

# Navigating Menopause: How Hormonal Shifts Shake Up Women's Careers

**Elizabeth Pearson** Contributor ⓘ

*I'm an Executive Coach focused on helping women be happier at work.*

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Hot flashes may affect your ability to focus GETTY

In the ever-evolving world of women's health, there's a quiet yet impactful intersection that often gets overshadowed – menopause and leadership. [Dr. Tasneem Bhatia](#), affectionately known as Dr. Taz, a distinguished women's health expert and author, invites us to peel back the layers of challenges that menopause brings to

women's careers. With a focus on empowerment during this transitional phase, she shares insights into the multifaceted impact of perimenopause and menopause on professional paths. We sat down to explore the complexities and strategies that women leaders can use to navigate this tricky landscape.



Dr. Taz Bhatia (Photo by Stewart Cook/SHE Media/Penske Media via Getty Images) PENSKE MEDIA VIA GETTY IMAGES

## **Menopause as a Career Setback**

Dr. Taz opens the conversation by shedding light on why menopause is often perceived as a career setback for women. I asked for her insights on why that is and what motivated her to focus on empowering women through this transitional phase.

She replied, “There are multiple reasons why menopause is seen as a career setback for women. Some of these include changes in energy, and motivation, struggling with sleep that then affects mood- with more anxiety and depression- and then trying to hide hot flashes and night sweats. Of course, age is a part of this as well,

and with age, many women find that they are no longer being noticed or recognized at work as they deal with the shifting changes in their health. I have heard some women also lament that changes in their weight result in being treated differently.”

Age-related shifts add another layer, as women find themselves grappling with reduced recognition in the workplace. In her book, *The Hormone Shift*, Dr. Taz explains how age and weight changes further compound the issue of being overlooked at work and a startling statistic from the [Bureau of Labor Statistics](#) backs that claim up by revealing that for every 10% increase in a woman's weight, her income on average drops by 6%.

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Dr. Taz underscores the significance of addressing these issues openly, breaking the taboo that has traditionally surrounded menopause discussions, especially in professional settings.

## Creating Harmony Amidst Change

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I asked Dr. Taz how women leaders can proactively create harmony between their professional lives and the changes that come with menopause.

She replied, “I think the best way for women to create harmony between their professional lives, and the changes that come with menopause is for women to really understand and own their health and that includes nutritional health, hormonal health, and mental health. The more you can be an advocate for yourself- the better.”

Dr. Taz's advice for women to become champions of their health is not just a platitude; it's a call to action to understand one's unique health needs during menopause. This empowerment, Dr. Taz contends, is the key to maintaining equilibrium between the professional and personal spheres during this transformative phase.

### **Stress Triggers Professional Challenges**

As women climb the professional ladder, stress becomes a companion on the journey. Dr. Taz explains, “I think stress creates a hyper-anxious state where women (and men) cannot make decisions that are in their best interests. For example, when we are stressed our chemistry changes, and with chronic stress, we actually experience brain inflammation that then causes us to eat more, choose quick fix foods rather than meal prep or plan foods, sacrifice exercise, and lose sleep.”

### **Navigating Symptoms**

Menopausal symptoms, from hot flashes to mood swings and sleep disturbances, can be disruptive. Dr. Taz emphasizes the importance of understanding that “solutions exist, ranging from natural alternatives to comprehensive hormone replacement therapies.”

Supporting this, a high percentage of women in perimenopause and menopause reported difficulty sleeping, highlighting the pervasive impact on professional performance. The call to action is clear—women must shed the shame and guilt often associated with menopause. Dr. Taz says, “By openly discussing symptoms, seeking support, and exploring tailored solutions, women leaders can maintain focus and productivity, driving their careers forward with confidence.”

### **Focusing on Nutrition, Exercise, and Lifestyle Changes**

Hormonal shifts during menopause can have far-reaching effects on cognitive function and energy levels. Dr. Taz recommends leveraging nutrition, exercise, and lifestyle changes to balance hormones and optimize professional performance. “Understanding that hormone shifts trigger changes in blood sugar, she advocates for increased protein intake, hydration, eating at clear intervals, and reducing sugar consumption”, Dr. Taz.

As women navigate the uncharted waters of menopause, the impact on their careers cannot be ignored. Dr. Taz's insights and supporting statistics underscore the urgent need for a shift in how we perceive and address menopause in the workplace. Empowering women to advocate for their health, manage stress effectively, and embrace tailored solutions will not only benefit individual careers but also contribute to fostering a more inclusive and understanding work environment. The menopause dilemma should be viewed not as a setback but as an opportunity for growth, resilience, and a redefined perspective on women's health in the professional realm. It's time to navigate menopause with confidence and chart a course for continued success in the workplace.

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**Elizabeth Pearson**

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