Recognizing the Impact of Menopause at Work

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Speaker Disclosures

Grant/Sponsorship Support: SSHRC Grant

Honorarium/Consulting Fees/Speaker Fees: Astellas**/** Duchesnay/Brightshores

Owner: Virtual Menopause Clinic **https://www.virtualmenopauseclinic.com**

Course and Program Developer:

Menopause Review for Primary Care;
Working with Menopause
Low Libido in Women during Mid-Life: Provider Update
Managing Mid-Life Sleep Issues in Women

Faulty Member Laurentian University School of Nursing and Centre for Research in Occupational and Safety and Health (CROSH)

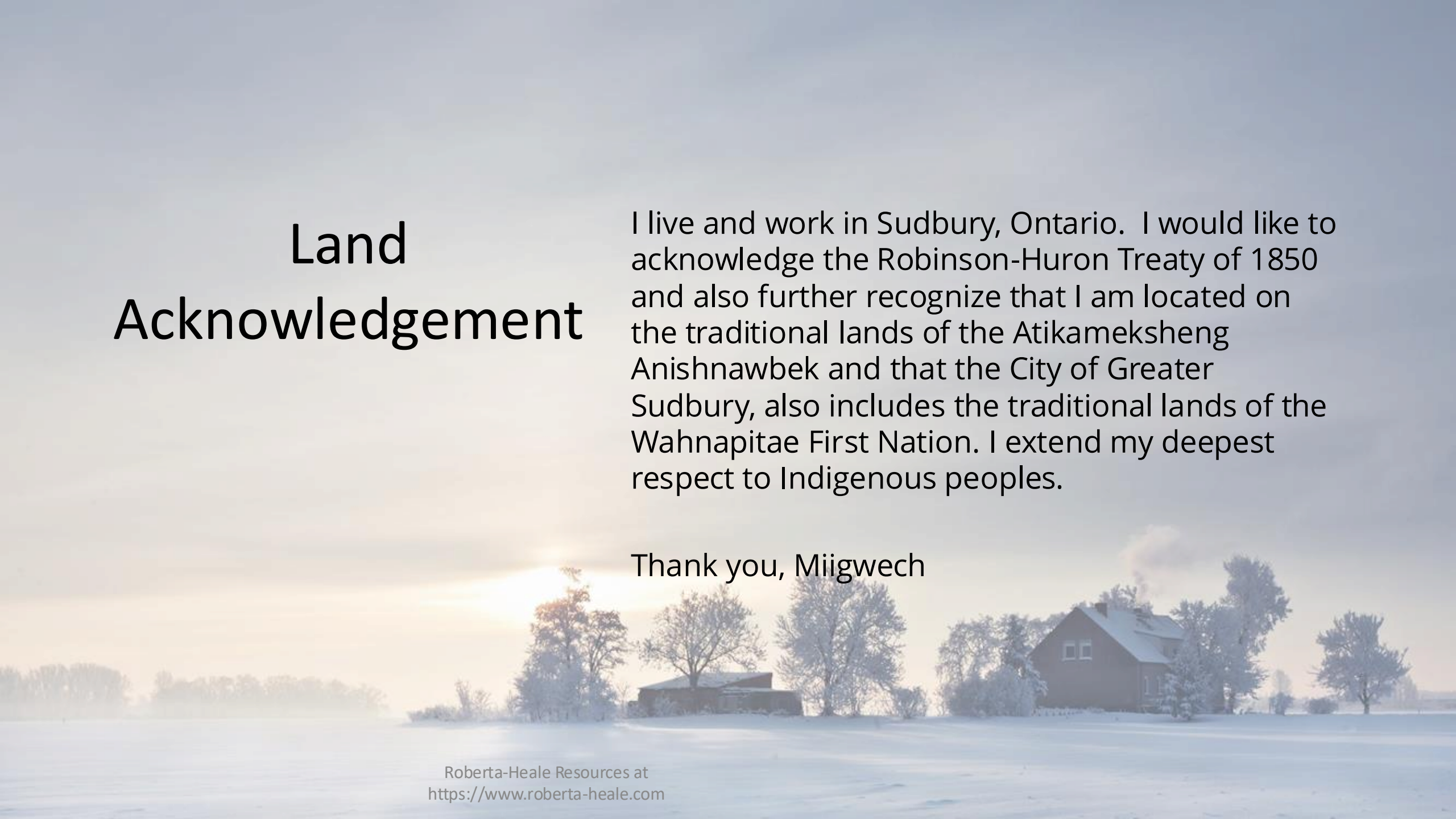
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Land Acknowledgement

I live and work in Sudbury, Ontario. I would like to acknowledge the Robinson-Huron Treaty of 1850 and also further recognize that I am located on the traditional lands of the Atikameksheng Anishnawbek and that the City of Greater Sudbury, also includes the traditional lands of the Wahnapitae First Nation. I extend my deepest respect to Indigenous peoples.

Thank you, Miigwech



What Women Told Me...

"If you hadn't treated me, I would have had to take a leave of absence from work."

"I've called in sick each menstrual cycle because I feel so awful."

"I'm so tired that I am worried about making a mistake at work."

"I thought I was losing my mind."

After the Presentation the Viewer will...

Describe the physiological changes associated with the menopause transition and recognize common symptoms.

Examine how the menopause transition and associated symptoms can affect women's experiences, functioning, and well-being at work.

Identify practical strategies and workplace accommodations that can support women experiencing the menopause transition.

Menopause is coming out of the shadows. Many women looking for answers say it's about time

Shame, stigma linked to the 'change' often left women feeling blindsided: study

Ioanna Roumeliotis & Brenda Witmer · CBC News ·
Posted: Jan 07, 2023 4:00 AM EST | Last Updated: January 7



Women are suffering needlessly through menopause transition, physicians say

Misconceptions about hormone therapy, lack of qualified doctors are barriers to care

Brandie Weikle, Colleen Ross · CBC Radio · Posted: Jan 28, 2023 4:00 AM EST | Last Updated: January 30



https://www.cbc.ca › radio › whitecoat › menopause-tra...

What doctors recommend to treat symptoms of menopause ...

6 days ago — The **menopause** transition can cause more than 30 symptoms, and many readers had questions about them. Here's what doctors recommend to ...

https://www.cbc.ca › radio › whitecoat › women-sufferi...

Women are suffering needlessly through menopause ... - CBC

Jan 28, 2023 — Where previously hormone replacement therapy had been widely embraced, often espoused as a way to be "feminine forever," **news** of the study's ...

Top stories

National Geographic

What happens during menopause? Science is finally piecing it together.



1 day ago

BBC NEWS

Menopause passport introduced by NHS trust boosting wellbeing



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Medpage Today

The Man Behind 'Died Suddenly'; Rethinking Menopause Tx; Long COV…



1 day ago

The Sydney Morning Herald

Naomi, Gwyneth, Serena: The ‘menopower’ movement lights up



14 hours ago

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A brief menopause primer

Menopause: 12 months without menstruation (when not otherwise explained)

Perimenopause: variable cycles and fluctuating hormones

Postmenopause: years following the final menstrual period

Symptoms and functional impact vary widely

https://www.instagram.com/reel/DSVH6FHEU5d/?hl=en

The symptoms most relevant to work

Fatigue and disrupted sleep → alertness and stamina

Brain fog → concentration, memory and confidence

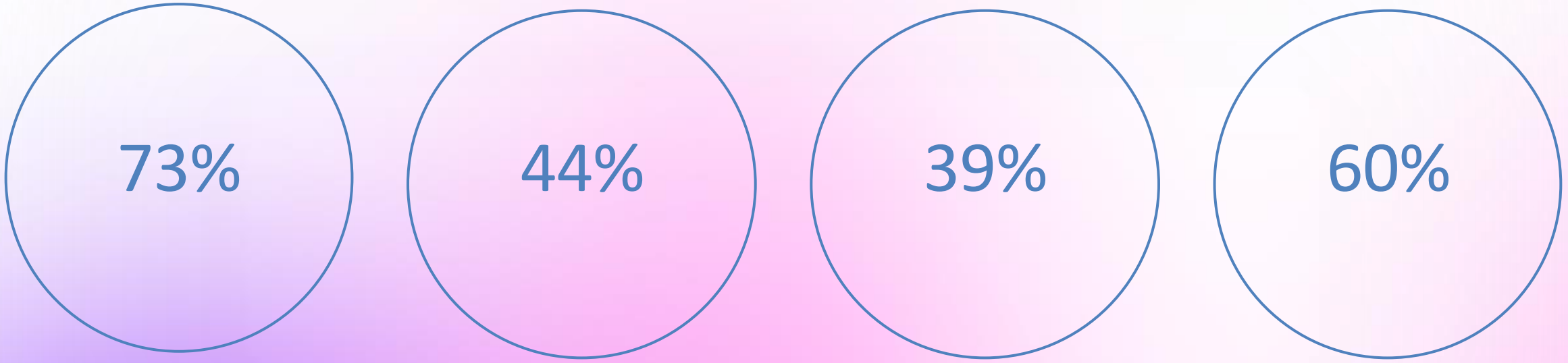
Heavy bleeding and hot flashes → breaks and environment

Anxiety, migraine and pain → attendance and task tolerance

Why occupational health should pay attention

- Symptoms can intersect with safety-critical tasks
- Work conditions may intensify symptom burden
- Stigma can discourage disclosure and help-seeking
- Support can protect participation and retention

Workplace Statistics on Menopause



Women Suffering from Menopause Symptoms

Women Reluctant to Discuss Symptoms

Women Embarrassed to Talk about Menopause at Work

Women Wanting More Menopause Support in Workplace

The Silent Struggle: Canadian Nurses' Experience

01

Canadian nurses reported feeling exhausted and struggled with managing symptoms like heavy bleeding while on shift.

02

Many nurses felt unable to discuss menopause with their managers and resorted to self-accommodating by switching to part-time work or different roles.

03

A number of nurses expressed intentions to quit their jobs due to the challenges posed by menopause symptoms.

04

Research estimates that approximately one in 10 women may leave the workforce due to menopause-related issues, indicating a substantial impact on workforce retention.

Think about how these findings relate to employees you work with!

Economic Implications

- Lost productivity due to menopause costs employers in Canada $237 million annually. (projected cost of replacing an employee is $50,000)
- Women lose $3.3 billion annually in income due to leaving the workforce or working fewer hours during peak earning years.
- 10% of women leave their jobs because of menopause transition
- Projected increase in the demographic of women over 40 in the workforce from 25% to 43% in 2038.

Menopause at Work survey

Anonymous online survey across Canada

417 responses at the time of the draft presentation

Descriptive, self-selected sample

Useful signals—not population prevalence estimates

The hidden burden: stigma and silence

- Workers may fear being judged as less capable
- Disclosure can feel risky in ageist or unsupportive cultures
- Self-accommodation may mean lost hours or career opportunities
- Confidentiality and choice are essential

Where work design can make symptoms worse

- Hot or poorly ventilated workspaces; restrictive uniforms
- Long shifts, night work, and limited recovery time
- Inflexible breaks or poor washroom access
- High cognitive load, low control, and unsupportive supervision

Examples of workplace adjustments

Environment: ventilation, cooling, access to water

Scheduling: flexible breaks, shift review, recovery time

Tasks: prioritization, quiet work area, temporary flexibility

Support: informed supervisors, confidential occupational health referral

A practical response: ask, assess, adjust

ASK: create a respectful, voluntary route to support

ASSESS: focus on functional impact and job demands

ADJUST: trial proportionate, individualized measures

REVIEW: revisit what is working

Workplace supports as appropriate

- Offer referral or recommend assessment for treatable symptoms and other causes
- Discuss available avenues for treatment when appropriate
- Outline strategies in their workplace, or benefits support sleep, movement, mental health and general prevention
- Do not make workplace support contingent on treatment

What OHCOW and workplace partners can do

- Recognize menopause in occupational health conversations
- Help identify modifiable workplace hazards and barriers
- Promote manager education without stereotyping
- Support worker-centred accommodation and evaluation

Beyond the workplace

Menopause Foundation of Canada

Standing Committee on the Status of Women (federal)

Menopause Awareness Month (Ontario)

Research…like mine!

Closing: recognition is the starting point

Menopause is normal; suffering at work need not be ignored

Symptoms are variable; solutions should be individualized

Better work design benefits workers and organizations

Questions and discussion



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