

## Info:Strengthening Romantic Relationships in Menopause

Menopause is one of the most challenging chapters in a woman's life. Not only are you suddenly experiencing symptoms like hot flashes,weight gain,low sex drive, and mood swings, but you now have to deal with the impacts of menopause on your relationship with your partner and others as well. However, the relationships that often suffer the most from menopausal symptoms are romantic relationships. Whether it's your spouse or your partner(s), peri/menopause can make your connection, communication, and understanding a bit harder.

As you grow older, many things can get in the way of your relationships. Especially as mothers, it could be raising children and maintaining a job, while also keeping your home life running smoothly at the same time. Now, when your children are no longer in the house, and your responsibilities aren't as demanding, now you have menopause to deal with, and now more than ever your romantic relationships are crucial to your quality of life, your sense of security, and overall wellness throughout menopause.

If you and your partner are having trouble working through some of these challenges, then here are a few things you can do to repair your relationship during menopause.

### **Couples Rituals**

What are couples' rituals? Think of couples' rituals as any habitual activity you do with your partner. It is an intentional routine to better connect with your partner. It could be having breakfast or coffee with them every morning, without fail, and prioritizing that time for your partner. It could also be making Sunday brunch or dinner together as an intentional bonding activity. Even going for an afternoon walk can be just what you need for a better connection during your transition.

Whatever ritual or routine you have or want to have, intentional couple rituals are essential building blocks for strong and healthy relationships, especially during such a big life transition. Do something together that makes you feel closer to your partner and do it regularly and intentionally. Have a date night once a week, share a bedtime routine, or simply set some time aside each day for something that you can do together.

As mothers, you have done and still do what you can for your children, your partner, and your family. Now is the time to do what you can for yourself and make sure your relationship with your life partner is stronger than ever before. Be intentional in your relationship.

## **Check-In**

It doesn't matter if you work from home, are retired, or still work full-time, checking in with your spouse can help you strengthen your bond in menopause. Have conversations at the dinner table without your phones. Ask them about their day, their work, or something new and exciting that you think they'll love. Check-in on them every once in a while to ask them how they're feeling. Talk about good days and especially the bad. Find ways to help them move past it.

Having sincere conversations regularly will bring you closer together. This is especially relevant if you both work and don't see each other much during the day. Women, especially mothers, always have something on their plate, so when menopause rears its ugly head loneliness can take over. Check-ins are vital for each person to be and stay on the same page.

## **Understand the Importance of Alone Time**

Sometimes the key to repairing or maintaining a healthy relationship is understanding the value of spending some time alone with yourself. When you and your partner need to decompress, take some alone time to relax by yourselves. Read a good book in your quiet space, or reserve a show just for you to watch alone. Whatever you choose to do to relax, make sure you respect each other's space and privacy. However, know when to come together for bonding and quality time, but leave enough time before or after for your partner to relax. Be mindful of each other's personal space.

Mothers don't often get to prioritize themselves to give themselves time alone, but alone time is necessary for each person. If your partner needs time alone, take advantage of it as a healthy time apart to collect yourself, know what you want for yourself, and appreciate their presence when you are together again.

## **Relationship Prioritization**

It takes genuine effort to put your spouse/partner first, especially when you share children together, when you have other responsibilities, or even when times are hard or stressful. Are you working overtime? Is your schedule filled with changeable plans that don't include your partner? Maybe it's time to trim the fat in your calendar and make time for your relationship by reworking your schedule to include more time with your partner. It can be anything from date nights to having longer coffee breaks in the mornings. The important thing is to make them feel like you're making an effort to keep your relationship in the number one slot on your list of priorities.

We get it; sometimes, it can be hard to fit time with your partner into your day, especially as a mother. But at the end of the day, it's all about intention. Wake up each day with the intention to spend some time with your partner and prioritize them. Not only will they feel valued, but you will feel fulfilled in your relationship as well.

## **Talk About Your Issues**

More than half of women who experience menopause say that they're too embarrassed to talk about their health issues with their partners, especially when it comes to sexual wellness. Having an open conversation about your hot flashes, mood swings, or your low sex drive can make you feel vulnerable, and it's perfectly natural to feel that way. There is no shame in feeling embarrassed, but your relationship will suffer if you don't talk through the problems you're facing.

Mothers, and women in general, tend to listen and feel/show empathy to their children and other close relationships. It's your nurturing side to want to be there for others and help them through tough times, but who will be there for you?

Open and honest communication is the best way to strengthen your bond and help you overcome the feelings of embarrassment you may feel. Speak openly about your hot flashes, your mood swings, your low sex drive. These are real and natural symptoms of menopause that shouldn't be ignored. If sex starts to feel painful, let them know so that they can find ways to make you feel more comfortable. Your partner cannot help you if you don't tell them what you're experiencing.

## **Celebrate One Another**

One of the biggest things you can do in a relationship is to celebrate even the smallest milestones and achievements. Even if you don't understand them, be happy for your partner if something happens in their favor. If you've gone a few days without experiencing raging menopause symptoms as a result of taking a new medication, celebrate it together. If your mood swings are starting to decrease and stabilize, join together, and celebrate. Maybe you've both achieved new success at work? Celebrate it together.

You are a mother who was and even still is your children's biggest cheerleader, and you are your partner's biggest supporter. So having someone to celebrate you will give you the encouragement you need to face your frustrations and low points in life with more hope and a better outlook.

Each little victory is something worth celebrating. Not only does it help boost your morale, but it can help bring you closer together by sticking to a more positive outlook. Cheering each other on can help lessen anxiety, sadness, and stress. So keep each other going with positivity and boost your spirits together.

