



Equality Talks Podcast - Transcript

Episode 6: Bringing Men on the Journey with Julie Moss

Equality Talks. Brought to you by Work 180. Where we discuss how to finally put an end to workplace discrimination. Let's talk about what it really takes to succeed, what people are doing to drive equality and what can still be done.

Samantha Sutherland:

Julie Moss is a Senior Diversity and Inclusion Organizational Development and Learning Professional currently working at TransGrid, where she's developing and implementing the strategies for diversity and inclusion and mental health and wellbeing in the workplace. With a career spanning 25 years, she's taken up, down and sideways moves, completed an undergraduate degree in English and Education as a mature age student while raising two children. Julie became interested in D&I when it first emerged as an area of focus. So has been in the industry as it's evolved over the last decade. She's an avid reader, likes getting her hands dirty in the garden, travel, and spending time with her family and friends. Thank you so much for joining me today, Julie. I'm really excited to talk to you.

Julie Moss:

Thanks for having me, Sam.

Samantha Sutherland:

So, when I looked at your bio and some of the questions that you responded to before we talked, I was really interested in the fact that you got interested in D&I back in 2007 when it really first started emerging as a topic of interest, and I was wondering if you could talk a bit about your initial interest, and then some of the evolution that you've seen over the last 13 years in how people are paying attention to the work people are doing, and how the industry's evolved.

Julie Moss:

I think my interest in diversity and inclusion first started when I was working as a learning and development manager. And, we were rolling out some training for Unconscious Bias, and it was a particular interest of mine that people held these views and didn't really know that they held these views. And so, I gradually got more and more interested in what diversity inclusion actually meant, and the more I read about it, the more I was interested. And the company I was working with were just beginning on their journey, and you could see the difference in managers who would roll this training out too. They had aha moments. The penny was dropping. And so, I think that started my initial interest. And at the time, really, the diversity and inclusion role didn't really exist. It was part of organizational development. So, it's been an area that has evolved, and the industry has grown. Most companies now would have a focus on diversity and inclusion even if they don't actually have somebody who is looking

after that role on their own. So, it would still be part of the organizational development or the HR areas. So, it has become pretty entrenched in our society which is great.

Samantha Sutherland:

With Unconscious Bias training and you said you really saw a difference in the managers who had that training. Do you have an example of a story where someone had a really good aha moment or something really cut through with the training and the way you did it?

Julie Moss:

Yeah. There was a situation where I had a small team and I had to allocate their pay increases for the year, from my pay increase bucket, and I allocated them pretty equally across the three people. One was a woman, the other two were men, and my manager had to approve that. And he said, "Why did you give the woman, why did you give her this amount, this higher amount of money than the other two?" And I said, "Well, because her performance has been much better, therefore I've given her just slightly higher, nothing major." And he said, "Well, I'd rather that you just split it between the two men and not give her as much, because her husband earns lots of money. "And these guys both actually support their families." Now, he was a lovely, lovely manager. He wasn't evil, he wasn't horrible, and I was gobsmacked. And I said, "Do you really think that that is fair?" I said, "You've just gone through the Unconscious Bias training. Do you not think that this is an Unconscious Bias?" So, I had the training to use as my argument. And, he stopped and he thought, and he went bright red and said, "I think you're right. I've just done that." So, if I hadn't had called him on it, and if I hadn't have brought the training into being... And that is just such a blatant example, and yet it happened.

Samantha Sutherland:

Back then I think it started, like you said, with Unconscious Bias was the major focus, and that's really changed over time now where Unconscious Bias is a part of what people are still talking about, but it's much more broad than that now.

Julie Moss:

Yeah, well, that's right. Along the way, certainly, they did start with the gender focus, but things have been added along the way. Most recently domestic violence a few years ago, and also, which was obviously something that needed to be added into the conversation. And also, more recently mental health. So, in some companies mental health sits with health and safety, in others it does sit with diversity and inclusion. So, I think it's just a strategy decision on where that one sits. Mental health certainly sits within my remit at TransGrid.

Samantha Sutherland:

And so, I wondered, if there's someone who's listening and might not be really embedded in the industry, what do you mean when you say that domestic violence and mental health have been added to diversity and inclusion, to that conversation?

Julie Moss:

Well, as we learn more about the importance of domestic violence, domestic violence has an impact on the workplace. Because, it just doesn't happen in isolation in people's homes. People who are perpetrators, people who are victims are in the workplace, and it's costing Australia billions in our economy by not addressing this. And I think corporations do have a role to play in addressing this. We

can't just leave it all to the government, and I think things move slowly when you expect the government to do everything, anyway. So, corporates have lifted their game on some of these social issues, which is good to see, and including what we saw with marriage equality too, with LGBTIQ+. So, these things have been added to the agenda as society has changed and expected them to be. So, I think corporates have both responded to what society wants and also they've led the way as well.

Samantha Sutherland:

Yeah, I think that's really interesting actually the fact that corporations are now... I mean, I think they probably always have to a degree in various different forms, but corporations are leading the way with some of this stuff and actually putting best practice in place well ahead of the government making changes or changing policy or legislation or things like that. And so, actually are driving change culturally or in the space.

Julie Moss:

Yeah, they absolutely are. And I think all kudos to corporations who are doing that. If you didn't have corporates involved in any of this we really wouldn't see the social change that we're seeing.

Samantha Sutherland:

Yeah. So, I want to go back to one of the things you said a bit earlier when you were talking about the fact that domestic violence has become part of the conversation around diversity and inclusion now. And, you said it actually costs the economy a significant amount of money, and one of the things that I think is actually interesting and coming more to the forefront is the fact that your workplace and your personal life are totally intertwined. Like, the idea of leaving your home-life at home and your work-life at work, it doesn't really exist any more. What do you think about that in terms of the intertwining and then the change in expectation from corporates and also from employees?

Julie Moss:

Yeah, well, it is completely intertwined. I mean, social media and access to phones 24/7 has meant that that's been the way we've been working now for quite some time. However, what's been slower is corporates allowing people to have the flexibility from the workplace to actually just get things done. So, we still see that sense of presenteeism that you have to be in the office between certain hours, and that's been a bit of a lag with the uptake of flexibility. Now, we have been increasing, I'm talking from Australia-wide perspective in the use of flexibility in the workplace. But still, it's not nearly as high as it should be for men. And it's mostly women who've been forging the way for taking flexible work options. But certainly corporates have been fine with giving people phones, and wanting them to access work from home for many years. But you've got to have it both ways. And this is why your home-life bleeds into your work-life and vice versa, because, there isn't that demarcation anymore.

Samantha Sutherland:

Yes. And I agree with you especially on that point that workplaces have been fine giving out Blackberries back and that was how it was done, and getting people to take their work home but then the reverse, like for a long time I think it was, it enabled people to work 24/7 as opposed to, it was a bit more of a back and forth.

Julie Moss:

Yeah.

Samantha Sutherland:

And I think that that is shifting a bit.

Julie Moss:

Oh, it's shifting a lot. And certainly with what we've seen recently with the virus situation, you've got workplaces now testing out their work from home capability for all employees as a continuity of business strategy. So, it's enabled, it's just a case of shifting and this is something that we might see as another shift towards working from home. Working from home doesn't suit everybody anyway. Home isn't the safe place for some people, certainly not those in a domestic violence situation. But having that flexibility to work from wherever you want to be able to work from is key to getting stuff done in this modern age. I mean, how many people run their own businesses out of their own homes or the local cafe, and have meetings virtually, you really don't need to be in an office so much anymore.

Samantha Sutherland:

Yeah. And one of the things that you mentioned in some of the questions I asked you before this, is talking about some of your milestones, and you talked about increasing the number of men who are working flexibly and implementing a Share The Care parental leave policy, to increase the number of men who are taking parental leave. And so, that's something you just touched on just a minute ago, around flexibility and having more men doing that. Why is this an area of passion for you? And what's the impact you've seen of the things you've implemented at TransGrid around getting more men to take flexible work options?

Julie Moss:

We've got to include the men as much as possible. I mean, my experience is that men want to help, but they just don't always know how to. And you've got to frame the arguments from their perspectives and more access for men to parental leave and flexibility has a better outcome for women down the track. So, I mean, I'm working in an environment where we're around 75% men, and there are a good number of men who want to work flexibly, but they've always felt that they can't work flexibly, even though we had the right policies in place. Because their perception was that it was for the women. So, it was about changing that perception and also training managers as well who sometimes had that view, that it was really just for the women. So, more men have been putting their hands up. If you've got everybody working flexibly, then who to promote becomes less of an issue because everybody's working flexibly. So, you can't say, well, that looks much better because he's working five days a week and she's only working four, and she might go off and have another child. You take that argument completely off the table when the bloke is also working flexibly, and also can take parental leave.

Samantha Sutherland:

Yeah. I really liked that you said who to promote becomes less of an issue when everybody's working flexibly, everybody's involved in domestic care and domestic labour, because it re-balances it. So, it's not that you have half the population who are less available at work.

Julie Moss:

Now, that's right. And whilst no manager these days is likely to say, well, I'm hiring the man because he's in the office more frequently, but these ideas are entrenched in our society. So, even though they're not being said, they're still being thought.

Samantha Sutherland:

Yeah. Well, that's absolutely right. Like Australia has a really strong male breadwinner model. So, that means the broad expectation with that if you're not actually thinking about it, is that the guy is going to be the one who makes all the money and the woman who's going to be the one who does all the care at home even if she's working.

Julie Moss:

Yeah.

Samantha Sutherland:

And the training that you did with Unconscious Bias would have shown you how people have these ingrained thoughts and they just come up really quickly without even being aware of them.

Julie Moss:

Yeah. Well, that's exactly right. And, were now in a situation where whilst men are still the main breadwinners, the decision of who goes back to work when the couple has a child is still based around the financial decision of who owns the most money. And so, it's the man who ends up going back to work. And that's why the gender pay gap is such an important thing to try and get rid of or try and minimize as much as possible. Because people are still making those decisions even if it is the man who wants to stay home with his children. If his partner hasn't been earning as much, he's the one who ends up going back.

Samantha Sutherland:

Yeah.

Julie Moss:

And so, it just keeps on perpetuating.

Samantha Sutherland:

Yeah. That's exactly right. So, I read a statistic that women's salaries on average peak when they're 31, and men's salaries peak on average when they're 41.

Julie Moss:

Yeah.

Samantha Sutherland:

And that's basically, 31 is probably on average when women go off to have babies. And so their income level then stalls. And then of course there is stuff like taking unpaid leave and going back part time and stuff all of that, it's all part of the same picture.

Julie Moss:

Yeah. I mean, it'd be interesting to see how that pans out with longitudinal studies. Because if somebody's peaking at 31 that would have been a while ago, because really their income, they would've had to have almost been at retirement age to see where that has actually peaked. Because if-

Samantha Sutherland:

Oh, interesting point. I see what you mean. So, I'm 40 now, and my income peaked at 31, I exactly fit the scenario.

Julie Moss:

But how do you know that that's not going to increase?

Samantha Sutherland:

Go back up later.

Julie Moss:

Yeah. Because mine did. So, I-

Samantha Sutherland:

So, did you have a peak and then a trough, and then it went back up again?

Julie Moss:

Yeah. So mine peaked, I would have set it about 28, and then it went very flat for a while, up until my early 40s. And then that's when I took my career. That's when I made the decision to work full time again, and to really push my career in a particular direction. So, now I'm earning more than I ever have done before.

Samantha Sutherland:

Oh, good challenge to the statistic.

Julie Moss:

Yeah.

Samantha Sutherland:

That gives me a bit of hope, I like that.

Julie Moss:

So yes, don't think that it's, it could be just a period in time.

Samantha Sutherland:

Yeah.

Julie Moss:

And I think we do suffer sometimes from thinking that career trajectories are only upwards, and that we are only being successful if we are going to a higher paid job, and moving up the corporate ladder whereas really success looks very different for different people and it can be up, down, sideways. And, it's about building in life's challenges along the way. I mean, some people have to leave work to look after family members, they have to take a backward step to look after children, whatever the reason, that doesn't mean to say that you can't get back into the workforce and absolutely give it a red hot go.

Samantha Sutherland:

That's actually something I wanted to ask you about, because you said that in your own work experience, you've gone up, you've gone down, you've gone sideways. You've made different changes. You've put the pedal back down to the middle again when you were in your early 40s, so, can we talk about some of the decisions you made that were maybe taking a step back or taking a sideways step and how you felt when you decided to take those moves and then what the impact of them was too? Because I also think, I've had a few conversations with people recently, who've taken a step back to learn something new, and it's almost been like pulling the bow back to let the arrow fly. Like they've taken a step back and then really projected forward after that.

Julie Moss:

Yeah.

Samantha Sutherland:

So, I just wonder about your experience of that.

Julie Moss:

Yeah, well, that's what I did. I mean, I was working for a good 12 years in finance, in sales, and traveling all over the world, doing all long hours. But, when I had two young children, that became nigh on impossible. So, I had to look at something different, and that's when I was looking at getting into learning. Because learning was something that I really enjoyed. And I think it's a case of sitting down and looking at what floats your boat? What do you really enjoy doing? So, I looked at the job that I did, and the part of the job that I enjoyed was talking to people and training them and helping them with solutions. And I'm thinking, okay, well, maybe learning's for me. So, I did go and do a cert four, and that's also what I, I did my degree in education as well. Because I didn't know where it was going to lead me, but it did lead me into a corporate job and it was great, but you have to go backwards to go forward.

Julie Moss:

That was a little igniter. Originally, when I first got into learning, had a very different to my high flying job as a sales manager, national sales manager. So, in the case of finding what we enjoy doing and getting rid of those stereotypes that are bugging you in your ear the whole time telling you that you really should be moving upwards and earning more money. But if you're doing what you're doing and you're enjoying it, that's what counts and it's leading to other things. So, I've found that now looking back at my career, as it stands at the moment, everything has happened for a reason, everything's contributed to where I am now, whether it's been a high flying job or being a learning coordinator.

Samantha Sutherland:

Right. Yes. So, I had a really interesting conversation with a colleague recently, which is similar to what you're saying. And she was saying, there's all this focus on how many women are CEOs of ASX 200 companies or executive leadership in those companies. And she said, being CEO of an ASX 200 company is a single minded pursuit. And a lot of women don't actually want to do that. They want to have friends and family and see their kids and have hobbies and do things outside of work. And so, success is not just a singular definition, which has as far up the career path as you can make it. I prefer up the ladder as you can make it. It also can be all the other things that bring you joy in your life, and all the things you do, and doing something that you love. And, like in your case, studying and looking after your kids and doing

work that you really care about, and making a career change, that is success, because it's made you happier.

Julie Moss:

Yeah. That's exactly right. You have to decide what is, I mean, we can all have it all, but you just have to define what having it all means for you. So, for me having it all meant working part time so that I kept up with my career. I kept up that human contact of adult conversation and friendships and achieving at work. But I also had the time with the children at home doing my, Play-Doh thing and going to the zoo with them and enjoying the time with them. But, if I had been full time in work, I know that I would have felt guilty and I wouldn't have enjoyed what I was doing. And if I'd been at home the whole time, I know I would have been resentful with the children. So, for me having it all meant having a balance of both and just accepting that I was doing that whilst they were at school through their school years. So, I only went back to work full time when they started high school.

Samantha Sutherland:

Okay. So, when they were like 12ish?

Julie Moss:

Yeah.

Samantha Sutherland:

Okay.

Julie Moss:

So, when my youngest was 12. Yeah.

Samantha Sutherland:

Okay. Yeah. And I suppose also then on that, having it all you say, I like what you've said about how you, you have to define yourself what having it all means.

Julie Moss:

Yeah.

Samantha Sutherland:

Because you don't know what the same thing, but also it means within your own career and life, what it all is will change as well.

Julie Moss:

Yeah. I would have had no idea where I was heading back when I was in my 20s. Certainly the job I'm doing now didn't even exist. I mean, that's what we hear a lot about, jobs are changing so much with AI, et cetera. But, even 30 years ago, some of the jobs we're doing now didn't exist. So, you have to. These are evolving all the time. And as a result, we have to evolve all the time as well, and just assess what's out there and what interests us.

Samantha Sutherland:

And so, how do you think someone can go about doing that? Did you take deliberate steps? Did you do a really conscious look at your life and what you liked, or how did that happen?

Julie Moss:

Yeah, I did have a look at what I enjoyed doing at work. There's always aspects of your job that you do like, and there's always aspects that you don't like. And, occasionally, we all know that in the workplace, people, departments are reorganized, people come in they leave, and there're new roles being created all the time. And so, what I did was, decided what I did like, and try to get rid of the bits of the jobs that I didn't like. So, certainly when I was a learning manager, I really enjoyed doing some parts of it but not other parts of it. And I was really interested in D&I. So, that's when I put a business case up to my manager to say, we should be doing more in this D&I space. But if we do that, and I'm keen to do that, I will need somebody to help me with some of these other tasks. And so, those other tasks become opportunities for different people as well, because what doesn't interest you certainly might interest other people.

Samantha Sutherland:

I want to touch on that. Most people leave because of their managers. So, Custom Insight it's a platform where a lot of companies do employee engagement surveys and things like that. And they looked at 16,000 data points and discovered that of the top 10 reasons why people leave a role or leave an organization, six of them are to do with management, to do with a manager. And so, the direct line manager has a massive impact. And so, I wonder what advice would you give to somebody who has that scenario where they've joined a company, because I've had that, where I had taken my dream job, absolutely on paper dream job, and I left because of management. And, so what advice would you give to someone who finds himself in that position where they had amazingly high hopes and they love the work, and they're wanting to leave because of management. What would you say?

Julie Moss:

Yeah, gosh, it's hard because each situation is so different. I know in one role I stayed, I thought, no, I'm not leaving. Because, I really enjoy what I'm doing. I'm going to dig my heels in and stay. And, I'm glad I did because that person ended up being removed. You've got to look at the culture I think. Is that behaviour being tolerated or put up with. So, for my instance, this wasn't being tolerated and they managed to get this person out. But, at another company that's because the culture itself was pretty average. And you could see that even though there was bad behaviour from certain managers, it was tolerated. And it was not going to change. So, you either had to put on a very, very thick skin and get on with it or leave. And, I think it also depends on where you are in your own career as well, and your own sense of resilience, but you really have to look at all the factors before you make that decision.

Samantha Sutherland:

I really like what you just said about looking at whether it's a cultural issue that is going to be accepted or whether it's something that actually is an anomaly and there might be something being done about it. That is really the key difference, isn't it? Like, working in a place that has a terrible culture can be quite soul-destroying. Because I think the thing, there's a Jim Rohn quote, which is that, you are the sum of the five people you spend the most time with. And you spend a lot of time with people from work.

Julie Moss:

Yeah.

Samantha Sutherland:

And so, if you're spending time with people who are behaving in a way and have values that are totally different to your own, it will affect you. I just don't think it's possible that it won't affect you at all.

Julie Moss:

No, that's right. I mean, it has to rub off on you. I mean, it's exhausting.

Samantha Sutherland:

Yeah.

Julie Moss:

It just takes up so much energy to go to work when you've got somebody draining you that much. But is it one person whose draining you or is it the entire culture, and that's what you have to decide. I mean, it's taken me years to really get to the point where I have realized just how important the culture of a workplace is.

Samantha Sutherland:

So, I want to ask you about another theme that has run through a few of the things you've talked about. So you said, when you first started doing the Unconscious Bias training, you really noticed the difference in the managers who had done that training. And then you said when you were trying to introduce more flexibility for men at TransGrid and getting more men to take flex leave and paternity leave and stuff like that. And you said, there's a change in perception, and then also a change in managers attitudes, and bringing the managers along that journey. And then, when you said about the mental health stuff and the mental health training and awareness and reducing stigma, you also said there that a lot of values around training for managers around how to identify it and how to deal with it.

Samantha Sutherland:

And so, a lot of your work in diversity and inclusion categories involves bringing the manager on the journey or the managers on the journey, like say you can actually shift the culture. And I wanted to ask a bit more about that. So like, how important is that like, am I correct in that thing that I've picked up, and how hard is that, and what do you do if there're managers really aren't engaged in that change process?

Julie Moss:

So, there's only so much you can do. People have to change their own thinking. So, through learning, I mean, I've got a learning background, so I guess I've got to bend towards learning. But certainly if you give people information and they have to process it themselves and think about it and think about their own attitudes to things, that's when you can see the penny drop. If you have leaders, CEOs, senior leaders, just talking about how important diversity and inclusion is and mental health. People don't see the what's in it for me. So, they have to see the what's in it for them. And so, whilst it's important to be led from the top and to have leaders saying these things, you also need people to go on their own journey and have those aha moments. When you do see culture change in a company that's usually what you see is the people who are not aligned with the values, end up leaving.

Samantha Sutherland:

Right. Yeah. I like that. Actually you said is that when you're trying to change the whole culture, the people who are resisting that change start to stand out, don't they?

Julie Moss:

Yeah, they do. And before they were flying under the radar, because no one was calling them out, their behaviour was accepted. Everybody walked past it. They just said, oh, that's the way he is or that's the way she is, a bit but then that does change.

Samantha Sutherland:

So, actually had a really fascinating conversation yesterday with the Australian Managing Director, or General Manager of Splunk, which is one of WORK180 has endorsed in place, and their culture is amazing. I mean, obviously I haven't worked there, but talking to him about what the values are and how they try and embed the culture is amazing. And he was saying it like, the number one thing they do is higher for culture. And they really are open about like, this is what we believe in, and this is how we live. And, so if you don't believe in this, if you don't truly believe in this. You won't last here, anyway you won't thrive here anyway. And, because it's so embedded, and because people love it so much, it actually now has become the case that the employees themselves help protect the culture.

Samantha Sutherland:

And so, if something is happening that's really outside the values of the organization, people just employees are empowered to bring it up with him, and to talk to him personally about it and to make that change and bring them back in alignment with their values, which I thought was really impressive to have that level of psychological safety, and that level of care and engagement about what the values are.

Julie Moss:

Well, you get to a point where there's a critical mass.

Samantha Sutherland:

Yeah.

Julie Moss:

And that's the point you're trying to get to. Certainly with a lot of the D&I stuff I don't spend too much time on the people I can't change. You've got your group at the top who are gung ho, believe everything about diversity and inclusion and really great supporters and advocates. Then you have a really vast group in the middle who just say, I just come to work to get paid. I don't care. I really don't care. And then you've got the few at the end who are digging their heels in and saying, this is all rubbish. So, you just go for that middle section that can be swayed with some of the arguments and say well, these are the facts and people will get it when they see the facts. They go like, hey that makes sense. So, that's where I think most of the change can be made.

Samantha Sutherland:

Interesting. And so, then both people will help you reach the critical mass. So, the people who are really resistant to it end up not wanting to stay at that company anymore?

Julie Moss:

Yeah.

Samantha Sutherland:

With your career, and all the things you've seen over your entire career and then with your focus on diversity and inclusion in the last 13 years, what do you think are the top three things that would really change the game in Australia in terms of diversity and inclusion and opportunity for women and flexible men all that stuff? Like, what do you think are the top three things that would drive positive change?

Julie Moss:

I think the corporates are actually doing all they can. They're doing a lot. So, certainly with, policy parental leave for example, let's just looking at parental leave. Yes, the government now has its policy in place. But, when you look at those European countries, Denmark's, Sweden's and the like. The government have really, really done a lot towards the equality piece. It's not been the corporates so much, it's actually being government. And in Australia, it's more of the corporates who are doing it. So, for example, in some of those country's childcare is funded, and it's treated from day one, from zero to five, that we pay huge amounts of money for, which also feeds the decision on whether to go back to work or not because it's so expensive. But in those countries, the government treat it as part of the education system.

Julie Moss:

So, it's free education. So, people are only paying \$90 a month, as opposed to, we're paying \$200 a day. There's a vast difference. And those are the things that make people make the decisions they're making. So, we can say, well, why aren't more women in the workforce? Well, there's a good reason.

Samantha Sutherland:

Yes. So you know how in Sweden they have really high paternity leave rates.

Julie Moss:

Yeah.

Samantha Sutherland:

So they actually introduced two years of parental leave that could be taken by either parent.

Julie Moss:

Yup.

Samantha Sutherland:

And their stats actually didn't change until there were still only like 2% of men taking paternal leave.

Julie Moss:

Yeah.

Samantha Sutherland:

And then they changed it and said that it had to be taken by the other partner. Like, not obviously you could have same sex marriages by the non initial primary carer parents,

Julie Moss:

Yeah.

Samantha Sutherland:

It had to be taken by that person, if they didn't take it they would lose it. So, the initial primary carer couldn't take the whole two years. And when they said that, then everything changed.

Julie Moss:

Yeah. That's right. Then the change. So, they had had, I'm not sure if it was Sweden or Denmark actually, but they have had those equality parental leave things in place since the 1970s.

Samantha Sutherland:

Yeah.

Julie Moss:

It was incredible. So, I think government policy is certainly something that would make a big change. And the other thing is just to try and get more men involved. We still keep seeing parental leave, flexibility, equality, the gender pay gap as a women's issue, and the men and not as engaged as they should be. They should be advocating for this just as much.

Samantha Sutherland:

How do you think we get more men involved and engaged in advocating for things like flex to look after their children?

Julie Moss:

So, we make it more about them, about the what's in it for them. I mean, everybody has a personal view. I mean, that's why women are advocating for these things because there's a win for them, but there's also a win for men as well. Diversity Council of Australia just recently put out an infographic that explains what's in it for men, why gender equality is good for men and good for women. And, that's worth having a look at. Because it helps with the male argument of why it's important. Men who want to stay home with their children can't, currently in many companies because they're the main breadwinner. So, they end up having to go back to work even if they were the ones who wanted to stay home. So, it's impacting, that gender equality thing is and the pay gap is affecting men's decisions also.

Samantha Sutherland:

Yeah. That's true. Actually, like guys feeling trapped in jobs that they maybe don't want to stay in because they have to look after their family and things like that. In terms of that article you just mentioned, I will share that in the show notes. If you're listening, you can go to WORK180.CO and the link will be there in this article.

Julie Moss:

I know that when we could Share The Care in September last year at TransGrid, we've had a good number of men. And when I say that there's probably been, six or seven who've now put in for The Share The Care option and to take some leave over and above the men who take the secondary care leave. So there's a keenness. They really are keen to do that.

Samantha Sutherland:

So, can you tell me a little bit more about what The Share The Care the initiative is?

Julie Moss:

You got to remember, we've got a very high male population. So, we don't have too many people taking primary care leave. So, what we put in place was an option for secondary carers which is primarily men to take over the primary care at any time during the first year. So, it's just treated in the same way as any other primary care option. We also have coaching for people going on primary care leave. So, that's with career coaching and that's been very helpful and we do that for women as well. So at first we had men going, oh, no, I don't need that. But, couple of the men who did take it up originally then said, that was really helpful. That was right. And so, the word spread a little bit that that was a good thing to have. So that's, again, your culture is quite often spread by word of mouth.

Samantha Sutherland:

Yeah. And you need those early adopters too, hey?

Julie Moss:

Yeah. That's right. There was a study beginning of last year. It might've been the year before now to say. Men suffer just as much from postnatal depression. It's just in a different format. So, that's an important thing. And it's because of that study that I put this coaching in place for the men as well. So, it's a full package and we've got terms and childcare options for vacation care, a subsidy for vacation care as well.

Samantha Sutherland:

Amazing. Now the question that I really like to finish on when I do these podcast interviews is, if you could go back in time, 10 years or 15 years and talk to young Julie, knowing everything you know, and everything you've seen unfold and all the changes you've seen in your career, and what you've learned and done and how you've grown, what would you say to her? What advice would you give to her? What would you tell her to look out for?

Julie Moss:

Yeah. I think when I first started out, I had a blind faith in people choosing or helping people in the workplace based on merit, that you were going to get a job based on merit, I never really realized that there was a gender issue. I hadn't been brought up that way. And yet it just kept on dawning on me along the way that actually the word gender issues and some quite big ones. And so, I think I would have told myself that be more aware of that, and certainly don't dismiss that. Oh, no, no, no. I'm going to get to where I'm going to get without any problems. And, I'm a hard worker and I know my stuff therefore I will succeed because there still is a lot of bias, a lot of self interest, a lot of human beliefs in the world. And you have to be able to, I think you're better off if you're savvy about them. So, I think I would give the advice to myself to be more savvy about that, about gender discrepancies.

Speaker 2:

I really hope you enjoyed today's chat. If you can help us spread the word by giving us a review on iTunes, that helps even more people find Equality Talks. To find out more about our mission. Check out current opportunities with WORK180 endorsed employers, and to read and listen to more inspiring stories. Please head over to WORK180.CO. That's WORK180.CO. See you next time.