

The menopause affects us all

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Up until about 4 years ago I had no idea what the menopause really was, or the impact it has on a woman's life. For them it is both mentally and physically debilitating. Like most men I gave it little thought, as far as I was concerned it was 'women's troubles' and nothing to do with me.

I never even considered that I would be in a relationship with someone who has to live with this condition, or the effects it would have on us as a couple, or on me personally.

At times I've found supporting my wife very difficult as her symptoms are varied with no pattern. The simple act of being there for her in her hour of need can make a massive difference. I'm not saying it's been easy. I have my own issues with mental health and can be very defensive.

My darling wife is going through peri menopause, which for all you guys out there is the period before the actual main event starts. I was clueless about this until I read up on the subject to better support her. I did find, however, there's not much advice out there on how to support someone with this condition. I've had to 'wing it' so to speak. I don't always get it right as it's hard to help when I can't see what is wrong – like if she had cut herself for instance.

There have been many facets to her condition. Some days she had hot flushes and is unable to control her temperature. Other days she's tearful and sad or 'fuzzy headed'. I've even known her not be able to string words together properly and go about knocking everything over. But by far the most difficult for me is when my every breath, thought or action seems to aggravate her and make her say things she cannot control. It's then I take a step back and just think for a moment. It's not personal.

Finally, I'd like to add if any of you are reading this and supporting your partner or spouse. If you're thinking, "this is really hard for me" I can assure you it is a hundred million times worse for them. Just hang in there, do your best and if that means taking it on the chin some days, that's what you must do. It's all part of the journey and remember, it's not forever.