

DISCUSSION GUIDE



Legal Disclaimer: There is NO recording of "THE (M) FACTOR" feature film allowed of any kind during screening runtime via Zoom, cell phone capture or any camera recording devices.



SHREDDING the SILENCE
on MENOPAUSE

The (M) Factor: Shredding the Silence on Menopause is a relevant and timely documentary exploring why we need to rethink the way women's health at midlife is treated in this country. Menopause represents a significant transition in women's lives, with physical and emotional changes that can have long-term consequences from cardiovascular disease and bone loss to dementia. Despite its universality, the healthcare system inadequately prepares physicians to address menopause and its symptoms so women's health concerns are largely ignored or attributed to age-related illness, leading to the silence and suffering of millions of women.

This guide is intended to provide individuals and organizations hosting screenings of The (M) Factor with a framework for key themes addressed within the film and key questions and prompts for discussion.

Warm-Up Questions

1 Which statement best describes how you are feeling at this moment after watching The (M) Factor?

- a. Shocked. There was a lot that I was not aware of.

- b. Not surprised. I'm aware of the statistics and the issues discussed in the film.

- c. Overwhelmed. I'm just taking it all in. I don't know where to start.

- d. Motivated. There's a lot to do too address this. I'm ready to move this forward and dialogue.

- e. Other

2 Complete the following sentence:

The factor that most contributes to substandard menopause care is...

- a. (under) Funding

- b. Implicit Gender Bias in medicine

- c. Lack of knowledge amongst physicians

- d. Lack of menopause medical specialists available to care for female patients

- e. All of the above

Discussion Questions

The following questions have been created to help facilitate conversation around the topics that have been explored in The (M) Factor.

1. The film highlights the silence surrounding menopause. Why do you think menopause has remained such a taboo topic in both society and the workplace, and what can be done to break that silence?
2. Hormone Replacement Therapy (HRT) is often a controversial topic. What are the key takeaways from the film regarding its role in symptom relief, and what are the risks and benefits of HRT, and how can women make informed decisions about whether it's right for them?
3. The film discusses the lack of solutions for sexual wellness during menopause. Why do you think this aspect of women's health is often overlooked, and what can be done to change that?
4. The film touches on the disparities faced by Black and Latina women in menopause treatment. How do these disparities manifest, and what steps can be taken to ensure more equitable care?
5. Menopause can last up to 10 years or more for some women. How do the long-term impacts of menopause challenge the common misconceptions that it's just a brief phase?
6. The U.S. healthcare system is often criticized for not adequately preparing medical students and physicians to treat menopause symptoms. What specific training or policy changes are needed to improve menopause management?
7. For many women, menopause is still a taboo subject. How can we break the silence and stigma surrounding menopause, especially in communities where discussing it is culturally sensitive?
8. The emotional and physical impacts of menopause can be profound. How can communities and healthcare providers better support women through this transition to reduce suffering and improve their quality of life?
9. What policies and workplace practices could better support employees going through menopause, and how can organizations create an inclusive environment that normalizes conversations about menopause?
10. What strategies can be used to engage employers in advocating for menopause-friendly workplace policies? How can advocates make a compelling case for the benefits of such policies?
11. In the film, experts discuss the need for more research on menopause. What are the most critical areas of research that need to be addressed to improve women's health during and after menopause and how can advocates push for these changes at a systematic level?
12. Menopause is linked to an increased risk of serious health conditions like cardiovascular disease and dementia. How can women proactively manage their health during menopause to mitigate these risks?
13. The film reveals the critical intersection between menopause and oral health. How do we empower women and dentists to engage in productive discussions surrounding the impact of menopause on oral health?
14. The (M) Factor is entering the landscape during a pivotal time politically surrounding menopause and reproductive health. How important are films like The (M) Factor in bringing forth conversations around these topics to communities who might not have access to information surrounding these issues?
15. What led you to produce this film and why now?

Wrap-Up Questions

Instructions:

The following questions are designed to wrap up the discussion and inspire the audience to take action by considering, "What can I do next?"

- 1 Many stories and experiences have been featured in the film. Whose story/experience resonated with you and what did you learn from it?
- 2 After watching this film and engaging in our discussion, what is the first step you will take to either educate others about menopause or advocate for better menopause support in your community or workplace?
- 3 What's one immediate change you can make in your daily life or professional environment to help normalize conversations about menopause and support those experiencing it?
- 4 Healthcare Practitioner / Administrator: Multiple organizations and medical facilities in regions across the US were featured in the documentary. What is one big idea you learned about today that you could apply to your own medical practice?
- 5 Which statement best describes how you are feeling at this moment after this discussion?

- a. The same as I did when it began.
- b. Overwhelmed. A lot was covered and I'm just processing it all.
- c. Motivated. I'm ready to take what I learned today and advocate for change.
- d. Other

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