

# Perimenopause in the Workplace: The Next Blind Spot in Performance Strategies?

Organizations have been investing in diversity and inclusion for years. And yet, one topic remain largely avoided.



A discreet, uncomfortable, sometimes taboo subject: perimenopause and menopause.

## The elephant in the room.

This silence is not neutral. It comes at a cost.

## A transition affecting the core of leadership

Perimenopause and menopause do not affect “early-career” Talents.

They concern experienced women, often in key positions: leadership, strategic expertise, governance, and knowledge sharing and mentoring.

It is precisely at this stage of professional maturity, when influence is strong and value creation is at its peak, that the following may emerge:

- fluctuations in energy
- sleep disturbances

- a heightened and persistent sense of cognitive overload
- a reassessment of one’s relationship to work and priorities

Reducing this phase to a purely medical issue is a mistake still too often made by organizations.

What is at stake runs deeper: a rebalancing of multiple dimensions: physical, psychological, identity-related, and professional.

And any major transition left unsupported brings a degree of fragility, here, an invisible vulnerability.

Some realities in Switzerland due to perimenopausal symptoms <sup>(1)</sup> :

- **20%** of women scale back their working hours
- **16%** switch employers
- **13%** step away from their careers
- **1 in 3** are affected at work
- **40%** fear repercussions on their professional future
- **47%** hide their symptoms

## An organizational risk: silent disengagement

In companies where the topic remains taboo, the effects do not disappear. They shift. They take the form of:

- gradual withdrawal from responsibilities

- self-censorship, with a direct impact on decision-making
- reduced self-confidence and visibility
- chronic fatigue that is often misinterpreted
- early departures or constrained repositioning.

For HR leaders and executive committees, the stakes are clear: losing - or seeing self-limitation among senior female - represents a major strategic risk.

This is not a matter of comfort. It is about continuity of career paths and the preservation of critical talent capital.

## A natural extension of DEI policies

Organizations have made progress in enabling women’s access to leadership roles. The next step is to secure longevity in those roles.

A mature DEI (Diversity, Equity & Inclusion) policy does not stop at entry into leadership. It supports employees throughout their entire lifecycle.

Integrating perimenopause and menopause into HR strategy means:

- aligning DEI commitments with real career trajectories
- normalizing complex life transitions
- strengthening psychological safety

- improving retention of strategic talents.

### Turning this transition into a performance driver

The goal is not to medicalize the workplace or to open a new activist front.

It is to support natural transitions (regardless of gender) with the same rigor applied to any critical career phase.

This may involve, for example:

- creating safe spaces for dialogue, including access to individual coaching
- raising awareness among managers to prevent misinterpretation
- improving understanding of signals within teams to better adapt management practices
- integrating the topic coherently into health and talent policies.

The true strength of this approach lies at the intersection of individual support, organizational health, and talent development.

### Supporting these transitions

Supporting these personal transitions makes it possible to:

- secure career paths during this period, because there is a meaningful “after”
- sustain long-term engagement (particularly as senior talent is increasingly valuable)
- strengthen managerial maturity across the organization
- transform a potentially destabilizing period into an opportunity for strategic repositioning.

### A leadership issue

The question is no longer: Should we talk about menopause in the workplace?

But rather: *Can we still afford to ignore it?*

Organizations that actively address this topic - UK being a leading example of best practices - send a strong signal: they are capable of integrating human realities into their performance model.

Isn't the ability to address difficult topics what ultimately distinguishes short-term-driven organizations from those building sustainable performance?

### What about you?

How does your organization support these transitions?

Let's take a closer look at your situation together.

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#### <sup>(1)</sup> Sources :

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