



The PMDD
Practice

A division of **The PMDD Project**

PMDD in the Workplace

Clinical Review Statement

This resource has been developed by The PMDD Project and reviewed by our Clinical Advisory Board for clinical accuracy and alignment with current evidence and guidelines.

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The PMDD Project Clinical Advisory Board

Premenstrual Dysphoric Disorder (PMDD) is a hormone-based mood disorder that can significantly impact someone's ability to function at work, especially during the luteal phase (the two* weeks before their period). As a colleague or employer, your support can make a huge difference in their ability to cope with symptoms while remaining productive.

This guide provides managers, HR professionals, and employers with practical steps to create a PMDD-friendly workplace, including UK legal considerations.

Understanding PMDD in the workplace

PMDD can have a profound impact on an employee's performance, attendance, and overall wellbeing.

Symptoms may include:

Emotional:

Anxiety, depression, irritability, mood swings, and panic attacks



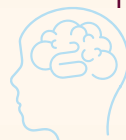
Physical:

Fatigue, headaches, joint pain, bloating, and sleep disturbances



Cognitive:

Difficulty concentrating, forgetfulness, and lack of motivation



Since these symptoms can fluctuate throughout the month, employees with PMDD may find it challenging to predict how they will feel day-to-day.

This unpredictability makes it important for workplaces to offer flexible and understanding support.

Legal considerations: UK workplace guidelines

In the UK, employers have a duty to protect the health and wellbeing of their employees, including those with long-term conditions like PMDD.

Although PMDD is not officially recognised as a disability, it can be considered a disability under Equality Act 2010 if the condition has a substantial and long-term effect on a person's ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities.

Under the Act, employees with PMDD may be entitled to reasonable adjustments to ensure they are not disadvantaged in the workplace.

Employers must take these obligations seriously to avoid potential discrimination claims.



How managers can support employees with PMDD

Promote open communication	
Encourage a culture of openness where employees feel comfortable discussing their health issues, including PMDD. While employees are not required to disclose their condition, creating an environment where they know their needs will be supported can help reduce stress and promote wellbeing.	Provide a safe and confidential space for employees to discuss their health. Be open to discussing flexible working arrangements or adjustments.

Implement reasonable adjustments:

Reasonable adjustments are changes made to an employee’s work environment or duties that allow them to perform their role effectively.

For employees with PMDD, this might include:

Inclusive policies Review workplace policies around sickness, absence, and mental health to ensure they are inclusive of chronic conditions like PMDD. Ensure policies allow flexibility for those managing recurring health issues.	Encourage a supportive and PMDD-friendly workplace A PMDD-friendly workplace goes beyond legal compliance. It’s about encouraging understanding and creating a supportive environment that prioritises employee wellbeing.
Breaks Allowing additional breaks during the day can help employees deal with fatigue, pain, or emotional distress.	Remote work options Working from home on days when symptoms are severe can provide relief and reduce absenteeism.

Awareness training

Provide training for managers and HR teams on PMDD, its symptoms, and how it can affect employees.

This can help ensure that managers spot the signs of PMDD in their employees, respond with empathy, and offer appropriate support.

Mental health support

Offer access to mental health support services, such as **Employee Assistance Programmes (EAPs)**, counselling, or therapy.

Educating staff about mental health conditions like PMDD can reduce stigma and encourage a more supportive workplace culture.

Reduced workloads during symptomatic days

Adjusting deadlines or reducing responsibilities during the luteal phase can help employees manage stress and workload more effectively.

Flexible working hours

PMDD symptoms may vary in intensity, so allowing flexible start and finish times can help employees manage their work alongside their condition.

Support self-care practices:
Encourage a workplace culture that promotes wellbeing and self-care.

For employees with PMDD, this might mean:

Encouraging breaks for relaxation	Access to rest areas
Allow time for relaxation exercises, mindfulness, or gentle movement throughout the day to help manage stress.	Providing a quiet room for rest or a place to step away can be helpful for those experiencing fatigue or emotional distress.
Be flexible and understanding during luteal phases	
Recognise that PMDD is cyclical, and there will be times when an employee is affected more than others.	
Encourage them to track their symptoms and communicate any anticipated challenges.	
Offer flexible scheduling	Review workloads and deadlines
If an employee knows their symptoms will be worse during the luteal phase, allow them to adjust their schedule in advance.	During more symptomatic phases, employees may need lighter workloads. Coordinate with them to ensure work can still be completed but in a way that aligns with their health.
Encourage employees to take sick leave if necessary	
If an employee's symptoms are severe and prevent them from working, encourage them to take sick leave rather than struggling through the day.	
This helps them recover more quickly and promotes a healthier work-life balance.	

Supporting a colleague with PMDD is about creating an environment where they feel understood and valued, while still being able to manage their symptoms without judgement.

Reasonable adjustments, compassionate communication, and a commitment to workplace wellbeing can empower them to perform their best, even on the hardest days.

By encouraging an open and supportive culture, you contribute to their wellbeing and the overall inclusivity of your workplace.

Need urgent support?

We know that managing PMDD can be incredibly difficult, and at times, the emotional weight can feel overwhelming. If you are experiencing severe distress, suicidal thoughts, or feel you are in crisis, please know that you are not alone and that support is available. You deserve to be heard and kept safe.

If you are in immediate danger:

Please call 999 or go to your nearest Accident and Emergency (A&E) department immediately.

Samaritans: Call 116 123 for free, 24/7 confidential support, or visit www.samaritans.org.

Shout: Text 'SHOUT' to 85258 for free, confidential, 24/7 text support.

Please note: This resource is intended for information and peer support; it is not a substitute for professional mental health care or crisis intervention. Please reach out to your GP, local mental health services, or the resources above if you need urgent help.



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