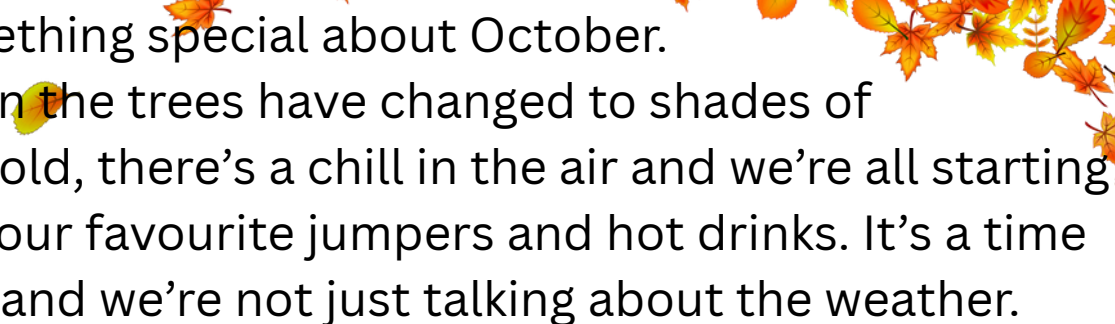



Embracing Change

A decorative border of autumn leaves in shades of orange, yellow, and red, arranged in a curved path along the right side of the text.

There's something special about October. The leaves on the trees have changed to shades of amber and gold, there's a chill in the air and we're all starting to reach for our favourite jumpers and hot drinks. It's a time of change – and we're not just talking about the weather.

This month, we're shining a light on menopause as part of Menopause Awareness Month. It's something that affects so many of us, directly or indirectly, and we believe it's important to talk about it openly, kindly, and without fuss. Whether we're experiencing it ourselves or supporting someone who is, understanding menopause helps us all feel more connected and informed.

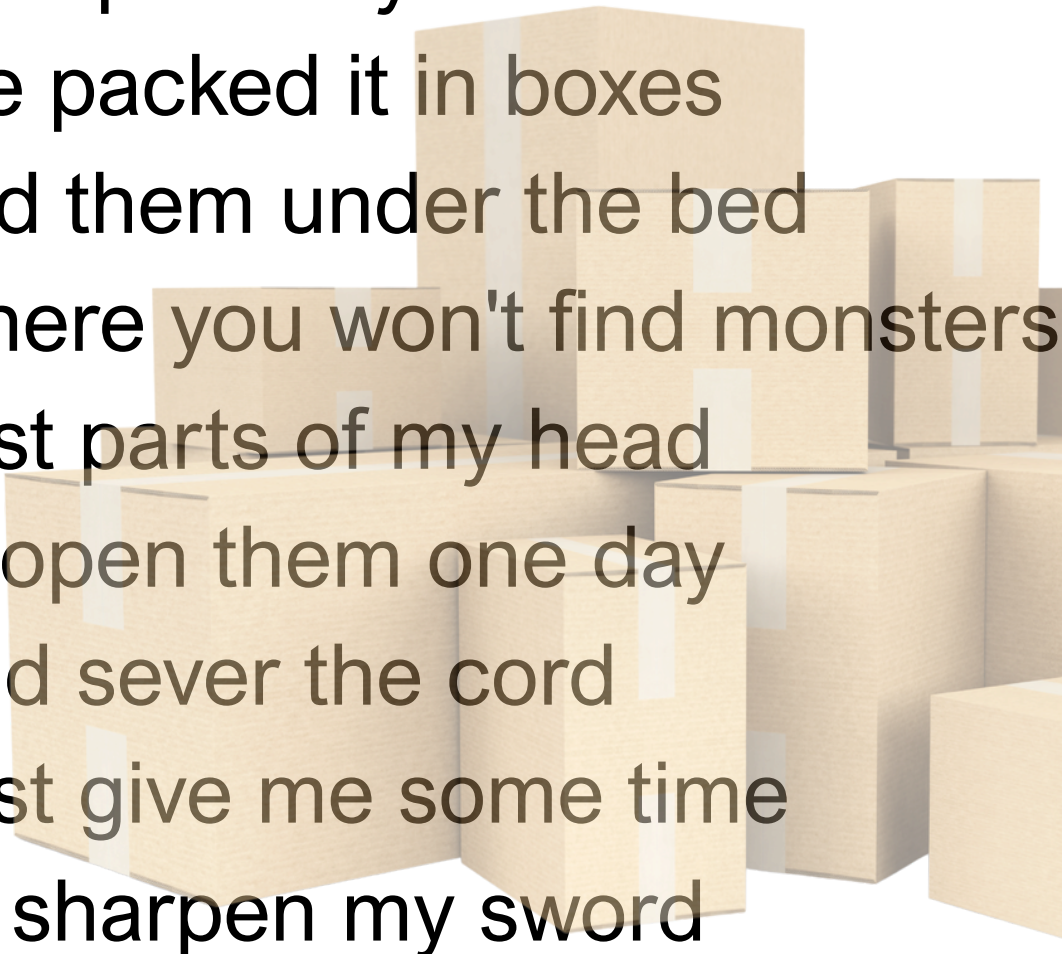
A decorative border of autumn leaves in shades of orange, yellow, and red, arranged in a curved path along the left side of the text.

Perhaps some of the fella's reading this might wonder if this edition's for them too, and the answer is yes, absolutely! Learning about menopause means being a better friend, son, brother, partner, colleague. And don't worry, next month we'll be focusing on Men's Health, so there's plenty coming up for our gentlemen learners. And since it's October, we couldn't forget Halloween! Whether we're carving pumpkins, watching spooky films, or just enjoying the seasonal treats, let's make space for fun, reflection, and support.

This is my past.....

It's National Poetry Day on 2 October and learner, Paul has kindly shared one of his amazing poems with us, which he wrote on our 'Writing for Self-Expression' course. Perhaps you had the pleasure of hearing him recite this at our Celebration event recently?

This is my past
Which I shall not discard
But thinking about it?
Unexpectedly hard
I've packed it in boxes
Slid them under the bed
Where you won't find monsters
Just parts of my head
I'll open them one day
And sever the cord
Just give me some time
To sharpen my sword



Do you fancy having a go at writing a little ditty? Then follow in Paul's footsteps and book on our upcoming Writing for Self-Expression course starting 3 November in Mirfield

Someone Like Me

Perimenopause and Me

by Recovery College Volunteer, Vicky M

“My menopause journey has been a rollercoaster to say the least and at times, one I struggled with mentally and physically and, at the darkest moments, one I didn’t want to live through.

It started at least 18 months before I reached complete burn out and no longer felt capable of working. I’d visited the Doctor on numerous occasions and not once during any appointment was menopause mentioned, and to be honest it wasn’t something that was on my radar. Menopause was what happened to old ladies wasn’t it? I honestly thought I had early on-set dementia. I now know that I was in perimenopause, and my suffering could have easily been prevented with just a little bit of knowledge, to help me recognise and question, if in fact my symptoms were menopause related.

It took a close friend of mine, who arrived at my house with Louise Newson’s book, a menopause symptom tracker and cake – obviously, for me to understand what was happening!

I became adamant that I didn’t want anyone else to suffer, and potentially choose not to live through the menopause. Therefore, I began reading, researching and reaching out to people in the Women’s Health space and even qualified as a Menopause Support Coach so I could help others.

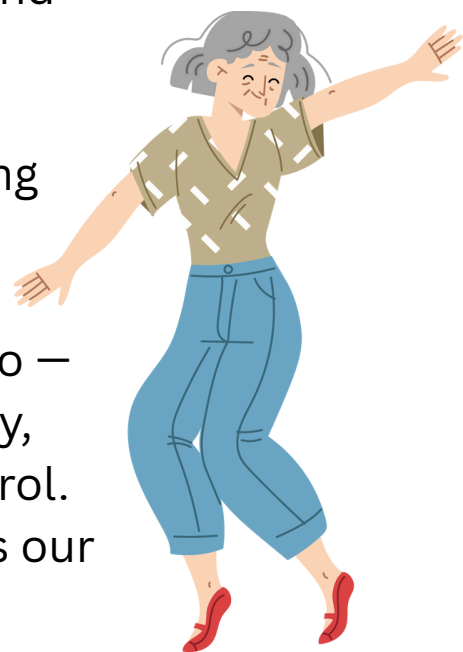
Standing on my soapbox and banging the metaphorical menopause drum to support and educate others about everything menopause related has become my passion and life purpose. I will keep banging that drum because knowledge is power and everyone deserves access to the information that can change their lives.”

Let's Get Physical: Moving through Menopause

Menopause can bring big changes, from hot flushes and low mood to aching joints and brain fog. But moving more can really help us feel better, both physically and emotionally.

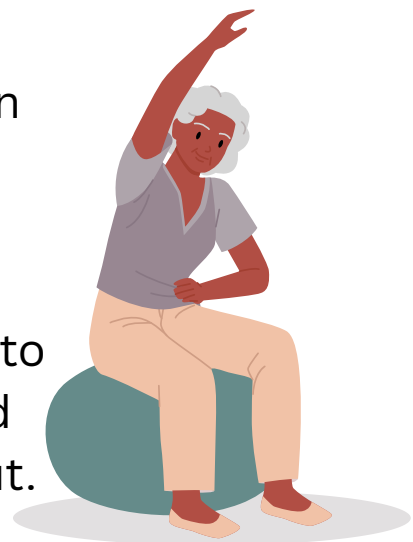


Exercise supports our heart, bones, and mood. As our oestrogen levels drop, we're more at risk of our bones becoming thinner and weaker, so weight-bearing and strength-building activities are especially helpful. Walking, dancing and lifting weights - or using resistance bands can all help keep our bones strong and reduce the risk of osteoporosis.



Activities like yoga, tai chi, and pilates are great too — they improve balance, co-ordination, and flexibility, while also helping us feel calmer and more in control. Dancing is a real all-rounder; it lifts our mood, gets our heart pumping, and keeps our brain sharp by challenging our co-ordination and memory.

We don't need to do it all at once. A short walk, a stretch in the morning, or a dance around the kitchen all count. The key is to find something we enjoy and build it into our routine, bit by bit.



At this time in our lives, it's more important than ever to be kind to ourselves, to celebrate the small wins, and move in ways that make us feel good — inside and out.

There are a couple of spaces left on our Dancing for Health with SS Dance & Wellbeing on Monday 3 November at 1.30pm - 2.30pm at Mirfield Community Centre. Click here for details:

<https://www.calderdalekirkleesrc.nhs.uk/courses/practical-life-skills/dance-fusion/>

Love to Learn:

Menopause: a journey not a destination

Menopause is a natural part of life, usually affecting women between the ages of 45 and 55, though it can vary - a lot! For some, it's a smooth transition, but for many of us (author included) it can bring a whole host of symptoms; hot flushes, sleep issues, mood swings, brain fog, joint aches, and more. In fact, there are over 30 possible symptoms, so if you're not feeling "quite yourself," you're definitely not alone.



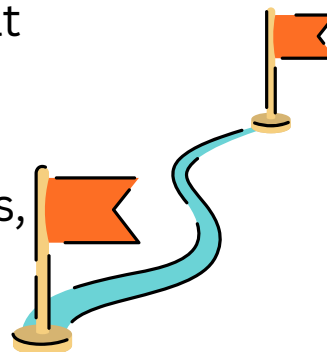
The good news is there are things we can do to feel more in control and to reduce the impact of symptoms. Eating a balanced diet with plenty of fruit and veg and foods high in protein is a good way to support our bodies and minds. Staying hydrated helps with energy and focus, so drinking plenty of water is a good way to combat our foggy minds. Regular movement is great for lifting our mood as well as easing aches and pains - check out our *Let's Get Physical* feature for more info about the types of movement that are particularly helpful. There are also some brilliant apps and websites where you can get support and more info including: <https://www.menopausematters.co.uk/>



If you're struggling, it's worth speaking to your GP. Go prepared, with a list of your symptoms, how long they've been going on, and how they're affecting your day-to-day life. Even if you aren't considering HRT, there are other options that could help.



While we may face difficulties during this time in our lives, remember that the menopause doesn't last forever - it's a journey, not a destination.



Want to know more? Then book on our online 'Menopause Awareness' workshop on Friday 24 October at 10am - 12pm

Stay up to date, follow us on our socials



Breathe Easier this Stoptober

Quitting smoking is one of the best things you can do for your health and wellbeing. Within days, your breathing improves and energy levels rise. Over time, your risk of heart disease, stroke, and cancer drops dramatically. But the benefits aren't just physical – many people report feeling more in control, less anxious, and gain a sense of pride with their progress.

Stoptober is the perfect time to take that first step. Whether it's your first try or your tenth, support is available - you don't have to do it alone. Every smoke-free day is a win! For help and support visit: www.nhs.uk/better-health/quit-smoking



**You know you
want to quit.**

We know you can.

It's never too late to quit smoking.

For free quitting support
search 'smokefree'.



Contact us

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07717 867911

www.calderdalekirkleesrc.nhs.uk

