow

In 2022-2023 there were 360 cafes with approximately 3600 attendees.

Feedback from Menopause Cafés from around the world include:

- **The First Minister of Scotland, Nicola Sturgeon**, when attending Menopause Café Perth in October 2022 said:
 - “When I was growing up, I didn’t know much – if anything – about the menopause. It was shrouded in mystery because women didn’t tend to talk about it.
 - “Now, I understand that is partly because of the stigma women face when admitting they are going through the menopause – as well as the vulnerability that comes when we start experiencing symptoms
 - “I can’t think of a better place to come to have a frank and informative discussion about the menopause than a Menopause Cafe
 - “The idea behind these fantastic events is so important as we work towards normalising these important conversations.”
- **Canberra – February 2024**
 - Learned a lot, feel a bit calmer about facing menopause!
 - Great session with people very generous with sharing their experiences and knowledge.
 - Wonderful to have the opportunity to chat with others.
 - It’s so good to hear other people’s experience and knowing that some also have the same experience.
 - Host Felicity is great. Wonderful open and knowledgeable person. Group sessions were wonderful to hear about other experiences. Everyone felt very safe to share their stories.
- **Burntwood Café, Sept 2023**

I can't express enough how much this group made me feel like I wasn't alone, even after I cafe. This should be on the NHS!!
- **Highland Council Menopause Café at Work**

Living in a remote area I really appreciated this was an online event as I usually cannot attend anything due to my location. Thanks for organising it.
- **RAF Wyton, Huntingdon Menopause Cafe**

In a secure government location, we often feel isolated from the real world so using the Menopause Cafe name and principles gave us an opportunity to have a direct connection with a civilian organisation.
- **Menopause Café Dersingham February 23**

It is so hard to describe how this made me feel. I was really, really apprehensive about going and didn't want to be there once i got there - BUT - I felt so liberated for going. I am so glad I went. It really MADE me take time out to look inwards at me (even though we were all there for each other too
- **Geraldine Norris, Feb 2023**

I wanted to let you know I found Menopause Cafe when I needed it most 5 years ago. I went on to host Menopause Cafe Blackwood for 4 years. I am

so grateful to you and all those I've encountered at Menopause Cafe over the years.

- **December 2022 from a man.**

“I was surprised at the stories shared and it raised my awareness of the issues my wife had been going through.”

- **Menopause Café Chiddingfold Nov 2022**

I was slightly late to the café, having come from work and walked into a circle of women. The café was like a beacon of warmth. The first words I heard were from a woman who piped up 'We're talking about vaginas!' I replied - 'what else is there to talk about!' and the group erupted with glee at the openness and warmth and safety of the conversation and atmosphere. I lead a University Menopause Network and am working hard to address issues of menopause across the Higher Education Sector in Universities, and feel that this work is not only about policy, workforce support and good treatment, it's about women feeling able to share without judgement, breaking down the taboos and building confidence about the services available to them and be helped to thrive and find a positive roadmap through these potentially challenging years.

- **Capita Menopause Café at Work, hosted by a male employee, inspired by Moira's MCs at SSE**

- The session was superb. It was very useful to hear about other ladies experiences & strategies on coping with both perimenopause and menopause. I felt quite empowered and a tad emotional at the end of the session as it made me feel so not 'alone' with my body and minds way of dealing with its journey
- Sense of relief in hearing from nearly 100 fellow employees at Capita, all experiencing similar symptoms to me and the chance to hear their stories.
- Such a fabulous idea and I hope the first of many sessions - thanks to all who organised this.
- I can't begin to say how insightful and powerful the session was with women sharing their experiences and not feeling so alone. It was empowering to realise that there are shared experiences and that you are not going mad. It also made me realise that some symptoms were due to the menopause that I hadn't realised were menopausal symptoms eg itchy skin. Such a positive, well run session that made a massive impact on my personal mental wellbeing. Thank you
- I found the The Menopause Cafe so beneficial and important as it highlighted that what I am experiencing and going through, I was not alone. It took 4 years of going to the GP only to be told constantly that I was too young to be Peri-menopausal and finally getting diagnosed at the age of 43.
- I think it is fantastic that Capita is providing guidance and supporting colleagues experiencing menopausal and peri-menopausal symptoms.
- Really lovely to connect to other women at work that are dealing with menopause symptoms and some really good links and suggestions. Good to know that my employer is recognising the impact on women at work.

This is an incredible addition to the wellbeing support we have on offer throughout the business.

- **Crystal Palace in London**

Hi! Hope you are well 🥰

Me and a friend attended one of your menopause cafes (Crystal Palace in London) a few months ago.

At the time we were both hugely struggling.

I had had a hysterectomy at 41 and my friend had gone through a break down and had recently discovered it was due to peri menopause.

We came away feeling so much better and honestly believe it was the push we both needed to get all the help we needed.

We are now both in a much happier, healthier place enjoying all aspects of life again after seeking the help that we needed and making lifestyle changes.

So we want to now thank you for encouraging us and give back.

So in March we are planning to host a menopause cafe as part of the telegraph hill festival.

We are really nervous and would love if you could guide us in any way you can.



- **Menopause Café York, April 2023**

- I feel much more reassured and less alone. It was great to hear others speak about their experiences at different stages.
- Thanks so much to Kirsty for organising and for her fabulous energy and passion for these events!
- Had a rough week at work and this just made me feel so much happier - so nice to speak with like-minded people
- Feeling More positive about the menopause. Had a really nice time ,looking forward to the next one

- **Royal Wootton Bassett, Wiltshire - July 2023**

- Reaching out and meeting other ladies experiencing some of the same experiences/impacts of menopause.
- Getting to know a face, or a few, in the area as moved and need to build a life here - really difficult when you aren't doing school drop offs anymore or working locally! Difficult to know where to start! I was so nervous but put my big girl pants on, and was made to feel welcome immediately - Lou was so friendly and funny. Made me feel part of the group immediately.

- **Ashford Kent - September 2023**

I'm glad it wasn't a session where women were all negative and moaning about menopause. We as a generation need to change that attitude, and not view it as such a negative part of our life.

- **East Kilbride - September 2023**

- To feel involved as part of a group of some lovely women with varied backgrounds who share similar & sometimes horrendous experiences who have great knowledge & tips on how to better manage the Menopause

- Vivarri (lady running the group) is very informative & kind. You can see her passion in helping others have a better understanding of the Menopause & support available. She has a great way with people, also Karen who made Tea's & coffee is super nice & all made to feel very welcome & part of the group. Thank you.

Further information about Menopause Café charity may be found at:

- www.menopausecafe.net
- Facebook <https://www.facebook.com/menocafe17/>
- Twitter and Instagram @Menopause_Cafe
- LinkedIn <https://www.linkedin.com/company/71500453/admin/>

In Canberra, the face-to-face Menopause Cafés are held on the first Saturday of every month, and the online Cafés on the first Tuesday of every month where anyone from anywhere is welcome to join. Further information on the Menopause Cafés in Canberra may be found through:

- menopausecafecanberra@gmail.com
- Instagram: [@menopausecafecanberra](https://www.instagram.com/menopausecafecanberra)
- Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/groups/menopausecafecanberra>

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