

## Changing Rooms star backs Essity 'changing wombs' menopause campaign

Linda Barker has gone from Changing Rooms to talking about 'Changing Wombs' as the TV presenter opens up to her daughter - about the menopause.

The 61-year-old has been through the menopause herself and has been open about her experiences in the past - revealing just how it impacted her life after it "hit her like a freight train".

And now the much-loved TV host has backed a campaign to end the taboo around it once and for all by launching a new series of Changing Wombs.

Linda talks to daughter Jessica about a host of topics related to the menopause including sex, career, self-confidence, getting older, and why so many people don't seem to talk about it.

The series follows the UK's biggest study into menopause, commissioned by global hygiene and health company Essity to launch online menopause community [issviva.co.uk](http://issviva.co.uk).

The research found a fifth of women mid or post actively avoided talking about this part of the ageing process with others.

Of these, 42 per cent wanted to keep things hidden from their children and 40 per cent from their partner.

Commenting on the findings, Linda Barker said: "I know now that I haven't spoken about the issue of menopause, and what was happening to me, as much as I should have done, especially with Jessica, who as a woman, will one day go through the same thing.

"Women in general aren't open enough with their feelings and try to hide something which is normal and natural."

Daughter Jessica Barker said: "Following this chat, I am so glad we have opened up to each other – I really had no idea of the impact going through the menopause had on mum's mental wellbeing.

"I want to encourage more people to ask questions of those they love and break the taboo."

The research of 5,000 women – 2,500 pre-menopausal and 2,500 who are in or post menopause - found of those currently suffering, 56 per cent admit to being constantly surprised by what the condition has thrown at them.

And an astonishing number of these women (53 per cent) felt they had or have no support network around them at all.

Of those who do, just 39 per cent felt they had a close friend or family member they could confide in.

Women going through menopause admit their confidence took a hit while experiencing symptoms (66 per cent).

In addition to feeling less assured, 39 per cent said their sex drive took a nosedive and 34 per cent felt less attractive.

Of the 78 per cent of women who continued to work, 58 per cent kept the fact they were going through the menopause from their colleagues.

However, choosing to suffer in silence meant they couldn't share how things were affecting them in the workplace – from tiredness (44 per cent), to poor concentration (30 per cent), poor memory (23 per cent) and inability to focus (22 per cent).

Sadly, exactly six in 10 women mid or post menopause admit it is still a taboo subject – with 58 per cent sure this is still because of embarrassment about disclosing personal problems.

A further 47 per cent – of those polled via OnePoll still consider menopause a largely misunderstood condition, and the same percentage think women don't like to talk about the deterioration of their body.

The reality is, those with the menopause can experience up to 62 different symptoms, according to Dr Naomi Potter, who recently partnered with Essity.

A spokesman for the hygiene and health company said: "There are so many symptoms that women can experience during menopause, many of which are often not associated with it and yet there are so few solutions readily available.

"We are aiming to create an online community with [issviva.co.uk](http://issviva.co.uk) that provides women with advice, support, and products that can help provide a solution to the symptoms they are experiencing.

"Menopause should not be a taboo subject. It should be something everyone can feel comfortable talking openly and honestly about."

**ENDS**