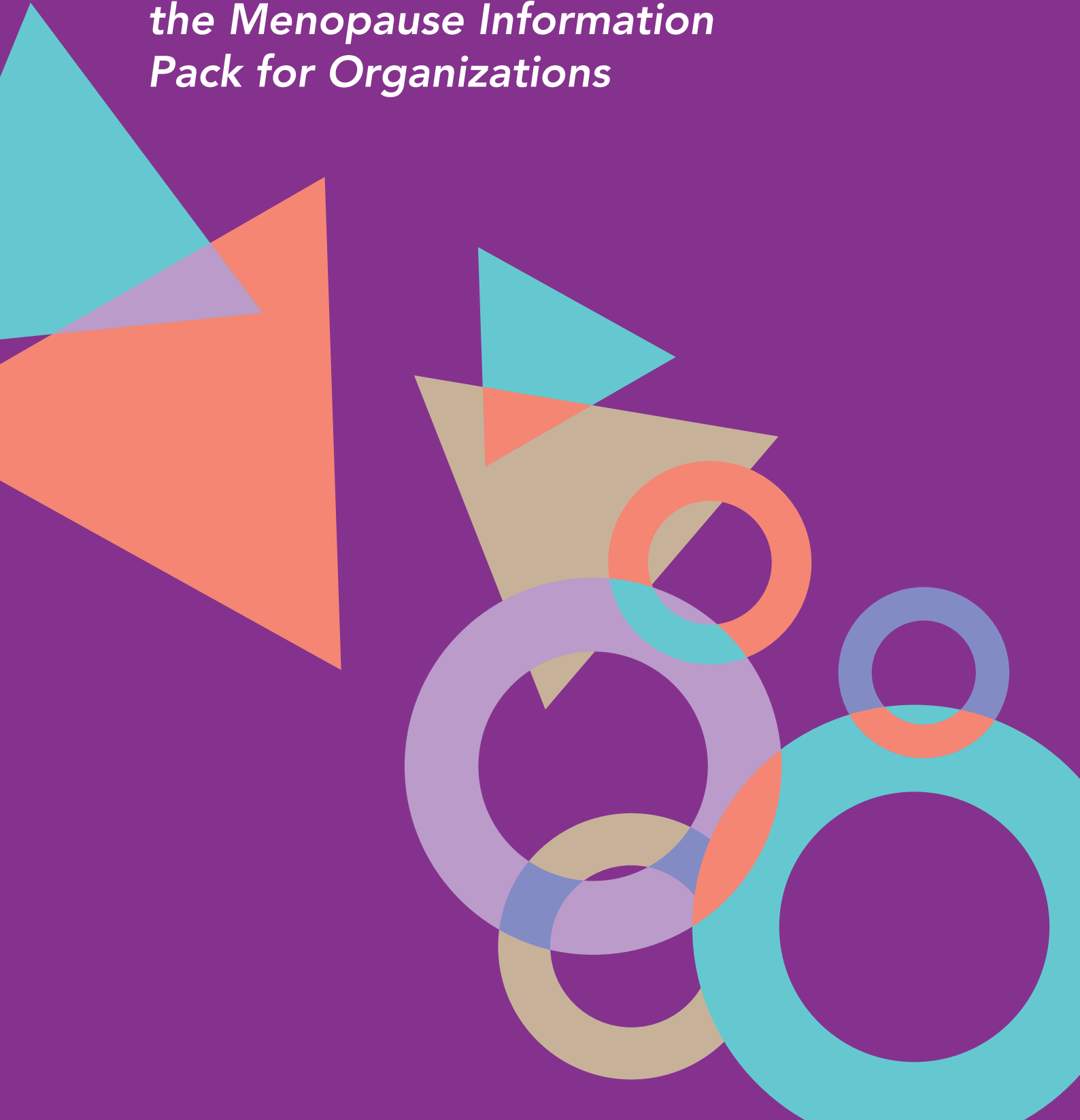


# MIP

Menopause Information Pack  
for Organizations



## **Welcome to MIPO:** *the Menopause Information Pack for Organizations*



## Introduction

Menopause is a natural stage in a woman's life, yet it remains a taboo, especially in workplaces. It is time to change this.

Many women experiencing menopausal transition, referred to in this pack as 'menopause' will care for their own symptoms, and consider it a private matter. But we believe there is an important role for employers to play in supporting women by providing an enabling and productive work environment without shame, fear or embarrassment.

For working women, menopause may be uneventful and have little impact on a woman's working or home life. For others, however, symptoms such as hot flushes and night sweats, sleep disturbance, itchiness, heavy or unpredictable menstrual bleeding, and anxiety/low confidence, can be debilitating and may have a severe impact on work.

The workplace has many aspects that may make those symptoms worse – hot and stuffy offices, inflexible work roles, or cultures that stigmatise or shame to name a few. As so few organizations have explicit guidelines, policies or management training on menopause, working women may feel they have no-one that can support them at work. These factors may combine with the many other competing demands on women at midlife (e.g., caring responsibilities for children or elderly parents, health concerns) to create an acutely stressful time.

Similarly, managers and supervisors, particularly those at the line-management level may be unclear about how they can support and enable women who disclose their experience of menopause in the workplace. Given that menopause is still a taboo subject in society, it is unsurprising few managers know how to talk about menopause and fear causing offence or saying the wrong thing.

Menopause is not only an important occupational health and workplace equality issue but presents an opportunity to demonstrate support and investment in your female workforce – a vital part of retaining and developing talent over 50 in your workplace.

This pack provides the first step on a journey towards making your organization menopause-ready by:

- encouraging the development of menopause-sensitive organizational policies and practices;
- providing information and tips for training your leaders and line managers to be menopause-savvy;
- creating working environments that are menopause-friendly in which women can thrive and easily access the support they need.

### **What is MIPO? How can organizations and managers use it?**

MIPO is a free resource for organizations developed by internationally renowned researchers and experts that is based on a growing evidence-base, research, and available guidelines surrounding menopause and work. It aims to raise awareness, provide information and generate behaviours and forms of communication that will improve organizations' and managers' knowledge and confidence to support menopause at work.

MIPO is designed to form part of a holistic approach which provides the opportunity to easily embed considerations surrounding menopause into existing strategies and practices in workplaces. We believe this is a more productive and inclusive approach than generating a stand-alone 'menopause management' policy.

*MIPO consists of three sets of materials outlined below.*

### **'MENOPAUSE-SENSITIVE POLICIES' RESOURCES**

#### **Why is menopause a workplace issue?**

Menopausal transition is emerging as an important workplace issue. Here we provide five compelling reasons why it should be on your organization's agenda.

#### **Healthcheck tool of existing policies**

This awareness raising tool is primarily aimed at leaders and senior managers in organizations. You can use it to quickly assess how menopause-aware your current organizational policies are, identify gaps in provision across a variety of areas and consider how to take the next steps.

#### **Strategic decisions for menopause supportive workplaces**

We offer an outline of key strategic considerations for organizations wishing to integrate menopause support into their working environment. Vital questions include: What are the focus and intended outcomes of your strategy? Who will own and be accountable for it? How will it be evaluated?

#### **Training decisions for menopause supportive workplaces**

We offer an outline of key considerations relating to the development and delivery of training for line managers, senior managers and co-workers on menopause at work. It focuses on vital questions of content, delivery and timing.

### **MENOPAUSE-SAVVY MANAGER' RESOURCES**

#### **What to expect when you are (not) expecting the menopause: A guide for managers**

This provides a basic overview of key aspects of the menopause (e.g., common symptoms), and its relationship

to the workplace. It can be used to provide some basic information about menopause in general, as well as incorporated into a business case for showing why supporting menopause in the workplace is important for all organizations.

### **Creative conversations for line managers and supervisors**

Research consistently tells us that line managers play a vital role in promoting a menopause-friendly workplace. We have written this short guide for managers or supervisors who may have subordinates that are going through menopause.

The aim is to raise their awareness, provide knowledge about the relationship between menopause and work, and offer practical advice on how to have creative and caring conversations on this sensitive issue.

### **Working through menopausal transition: A collaborative tool for line managers and employees**

A practical way of helping women and their managers work towards providing an enabling and supportive work environment. These forms can be downloaded and adapted to suit your workplaces particular needs, and also include an example of how you might work through the form together.

## **'MENOPAUSE-FRIENDLY ENVIRONMENTS' RESOURCES**

### **Experiencing peri-/menopause: Women's stories**

Women in midlife and older often feel invisible, or afraid to disclose their menopausal status and what they are going through. But it is vital that leaders and managers develop understanding and empathy on this topic so that they can create a non-judgmental and open environment for women.

We believe in the power of women's own words as a way of educating and informing about menopause in the workplace. These thought-provoking quotations from women who took part in our research studies provide first-hand accounts of their experience of menopause at work. They can be used to prompt personal reflection or discussion amongst managers, and potentially between managers and subordinates, and as part of management training.

### **Menopause support posters**

We have created these simple posters to promote the name of the contact person with your organization for questions about how to access support for menopause.

### **Menopause reasonable adjustments**

The principles of reasonable adjustment (or accommodation) are a good starting point for supporting menopausal transitions. We offer examples of reasonable adjustments, and broader advice about how to be collaborative, responsive, proactive and strategic in agreeing and implementing them.

### **Menopause and absence from work**

We offer advice on how organizations and managers might factor menopause into their sickness absence policies, procedures and systems.

### ***In addition we have also included some background resources***

#### **Glossary**

We provide easy-to-understand definitions of key terms relating to menopause, medicine and work.

### **Further information and resources on menopausal transition**

We have collated in one place a selection of information and sources of support and advice about menopause available to women in Australia, New Zealand, USA, Canada, Europe and the UK.

Please read our disclaimer at the end of this document in association with these recommendations on how to use MIPO.

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## **WHO ARE WE?**

We are an interdisciplinary team of academic researchers and clinicians based in Australia and the UK. As leading international authorities on menopause in the workplace, we have been developing evidence that specifically relates to women's experience of menopause in a work setting. As well as invitations to present our work internationally, we have provided regular commentary on TV, radio and newspaper interviews, newspaper columns, and videos for professional organizations to raise awareness of this topic.

We have a track record of working with research partners in Australia (La Trobe University) and overseas (King's College London, University of Nottingham, UK; Yale University, USA), and collaborating with organizational partners in a range of sectors including health and education.

For more information on how to contact us, please see the 'Approaches to menopause support training' page.

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