

Menopause matters™

Winter 2023 £5.99

Checking the noise around HRT

Are women getting the right message?

MENOPAUSE
AND YOUR
MENTAL HEALTH

EXERCISES
FOR YOUR
HEART

FEELING
BONE
TIRED?

Building bone
strength tips

FINDING
YOUR
COMMUNITY

Are you coping
and confident?

Hands up how many of us
are struggling with our
confidence right now? Well,
you're not alone

NOW A 116
PAGE ISSUE!

ACCEPTANCE
COMPASSION
CREATIVITY

Some quiet
antidotes in a
noisy world

PAUSE
FOR
THOUGHT

A NEW
NEUROSCIENCE
SERIES

YOUR VAGINA
AND BLADDER
HEALTH

+ PLUS...

Winding Down for Winter
Dr Currie's Casebook
Café Culture
and much more...

Heart health

why it's a top priority
for women in midlife



Menopause

and Mental Health

Menopause is a natural biological process marking the end of a woman's reproductive years. While physical symptoms like night sweats and weight gain often take the spotlight, the impact on our mental health is an aspect that tends to be overlooked.

The hormonal fluctuations during menopause can have profound effects on a woman's emotional well-being.

Amanda Jane, a counsellor and advocate for women's health and well-being told Menopause Matters: "I know firsthand how the rollercoaster of hormonal changes during menopause can lead to mood swings, anxiety, and even depression.

"Fluctuating estrogen levels play a pivotal role in regulating neurotransmitters like serotonin, which is closely associated with mood. As estrogen levels

decline, so can serotonin, contributing to mood disturbances. The psychological toll of menopause can be as significant as the physical challenges, and addressing our mental health becomes paramount for overall well-being

"One common mental health aspect that surfaces during menopause is the increased vulnerability to anxiety. Hormonal imbalances can trigger or exacerbate anxiety symptoms, leaving some women navigating not only physical discomfort but also the unsettling terrain of anxious thoughts and feelings. Recognising and addressing these mental health challenges is vital for holistic menopausal care.

"Depression, too, can be an unwelcome companion during menopause. The hormonal changes, coupled with societal expectations and personal perceptions can contribute to a sense of loss and identity shift.





Acknowledging these emotional struggles and seeking appropriate support is crucial for managing mental health effectively.

"It's imperative to shift the narrative surrounding menopause to encompass both physical and mental well-being. Counselling, support groups, and open conversations can provide a platform for women to share their experiences and receive validation for the emotional journey they're navigating. By acknowledging and addressing the mental health aspects of menopause, we can empower women to face this life transition with resilience and a more comprehensive understanding of their health."

Amanda Jane is a fully qualified Integrative counsellor with a Diploma in Therapeutic Counselling from the CPCAB and is an Individual Member of BACP (British Association For Counselling and Psychotherapy). She adheres to its Code of Ethics to provide a safe, confidential and non-judgmental environment. She has experience across a range of issues including depression, anxiety, loneliness, abandonment, relationship issues, low self-esteem, anger and issues related to trauma. Alongside her private practice she is also volunteers as a school counsellor, supporting young people.

www.therapywithamandajane.co.uk

Mind is a registered charity, which provides advice and support to empower anyone experiencing a mental health problem. It campaigns to improve services, raise awareness and promote understanding.

In a blog on Mind's website, Gillian blogged about her mental health during her menopause transition.

I started the perimenopause aged 42, and the symptoms increased during the following 6 years. I hadn't had children naturally – my three beautiful sons, now adults, are all adopted. I'd always had regular periods and been lucky not to suffer badly. Suddenly they were heavy, with bad Pre-Menstrual Syndrome and increasing discomfort, sometimes lasting weeks. Then the real fun started. Poor sleep – I'd wake with my heart racing or my bladder fizzing.



"As the menopause closed in, I often felt very low. My anxiety levels were through the roof. I ached, I was nauseous. I went to the doctors a couple of times. Once when I was worried about bleeding and lower back pain but was reassured by a scan. And once when the anxiety was very high.

My 2 younger boys are both non-verbal autistic, and as a carer mum, I struggled at times. My husband worked away a lot and I lived away from my family. I could feel quite isolated. Having lost my mum in my 30s, I think I would have sold my soul for a phone call at this point.

"My husband and I separated after 28 years and my life was turned upside down. My middle son with learning difficulties also hit a really bad time, non verbal, 16 and hormones raging. I felt at my lowest physically and mentally. I tried so hard to value who I was, but it proved impossible. After an incident with my son, a wonderful teacher at his school told me to go to the doctors immediately and not leave till I got help.

"I was prescribed antidepressants which I took for 18 months and then came off under GP supervision. I also had some counselling, and very slowly started to feel myself again. My friends and family were so supportive and I feel incredibly lucky to have had that. I made sure I did things for me, from the simplest things like walking my dog to a glass of wine and a good old natter with friends. I even dated. Dear lord it was a whole new world out there!

"I'm 53, post menopausal and feel in the best shape of my life mentally. I'm my own fairytale ending."

Having retrained as a counsellor, I then applied at the ripe old age of 52 to do my first degree, in psychology. I love my counselling work. It's so varied, but I have worked with a lot of menopausal women who are struggling. It's become a passion of mine, and I'm making plans to start a support group. I want to finish my degree and do a doctorate.

I'm 53, post-menopausal and feel in the best shape of my life mentally. I'm my own fairytale ending. **I**

For more information visit mind.org.uk where you can find a wealth of information and support about all aspects of mental health.