

Canva Presentation: <https://canva.link/world-menopause-day>

Customisable Canva Presentation: <https://canva.link/hy5068oh81lhy4i>

Part 1. Before you read anything else, what's your instinct? Are you for, against, or not sure? Tell your partner why, in a sentence or two.

Should workplaces be legally required to provide formal support for menopause?

Part 2. Read the statements below. Which feel true for you?

- I could name at least three physical symptoms of menopause before this lesson.
- I've heard menopause discussed openly at work or in my social circle.
- I think men generally know less about menopause than women do.
- I'd feel comfortable bringing up menopause in a work conversation.
- I think older women are sometimes treated differently once people know they're going through menopause.
- I've noticed more public conversation about menopause in the last few years.

Part 3. Read the following overview of the debate. It presents both sides fairly.

Menopause affects roughly half the population, usually in their late forties or early fifties, yet for decades it barely came up at work, or anywhere else in public life. That is changing quickly. Public figures now talk openly about hot flushes and brain fog, and a growing number of companies offer menopause policies, flexible hours, or simple things like desk fans. Whether any of this should be written into law is where people start to disagree.

Supporters of formal workplace support argue that menopause is a health issue like any other, and that treating it as one is simply catching up with decades of silence. They point to research linking unsupported symptoms to reduced hours, missed promotions, and women leaving the workforce altogether, often at the peak of their experience.

Sceptics are not against menopause being taken seriously. They question whether a legal mandate is the right tool. Singling out one biological stage, they argue, could create awkward disclosure requirements, or quietly reinforce the idea that older women are a problem to be managed. A more general approach to flexibility, in this view, would help everyone, menopause or not, without drawing a line around one group.

Both sides agree the old silence was not working. They disagree about what should replace it.

Part 4. Answer the following questions about the text.

1. What is the strongest argument FOR legally required workplace support?
2. What is the strongest argument AGAINST it?
3. What do both sides agree on, even though they disagree on the solution?

1. Menopause is a health issue and formal support corrects decades of silence; unsupported symptoms are linked to reduced hours, missed promotions and women leaving the workforce.

2. A legal mandate may not be the right tool – it could single out one group, create awkward disclosure requirements, or reinforce the idea that older women are a problem to be managed.

3. Both sides agree the old silence wasn't working – they disagree on what should replace it.

Part 5. Look at the expressions below. You will use these to debate the question, whichever side you're on.**Hedging and conceding a point**

It could be argued that... — It could be argued that silence has done more harm than any policy could.

I take your point, but... — I take your point, but that doesn't mean the law is the right tool.

That's fair, however... — That's fair, however, I still think something formal is necessary.

To some extent, yes, but... — To some extent, yes, but it's more complicated than that.

Disagreeing respectfully

I'd push back on that a little... — I'd push back on that a little; not every workplace can offer the same thing.

Where I'd disagree is... — Where I'd disagree is the idea that flexibility alone is enough.

That assumes... — That assumes every employer would act in good faith without a legal requirement.

Building and concluding

Building on that... — Building on that, you could say the same logic applies to other health conditions.

The evidence suggests... — The evidence suggests women who get support stay in senior roles longer.

On balance, I think... — On balance, I think the law should set a minimum, even if it's not perfect.

Part 6. Complete the exchange with a phrase from Part 5. There is one extra phrase.

Building on that · The evidence suggests · It could be argued that · That assumes · On balance · I take your point

A: I think companies should be legally required to support menopause at work.

B: **I take your point**, but doesn't that risk singling people out?

A: **It could be argued that** some kind of formal recognition matters after decades of silence.

B: **That assumes** that not every business can afford the same policies.

A: **Building on that**, smaller companies could get support to help them adapt.

B: **On balance**, I think you're right that something has to change.

Part 7. Now debate the question properly.

Stage 1 — Prepare:

In small groups, you'll be assigned FOR or AGAINST the question, regardless of your real opinion. Use the text and today's language to prepare two or three strong points.

Stage 2 — Present:

Present your position to a group with the opposite assignment. Use at least three phrases from Part 5.

Stage 3 — Open the floor:

Drop your assigned position. Discuss freely: what do you actually think?

Reflection

Having heard the other side, where do you actually land? Complete the sentences in your own words.

1. Before this lesson, my instinct was... Now, I think...
2. The strongest argument I heard from the other side was...
3. One reason people avoid this conversation, in general, is...
4. Something I'd say differently after today is...