



TRAUMA & MENOPAUSE

UNDERSTANDING THE HIDDEN CONNECTION

Menopause is more than a hormonal transition. Past experiences can influence how your body and nervous system respond.

MENOPAUSE CAN BRING MANY CHALLENGES



Hot flashes & night sweats



Anxiety & overwhelm



Poor sleep



Mood changes



Brain fog & forgetfulness



Fatigue & low energy



Body aches & chronic pain



Sexual discomfort



For women with a history of trauma, these symptoms can feel more intense and overwhelming. Past experiences don't cause menopause, but they can influence how the body and nervous system respond.



WHAT THE RESEARCH TELLS US

Growing evidence shows that past trauma and stress can impact menopausal symptoms and wellbeing.

- ✓ Childhood physical or sexual abuse is linked to more frequent hot flashes and night sweats.
- ✓ Adverse childhood experiences are linked to greater overall menopausal symptom burden.
- ✓ Women with trauma histories often report greater difficulties with sexual health in midlife.
- ✓ PTSD symptoms are linked to more severe menopausal symptoms.
- ✓ Long-term stressors (abuse, financial hardship) may predict poorer menopausal wellbeing decades later.



2024 review: Trauma-related difficulties and reproductive ageing influence each other in a two-way relationship.



UNDERSTANDING TRAUMA

According to SAMHSA, trauma is:

"An event, series of events, or set of circumstances experienced as physically or emotionally harmful or life-threatening, with lasting effects on wellbeing and functioning."

TRAUMA CAN INCLUDE:

- | | |
|-------------------|--------------------------|
| Childhood neglect | Loss of a parent |
| Emotional abuse | Divorce |
| Physical abuse | Financial hardship |
| Sexual abuse | Medical trauma |
| Domestic violence | Serious illness |
| Bullying | Rejection or abandonment |
| Chronic criticism | |



Not everyone develops PTSD, but many carry the lasting emotional and physiological effects.



TYPES OF TRAUMA



ACUTE TRAUMA

A single overwhelming event such as an accident, assault, serious illness or sudden loss.



CHRONIC TRAUMA

Repeated exposure to stressful experiences over time such as ongoing bullying, long-term caregiving stress or living in an unsafe environment.



COMPLEX TRAUMA

Repeated and inescapable experiences over long periods such as childhood abuse, neglect, long-term domestic violence or ongoing emotional abuse. May affect self-worth, relationships, emotional regulation, identity and sense of safety.



INTERPERSONAL TRAUMA

Occurs within relationships and affects trust, attachment and connection with others—especially relevant during menopause.

WHY MENOPAUSE CAN REACTIVATE OLD WOUNDS



Menopause often brings:

- Physical & emotional change
- Shifts in identity & roles
- Changes in relationships
- Grief & loss
- Ageing
- Increased caregiving responsibilities
- Career transitions

Menopause also brings unfamiliar body sensations:



Heat surges & sweating



Racing heartbeat



Fatigue



Pain & body aches



Sleep disruption



Memory lapses



Emotional fluctuations



For women with trauma histories, these sensations can feel similar to past survival responses, causing the nervous system to react as if danger is present. This can lead to unresolved trauma resurfacing during menopause.

A WHOLE-PERSON EXPERIENCE

Menopause affects every part of you.



A trauma-informed approach brings compassion, understanding and new pathways for healing.

FINAL THOUGHTS



- ♥ You are not alone. There is nothing "wrong" with you.
- ♥ Your symptoms are real. They are not signs of weakness.
- ♥ Understanding is the first step toward healing.
- ♥ Your story and experiences matter.
- ♥ With the right support, menopause can become a time of healing, growth and renewed wellbeing.

*You are not broken.
You are becoming.*



6
PART
SERIES

THIS IS THE FIRST ARTICLE IN OUR 6-PART SERIES

Each blog will build on this foundation to help you understand the deeper connections between trauma, stress, hormones and whole-person healing.



Trauma & Menopause
(You are here)



Why Trauma Can Magnify Menopausal Symptoms



Stress, Cortisol & Hormones: The Hidden Connection



Trauma, Sleep, Anxiety & Mood During Menopause



Body Image, Sexual Health & Intimacy After Trauma



Healing & Support: Naturopathic & Lifestyle Approaches



Healing is about understanding what your body has been trying to communicate all along.

*Be gentle. Be kind.
Be patient with you. ♥*



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