

# edit 2

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## SPEAKERS

Kit, Moana

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**M** Moana 00:00  
Kit, lovely to have you on.

**K** Kit 00:01  
Hello Mo, how are you?

**M** Moana 00:03  
Oh, you're a vibe! Anyone that doesn't know I'm talking about, I've got this woman in front of me. Really cool shirt, vibe but the hair's on, glasses are in. I'm down with all that.

**K** Kit 00:13  
Yeah, it's happening. We need to talk about menopause. It's very cool.

**M** Moana 00:16  
No, you know what, we should talk about it? Because I feel like everything that's got to do with women and what women go through is always put into a go deal with it on your own type thing, but I will about talking about it. Because the more we can talk about it, the more we can all learn as women and also men can know what women go through.

**K** Kit 00:32  
Yeah, it's equality for all, it's good for everyone.

M Moana 00:35

And then let's bring it back to business. What can businesses do to support people so that's why I'm bringing you in!

K Kit 00:40

Yeah, so here's the thing, right? There are women in workplaces today that have perimenopause and menopause. I know, shocker.

M Moana 00:51

Pause that for a second, right? Because I didn't know there were two separate things until Alice my producer told me. Okay, and guess what? I'm a woman - didn't know. Should've told me in school. Yeah, they didn't. We're too busy learning numbers or something about shapes

K Kit 01:05

and Shakespeare. Okay, so let's do this. So many menopause. The technical definition of menopause is when you haven't had a period for 12 months. And here's the thing, you might have a period for 12 months, and then you might have one. So it's a definition but between the definition and real life, there's a bit of difference. Now perimenopause, the word "peri" just means "around about" menopause. So the perimenopause is kind of what happened leading in

M Moana 01:33

It's like the preseason of the season.

K Kit 01:34

Here we go. You get all the all the bonuses.

M Moana 01:37

So how are you diagnosed with menopause then?

K Kit 01:41

Unfortunately, it's pretty tricky. So in the past, it's been, you don't have a period. But what we've been able to do Recently, because of research and people - the lack of research - but there's more research going into it recently, which is good. But we need more because we've

discovered there's about 35 symptoms associated with it.

**M** Moana 01:59  
35!

**K** Kit 02:00  
I know we get all the good stuff, don't we? So it's not only - people get caught up with the sweats the hot flushes, right?

**M** Moana 02:07  
That's what I thought because I had, I had one of my favorite guests on I forgot forgotten her name, but she was talking about - she was going through menopause. And I was like, "you've got the hot sweats?" She goes, "that's not it." I go, "there's more?"

**K** Kit 02:17  
There is more.

**M** Moana 02:18  
Yeah, there's 35 apparently!

**K** Kit 02:20  
So it's things like... you'll hear people talk about they feel foggy. You'll hear people say that they feel a bit anxious or angry, often.

**M** Moana 02:30  
I'm already feeling those things.

**K** Kit 02:32  
Yeah. Right? You'll hear people talk about the fact that they have dry skin, or crampy legs. It can affect the way you have sex with people too. It can it can create problems there. Right. So it's a really broad range of symptoms. And the challenge is that because we don't talk about it, because there's a thing that happens with women and health is that it's not well investigated, right?

M Moana 03:00

It's kind of like it's a woman's thing. It's your issue, go deal with it and be quiet.

K Kit 03:03

Be quiet about it. Don't talk about it. But because we don't talk about it, there are women that suffer this. So there are about 3 million women with menopause at the moment in Australia. One in three suffer with really bad symptoms - most women doesn't happen, right? Yeah. But you can get it from about age say 30-40 onwards.

M Moana 03:24

So one in three at the moment are going through at the moment?

K Kit 03:26

And really badly.

M Moana 03:28

So what's your definition of badly because I get horrible periods.

K Kit 03:33

And it's not normal. Let's be honest. Right? It's not normal.

M Moana 03:36

Apparently I've just found that recently, yeah.

K Kit 03:38

What's bad? Oh, it stops you working? Stops you going out? It stops you living your life. That's anything that's gonna modify you having a healthy functioning, well, life is a problem.

M Moana 03:50

Do you know what it's kind of like? For me, I don't know what it feels like to go through menopause. So when you say that I'm like, "what do you mean?" But it's kind of like, when I used to think about pregnancy I used to go "seems alright"

used to think about pregnancy I used to go, seems alright.

K

Kit 04:02

Yeah. What's the problem?

M

Moana 04:04

And then I did it. And then I was like, hardest thing I've ever done. It's like the most exhausting, taxing, mentally challenging thing I've ever done? Yeah. But it's not until you go through it that you'll get it. So can I bring it back to a business perspective the because I'm in my business that we're talking about potentially implementing something like menopause leave, which is great. A lot of businesses though, a lot of CEOs, a lot of John's and David's who don't know what it's like to go through menopause, right? How do businesses implement something that they don't actually fully understand it?

K

Kit 04:38

Yep. So what will happen and what we know now from evidence and research in business research to is that women leave the workforce because of it. Right?

M

Moana 04:47

What's the percentage?

K

Kit 04:48

Well, it's about 13%. And what that means is low productivity - that we know of, Mo, that we know of. So women will leave it, they will lose superannuation, it'll affect their ability to keep a roof over their head, a whole range of things not good. But there's a lot of women that suffer with it and don't say anything. And what they might do is go down to part time. Or they'll think it's their fault. So it'll affect their mental health and well being.

K

Kit 05:14

If you want to retain talent, if you want to stop spending money on recruitment, if you want to retain the good oil that's in your organisation, what you want to do is create workplaces that are good to be in and that you want to stick with. This is one of those things, we now have leave being considered for, you know, religious days, we have leave for pregnancy. We have leave for all different phases of life for wellbeing and health, right? This has got to be one of those types of leaves, and there is no time better than starting now.

M

Moana 05:50

So if in my business where I was going to have a roundtable which I am this week to discuss it. How do you implement such leave? What amount of days you'd allocate?

**K** Kit 05:59

So in Australia, there's some really good examples - actually Future Super is one of the superannuation funds, you can actually go and look at their leave policy online to see what they do. So when you offer a leave policy, generally people put it together or can put it together with menstrual leave. Because what we know is - you talked about having really hard, bad periods. There's a recognition now that people need leave for that as well, because it can disrupt.

**M** Moana 06:26

It destroys me, I'm in bed two days.

**K** Kit 06:28

Yeah, it's awful. And you shouldn't have to feel like you've got to push through, because then it can add and contribute to ongoing ill health and negative outcomes for yourself and the organisation. So what they do is they often combine it with with menstrual leave. And on average, what's the people attending to do is giving six days extra leave. On top of personal leave.

**M** Moana 06:52

A year?

**K** Kit 06:53

Yeah. Use it or lose it like menstrual or like, personal leave. And then the other thing that they're doing is they're offering fixed flexible work from home, right? So sometimes, you're faced with these symptoms, and that's a very common experience. And it might mean, you just don't want to get changed into the high heels and the shoes and battle of public transport and the commute in you just want to stay home and do work. And that's part of the offer.

**M** Moana 07:18

Put your heat pack on your tummy. So would you say 10 days? Or sorry, six days? And you'd call it menstrual slash menopausal leave? Like so, it can be either.

**K** Kit 07:28

Yeah, absolutely. I mean, these days, really good organisations are also getting really used to the idea of family violence leave, right? Court leave? It's this idea that when we employ people, we employ the whole human. We don't employ a bit of them. You know, we employ whole of them.

M

Moana 07:44

That's just blows my effing mind like companies are implementing family violence leave? That's how bad this is in Australia, and companies are adapting yet governments do...

K

Kit 07:53

So what they've realised is that people's lives affect their work environment, right? You can't separate the two, right? So the sort of leader I like to be, is I know that I want, and I need my people to bring their best selves all the day, because I'm asking them to do things that are really tricky, right? To go and have conversations about equality, and sexual and reproductive health and carry resistance and backlash, right? I want them to be honest with me, I want them to be who they are. But at the same time, I want to run an honest organisation whereby if they've got a challenge with their health, I want to give them the flexibility to be honest about that. And we can accommodate them. That's just called being having human rights. But the other thing too, is I want to keep them.

M

Moana 08:39

Well yeah, that's what you want, yeah

K

Kit 08:42

So that's part of it. You know, this menopause/menstrual leave. People are real, don't let them lie about it. Don't let them have to tell fibs to their organisation.

M

Moana 08:50

Don't make them feel bad.

K

Kit 08:50

Don't make them feel bad, don't make them feel worse. But the other really good thing too, is the evidence shows that change the conversation regarding equality within the organisation as well. So you can't just sit and forget these policies you got to do with a training a bit of build up a bit of talking to the community, into the staff about it. But it actually creates the opportunity for it to become normalised - to not become something that's odd.

M Moana 09:12

What do you say to those people where if they were like talking about menstrual leave, or paternity leave, and they just go women just need too much? Like it's too much?

K Kit 09:19

Oh, I know

M Moana 09:20

Because that you hear that? What do you say?

K Kit 09:23

I say? No, we don't we get paid less. That's the first thing I talked about the pay gap. And then I talk -

M Moana 09:29

Isn't it funny that women go through something that their bodies naturally go through, because women carry the babies. And I've said this to our guests, I was like, what happens if women decide, "hey, let's stop having babies."

K Kit 09:40

That's it.

M Moana 09:40

What's going to happen

K Kit 09:41

I know, so here's the thing, if you're born with ovaries, and a lot of people are estrogen floods your body unless you do something to change it right? Or at least something happens to you. And that's happening for more than half the population, right? So to almost ignore that It's like ignoring mental ill health. It's like ignoring accidents in the workplace. It's like ignoring workplace health and safety. It's like ignoring sexual harassment in the workplace. It's ridiculous to do so. Because it just perpetuates this idea, it makes it exclusive, it discriminates and oppresses people. And that's no good for anyone.



M

Moana 10:23

And then another one, what about where people will go, "well, if women get that, what do I get as a man? What if they get six days? And I want six days? Because you know, equal = equality?"

K

Kit 10:34

So, let's talk about that. Because I think that's really, really good. Like we talk about menopause and menstrual leave. For women, people with ovaries, why don't we have conversations also to about parental leave for blokes? It's not exclusive. If your kids sick? Well, why don't you take that leave to go and look after your kid the partner leave? That's why we start talking about not maternal leave anymore, but parental leave. Why don't we talk about wellbeing leave? So it's not just a woman's problem. That leave is about well being and retention all over. You know, we have bereavement we have, but family violence leave is for anyone, regardless of gender. And it just so happens that women need it more than men because of the way the world is. But similarly, that leave should be available to men to go and help if they need to.

M

Moana 11:29

Alice, my producer just told me my ear that there's also transitioning leave now. So if somebody is going through transitioning companies are giving them leave.

K

Kit 11:37

Absolutely. Which is great. Or leave if you're going through IVF.

M

Moana 11:44

I didn't know this, because then people don't actually understand how hard IVF is. I watched my ex wife go through the IVF. I got pregnant through IUI which is just through insemination, which is only 15% chance of happening. Yeah, but I watched her go through IVF and it gets you! It mentally gets you. The hormones do to you, you don't know.

K

Kit 12:08

No, you don't and it's often it's a bit of a secret business to do with IVF I think that needs to be talked about more. But similarly IVF leave can be for the partners of those people. Adoption leave. The bigger picture here is if we want people to work for us, if we want them to stay with us, if we want them to bring their whole selves and their whole talent and be present, then we've got to give them the environment to do that and treat them as whole people and human and not get them to pretend that there's something in their world that we gotta ignore.

M Moana 12:39  
Say it louder for the people in the back.

K Kit 12:41  
Oh yeah. Just bring your whole self!

M Moana 12:44  
Don't go anywhere -

K Kit 12:45  
Treat people as humans

M Moana 12:45  
- we've got more right after this.

M Moana 12:46  
I'm Moana Hope and you're listening to Entrepreneur Her. With me, I have Kit McMahon, who is the CEO of Women's Health in the South East of Melbourne. Kit, before the break, we're talking about leave, differently leave types of companies can put in. I think it's a smart business decision to put in leaves that cover everyone, not just women, just everyone in general. Because I know that once you have good staff, you keep them - business is good. It takes a long time to train people and to gain their trust.

K Kit 13:25  
And yeah, the moment Australia keeps talking about how it's in a skills crisis. So and we knew from COVID, that the after the COVID, there was a turnover of staff and they just, you know, turnover people. People will work for organisations that make them feel rewarded. And there's strong evidence to say that that's not just about money, that that's about doing good work, having a feeling of contribution and belonging, and being treated with respect, right. And those demands are increasing as generational change comes through our workforces. So if you look like organisations like Adobe, Future Super, even Diageo, who makes the Guinness and the spirits, they are introducing these policies, and these are highly profitable organisations. They're introducing these policies, because it just makes sense, right? But it's part of a suite of leave. It's not just about women's problems, right? It's about wellbeing. It's about the knowledge that we ask people to do a lot. We want them to stay. And so to do that, we're going

to offer a range of conditions. And I think when you think about it if you're a business person, and you're an employer and a manager, and you think about it in that context, it makes complete business sense. And the evidence is there to show it.

M Moana 14:40

And you're also talking about domestic violence leave. That's the first time I've heard of this.

K Kit 14:44

Yeah. So family violence leave is there's a lot of organisations or government organisations who have got this now as part of their leave provision. What it recognises is that if you are a victim in whatever shape of family violence, your workplace can support you through that. And that can be things like going to court, being with a child. Because going through court proceedings for family violence takes a lot of energy and takes a lot of time. And some of the family leave policies that I've seen offered up to 20 days of leave for that. Because it's just a horrible experience and they want to retain those people. But they do it also too because they recognise as an organisation, that they've got a role to stop this. And by saying, we recognise the prevalence of this, we know that if we employ people, the chances are sadly, that we will have people in our organisation who are victims of family violence. And so we want to support them through it because we want them to be well, or we want to be known for that to

M Moana 15:55

The thing is, yes, it's great. The business is doing that. It really is. But like, I'm gonna talk about one case that I know of just one case. And it was a man who took the life of his wife.

K Kit 16:09

I'm sorry.

M Moana 16:10

And he only got four years jail.

K Kit 16:13

And that hurts, doesn't it?

M Moana 16:14

It hurts because it's like that woman's never coming back. That woman was a mum, that woman was a daughter. You took that. And it's four years. And then you talk about the amount

of women that are losing - there was four women killed last week.

K

Kit 16:28

Yeah, we're up to more than one a week

M

Moana 16:30

Four women from domestic violence. And that's the hands of a current or former partner for last week, more than one a week. And yet this is a number that is only growing, yet nothing is changing. Like four years is like, I just don't understand it. It just really, really, really upsets me.

K

Kit 16:53

A sense of justice. Yeah. So I can't comment on too much on the court proceedings. But the sense of injustice, about the ongoing prevalence of this is something that many people hold dear. So family violence reforms, one of it, you see, in organisations and across community, things like white ribbon marches. You see Victorian government doing things like campaigns, to try to stop it, to try to actually change the gender drivers that lead to it.

M

Moana 17:23


But how do we actually stop it then? Because if these people are taking the lives - I spoke about on my Instagram, and people message me and I'm not even joking. You're right. It's hard to read this. Like, for example, one that stuck with me was a woman. It's like, "I am scared that I'm that next statistic. And I've told the place, and they just laughed at me." So what needs to change? I'm not saying all the police are like that. I'm not. But what needs to change?

K

Kit 17:48

All right. So here's the thing. We all have superpowers, right. And the superpowers that we all need to buy to will lead us to understand that we've all got a role to play. And we need to give ourselves space to work through it. So the first thing we need to do is we need to understand that it's prevalent. By the time it gets to the court for your very awful situation that you described. It's almost too late. You think of it like an iceberg, peak of the iceberg is what you described. But underneath, there's so much more, right? So we need to understand the prevalence, and we need to understand what drives it. And you and I have been here talking about menopause and menstrual policy. Believe it or not talking about that and normalising it is one of the things that reduces family violence over the long term because what happens is it creates equality and globally for decades, the evidence is in the thing that drives violence against women, the perpetration of gender based violence is the awful stereotypes around gender. That's what drives family violence. We think people are lesser than us, we think we can control them. So first superpower, understand prevalence. Second thing, understand what drives it. Then understand you can start to learn your skills to stand up and say something. A lot of people don't know how to be an active bystander. They think it's all white steed go in and


be a hero. It's not you don't have to. So learn how to be a bystander. Second thing learn how to manage resistance and backlash, particularly helpful in the workplace. When you get the things like, oh, "but it's all about women, why do women need..." - learn how to handle that. Third thing you need to do, if someone makes a disclosure, know what to do. Firstly, you don't have to fix it. But you can provide them options. only one number you need to know two numbers. 1800 Respect. It's on a website, great website. And if they're not safe, do not pass go. Triple 0. Call the police. So prevalence, what drives it, bystander, resistance backlash, know how to manage disclosure and then look after yourself.

 Moana 19:46

Thank you for your time. That's all right. How do people get ahold of you?

 Kit 19:49


So [whise.org.au](http://whise.org.au) And we've got a free webinar coming up on menopause and mental health. If you search [humanitix](http://humanitix.com) and WHISE, you'll find it there.

 Moana 19:57

Thank you for your time

 Kit 19:58

No Mo, anytime. Thank you.

 Moana 19:59

I'm Moana Hope and you are listening to Entrepreneur Her