

HOW TWO FEMALE ENTREPRENEURS
FOUND AN UNCONVENTIONAL WAY
AROUND TOLERATING

The Change

***We were suffering with our
menopause symptoms in silence...
until we found cannabis.***

Carrie Mapes and Patty Pappas are longtime friends and co-founders of Hello Again, a line of cannabis-infused menopause care products that relieve symptoms at the source. They were both suffering through their menopause symptoms in silence - until they decided there had to be a better way. Leaning on their tribe, they found that their experiences were similar—at least similarly awful. They decided to join forces, becoming fierce advocates for helping women and upending social stigmas associated with menopause and cannabis. Here are their stories:

Carrie's experience

I've always considered myself a sharp person that was quick on my feet. After all, I'd spent much of my adult life as an educator and found every opportunity to be involved in my kids' lives while they were growing up. Despite being fully on top of everything in my household and community, nothing could have prepared me for what menopause had in store for me. I braced myself for the usual suspects—hot flashes, mood swings, and sleep problems as I crept closer to 50. But I was completely blindsided by the memory problems and brain fog that came with my hormone fluctuations.

I had recently taken a family member to a memory clinic to address cognitive challenges and, after a string of jarring memory lapses, decided to make an appointment for myself. My growing tendency to forget names, struggle with finding the specific word to best express myself and grapple with short-term memory tasks left me frustrated about my own capabilities. I was also disheartened that my family's response to the majority of my questions was, "I already told you that." I didn't tell anyone about my appointment and played out all the different ways I would break the news to my family that I probably had early-onset Alzheimer's on the drive over.

Luckily, I didn't come out of that appointment with the diagnosis I was expecting but was surprised to learn that my memory problems were attributed to my menopause. My OB-GYN prescribed hormone therapy, and the symptoms subsided quickly. However, I knew quickly that the hormone treatment wasn't a sustainable option. The transdermal estrogen patch often slipped off while exercising, and I learned about friends who had taken hormones for years developing dark masses on their mammograms. I had to wonder—with millions of women in this country experiencing such an agonizing physical life transition, was this really the only viable treatment doctors could offer?

Patty's experience

As it turns out, there isn't a 'typical' experience for menopause. In my case, my age and symptoms had confounded my doctors about what was going on inside of me. When I was only in my 40s, I had to put towels under my body to sleep because I would sweat through the sheets almost every night and had difficulty falling asleep. During the day, I would have at least five or six hot flashes and be convinced that one of my kids had turned on the car seat heaters while I was driving. Just like Carrie, my brain fog was no joke. I started forgetting key tasks, like picking up my own mother from lunch.

When I approached my OB-GYN about my debilitating symptoms, she ran tests and told me that I wasn't even menopausal and couldn't start treatment yet. My relief finally came from an integrative doctor that I went to in desperation because I truly felt like I was going crazy. When he got my blood work back, he remarked, "Wow, your hormone levels are so low I can't even read them!" I was going through perimenopause, something overlooked by the media and the medical community that can often mimic the symptoms of full-blown menopause in many women.

I had to endure these symptoms for six more years until I finally lost my period and was officially deemed menopausal by doctors. A lot of women experiencing these physical changes are close to becoming empty nesters or may have more time to take care of themselves during this trying time, but I was still in the thick of it raising three teenage daughters. In hindsight, I wish I had access to more holistic options to manage and alleviate my symptoms instead of gutting it out. Doctors and friends truly don't understand how hard it can be to stay functional in the throes of perimenopause.



MJ Loves

Cannabis Products for Women

Hello Again suppositories will help you focus your day, brighten your mood, boost your energy, regulate hot flashes, and support uninterrupted sleep while addressing vaginal dryness. Get relief in your body without a high in your head.

Find *Hello Again* at
helloagainproducts.com



Carrie's aba moment

Patty and I became interested in the medical applications of cannabis when California legalized recreational use and made it accessible to everyone in the state. In my free time when the kids were at school, I would visit dispensaries and learn about people using cannabis to treat their aches and pains, help them fall asleep and manage their anxiety. Although I was never a big pot smoker in high school or college—back then, it was more of a “boy’s drug,” I started experimenting with a variety of products, from edibles to vapes to patches and creams, to find relief from my various symptoms.

Of course, in the beginning, I didn’t tell my doctors about my new supplementary treatments. There have been few advances in menopause treatment in the past decades and although I trusted my doctors to prioritize my overall health, I knew that they had limited information about holistic remedies. I was surprised to learn that most medical schools and residency programs don’t prepare future physicians adequately on the subject of menopause. A recent survey revealed that only 20% of OB-GYN residency programs provided any kind of menopause training, and most of the courses were elective. As a result, almost three out of four women who talk to their doctors about menopause symptoms do not receive helpful information or treatment. As someone quite in-tune with my own body, I could tell I needed something more natural and sustainable to complement my hormone treatments.

Patty's advice on cannabis femme-care

Unfortunately, because women aren't informed about menopause and medical professionals aren't equipped to provide holistic treatments, most women, including my friends and family, have self-medicated with Xanax, Ambien, or alcohol to deal with symptoms like sleep issues and anxiety. Hormone replacement therapy and off-label uses for high blood pressure medication and antidepressants comprise most of the medically prescribed options. These are risky treatments for some women and not viable options for women with certain cancer histories or blood clots. For decades, women have had only two choices for their unwanted symptoms, to medicate or to tolerate, and have been looking for something in between.

Supplementing conventional menopause treatments with cannabis made me feel like my old self again. I could finally sleep through the night, experienced less anxiety and had more energy and clarity to get through the day. Although Carrie and I were thrilled with the benefits of cannabis in our own lives, we realized that there weren't any specific products on the market targeted at menopause relief. We decided to take matters into our own hands and started developing a product with leading cannabis doctors in California to address the physical and mental challenges that we, and millions of women, have dealt with in this stage of life. This project eventually became *Hello Again*, a natural cannabis suppository that helps relieve the myriad of symptoms that come with every stage of menopause.

In order to give women access to emotional and physical support during menopause, we applaud the various platforms, in and out of the cannabis space, that are directed at informing and connecting women in their 40s and 50s. It seems women are having a collective awakening and deciding that the roadmap for this chapter of life is to be written by modern women, not dictated by cultural traditions. Today's women going through menopause are in very different phases of their lives than their mothers and grandmothers were at the same age. Women in menopause are often still raising children, working outside of the home in one or multiple positions and perhaps newly single and dating. The two choices to either pharmaceutically medicate or merely tolerate unwanted symptoms isn't meeting our needs anymore. Our hope is that more women can increase their understanding and awareness of symptoms and supplementary treatments by openly engaging with their female peers. Menopause can truly be an exciting time when women can thrive and pursue new aspirations. The sky's the limit once we feel like ourselves again.

Products to help get through "the change":

- ▶ *Hello Again*, Sleep is designed to bring back an old friend: a good night's sleep. We want you to stay cool, go to sleep, stay asleep and—when things go bump in the night—get back to sleep. When a girl gets a good night's sleep, there's nothing she can't do.
- ▶ *Hello Again*, Everyday was formulated to lift mental fog, brighten mood, increase energy, regulate body temperature and soothe vaginal dryness to provide what every woman in this phase of life wants: to feel like herself again.
- ▶ We've been drinking *Kikoko* Sympa-Tea for quite some time. The low THC is just right for a nice exhale without feeling impaired.
- ▶ We just found *Steam* face oil at a beautiful new dispensary, *Serra*. We slather it on in the middle of the workday for a quick refresher; we love the clean, bright smell.
- ▶ *Mama Sue Relief* oil does wonders for post-workout recovery.