

Female Announcer (00:02):

You are listening to The Safety Moment Podcast by Utility Safety Partners. Safety is always a good conversation and it's a click away. Here's your host, Mike Sullivan.

Mike Sullivan (00:16):

Hi everybody and welcome to The Safety Moment and Podcast. Thanks for joining us again today. My guest today is Fleur Yumol, she is with Unify and they provide employee assistance to multiple clients across, well not just Alberta, but everywhere that they have clients. And today we're going to be talking about wellness and what does that mean really, and how are we getting better as a society in providing a workplace that recognizes the best place to be is an organization that contributes or allows everybody to contribute in a setting that they can promote wellness, not just mentally but physically. Fleur thanks for joining us today. Really appreciate you being here. This is a bit of a treat and as you know, if you've listened to our podcast, anybody who listens to our podcasts we've allowed ourselves to expand our topics when we rebranded to The Safety Moment.

(01:17):

There's so much more that's involved when we think about safety and being ready for safety and being ready for the workday, being ready for the week and how we prepare for the week is really different for everybody. If you're working on a Monday to Friday then how you get ready on a Sunday night and ready on a Monday morning, it's different for everybody and we have to be ready for that week. And some of us take that for granted and others of us, I mean it, it's a struggle. So we wanted to talk about that today. I mean in very broad strokes. I mean we're talking about wellness. There's a greater focus I think today than at any other time for employees and employee employees alike to foster that culture of wellness. And I'm not just talking mental wellness, but just overall. So what are you seeing? And maybe before we get there I should really back up a little bit and tell me about yourself and how we've got here, how you got here.

Fleur Yumol (02:22):

Sure, sure. Thanks Mike. And I totally appreciate the opportunity and love talking about wellness. So I am trained as a clinical registered social worker. And so what that means is that I have a master's level in social work that allows me to provide counseling services to individuals, families, couples. And so that's really what my training is. But over the last 23 years as I've been doing this it's kind of evolved into more organizational wellness. So I now run a very small organizational company. And the industry that is probably most relevant to what we do is the employee assistance family program. So basically we contract out to corporate clients and they trust us to triage their employees to counselors in our network. And so we really provide that confidential, safe environment for employees to access services for their mental wellness. And so that's kind of the area that I've been specializing in for the last 10 years and love it.

(03:36):

And like you said, wellness has really changed over the course and particularly post pandemic during pandemic and even just the idea of wellness Mike, it means different things to different people. So that's kind of my background and that's probably why you've asked me to come is because I have a experience in this and that I see it in my day out. The company that I run we're 24 7. So we see the gamut from crisis calls to people who are at maintenance level. So when we talk about wellness, we can really look at it from that kind of spectrum. And that's how I look like to look at most things is from a spectrum perspective. So what does it look like? Because we don't want anyone to feel badly about

where they are on this spectrum. And knowing that there's movement along the spectrum I think is what makes it, I think, a bit easier to embark on a wellness journey.

Mike Sullivan ([04:38](#)):

Well, I mean the wellness and the word, it just seems to be a bit of a buzzword almost for, it's been around now for a little while, but it really isn't, I mean obviously as I just mentioned earlier from employers and employees alike there, there's that culture today that we have to foster that culture of wellness. But I'm not sure that everybody is really quite embracing it and the importance of it. And as I mentioned when we started our conversation, how people prepare themselves for the work week or just maybe an event or a family event or anything like that, it's really different for everybody. Some people look forward to it, others look at it as well, it's a necessary thing I have to do. And for an employer, we want to foster a culture where we have employees who are happy to come to work, mean the work still has to get done and there are performance metrics to meet and everything else, but we still need to foster that culture of wellness. What have you seen, I mean it's changed obviously the pandemic and I want to talk about that a little bit later, but what have you seen now over the last 10 years that shift to help employers and employees understand that we have to meet each other in the middle?

Fleur Yumol ([05:58](#)):

Well, and I think that you talk about, mention it, the conundrum that I think we face with wellness in general is the idea that we have obligations as adults. We have these obligations whether they're social or professional and we have to balance that with how we are in our day-to-day and how we're functioning. And so I think what I've seen change over the last 10 years is a greater understanding around how wellness actually contributes to the bottom line. I think before there was just an expectation that you have a job, you come and you do it and you leave your stuff at the door if you got personal stuff going on.

Mike Sullivan ([06:43](#)):

My generation, in other words, yeah, you're right, you're right

Fleur Yumol ([06:47](#)):

I wouldn't go there, but

Mike Sullivan ([06:48](#)):

It's true. No, I face it all the time. Yeah, it is

Fleur Yumol ([06:50](#)):

Totally, totally. And I think that that's the difference was a real suck it up princess, come to work, be ready to work. That's what you get paid for. And part of your job is to leave whatever's going on for you personally at home. And I think the shift has

Mike Sullivan ([07:07](#)):

And soldier on, right?

Fleur Yumol ([07:08](#)):

Yes. Pull up your bootstraps and you know, got a job to do. And I think the shift is that the employer has started to recognize the value of a well employee that really contributes to things like engagement and loyalty and retention and productivity. And I think the other shift has been that as an employer, I think there's a new recognition that it's part of our responsibility. So think about some of the things that are happening now with the other buzzword. It is psychological safety in the workplace. So the E D I staff and diversity and making sure that we are respectful of everybody's state in life. So there's really been this transition that if we're not attending to our employees wellness, that that's actually going to affect our bottom line. That as much as we would like everyone to leave their staff at the door come in and soldier on, we realize that people have limited resilience, particularly if we're not able to contribute to that wellness. So I would say, Mike, that's what I'm seeing is the biggest difference is that employers have, and organizations have come to recognize the value of employee wellness and recognize that they have a role in that.

Mike Sullivan ([08:37](#)):

And it's interesting, we talk about culturally or even demographics, I mean somebody my age, yeah, I witnessed the change transition here when I was a young person and working and you left your stuff at the door and you work and you soldier on and then you deal with life afterwards and it really isn't like that anymore. And I'm glad, I'm glad not, I mean, let's face it mean we work as a means to an end and life is much greater than your job. It should be. You need to be able to hopefully, yes, hopefully. Exactly. Mean careers are important, don't get me wrong. I I'm at all. But there's so much more to life than a career. There's so much more to be experienced, whether it's travel or family or social engagements or music or whatever the case may be. And if you're not being consumed, I think by the fact that I have to work and I have to be on and all that energy is used during that work week, maybe there's nothing left for the person after the work week is done.

[\(09:47\)](#):

And that is very real. That can be very real. But the ability though, if we're as an employer, if we are providing that assistance or providing that space for employees to be prepared or have that help to achieve that mental wellness or physical wellness too. And I want to talk about that a little bit. You're right. And we are seeing the benefits of that and we're seeing, I hear it from the people I work with that this is a great place to work and I'm so glad that Utility Safety Partners is there for me or whatever the case may be. And I think I'm hearing that more and more and more everywhere. And is that what you're seeing too? We this is this shift to promoting wellness beyond the buzzword?

Fleur Yumol ([10:45](#)):

Yeah, I do. And I think you mentioned the generational piece. I think we have to, as employers begin to shift our mindset because we are now hiring our millennials and they come from a very different mindset. They were told from the get-go that you can have everything. You can have a career and a family and you can have the rec property and you can have travel. And so I think that is the other difference, Mike, that we are seeing is that the people that we're hiring now, people that we're promoting now have a very different idea about work-life balance. They actually value it, you know, can throw a ton of money at them, but if it doesn't come with me, some of those other perks, they're not as interested. They want the vacation time, they want the continuing education, they want to be able to move in the organization, they want to continue to be challenged.

[\(11:47\)](#):

And so I think as much as it is that organizations are recognizing the of employee wellness, we're also seeing the generational shift of who we're hiring into these new roles that their expectations of the employer are far different. I mean, I remember coming out of school and being kind of like, please hire me. I'll work whatever you need, work after hours, I'll work in the weekend. I was just happy to be earning and paying off my student loan. But now it's kind of like they're coming in and they're actually negotiating for themselves because we taught them that you have value and that you have a voice and we want to hear that what is important to you. And I think we have to be creative as employers and as organizations because we can't just go with the same old, same old, this is what you get paid and you only get pay increases so much. And I think that work-life balance is just something that is almost expected at this point, even as technology has increased. And we could actually work all the time if you wanted to. People are far more conscious of having other things in their life other than work because that's just their mentality at this point.

Mike Sullivan ([13:04](#)):

The work life balance today is so higher up on that scale of what's important to a person. And as a person from my generation, I put a lot of things in the back burner because as a provider I had to do this, I had to do that. And I convinced myself that that was the right thing to do. And at the time I think it was I had to do what I had to do. But now as I am older and I look back and oh, I wish I had done this differently, I wish I had done that differently. And I can tell myself, well I, I got this for my family or I was able to do this or that for my family. But you only get one chance to go around and you can't jam it all in, you know, can't jam it all in, but you do your best.

[\(13:46\)](#):

And at the end of the day, I think that's what I hope is that we continue to do our best, not just back then but every day. And that's what I'm trying to do now with our own organization is to do our best. But it's a great balancing act as the employer, my perspective we have to provide that culture that supports everybody, but at the same time the work has to get done. And that can be very challenging sometimes because that's what the expectation is, that we have a demand from the public to provide a service. Now assuming a person doesn't reach out what are some of the signs we should be looking for that might indicate maybe a family member or a colleague is facing difficulty and they're being challenged by what is going on in their own life?

Fleur Yumol ([14:42](#)):

That's a really good question because I think one of the things that a lot of us have become excellent at is just putting on the mask. I talk about this culture of armoring up and because the expectation is that we continue to just do what we're supposed to do. So the first thing that I tell people when they're concerned is look for any kind of changes. So if this person that you're concerned about is normally an outgoing person and all of a sudden they're spending lots of time in front of the tv if this person is normally an active person and you notice that they skipped their gym routine, notice changes in sleep notice, notice changes in their appetite, notice any kind of change that is a bit more persistent, I would say one or two days of not sleeping well, we all have that. But if you're having talking to your partner or your child or a friend and they say things like, I've been sleeping well or I'm just really tired all the time. And if you see that kind of two to four weeks pretty consistent change, I would say that that would be good to prompt a question around, Hey, is everything okay?

Mike Sullivan ([15:59](#)):

It's hard to do that. I mean we're in a remote working environment now. It's hard to do that and a lot of employers are, right.

Fleur Yumol ([16:06](#)):

So then the next thing I would say would be any changes in how people are responsive. So someone who texts slowly responds to email slowly, if you notice that. And I don't know if there's a way for you to tell when they're kind of logging on in this is really a hard thing. They can log on

Mike Sullivan ([16:23](#)):

We do, yeah. <laugh> big brother in our environment, they

Fleur Yumol ([16:26](#)):

Can log on. They give you, go get coffee in a laundry like they're on, but they're not on. So I would say for you guys have the metrics, how long are they staying on the phone? How quickly are they responding to? And for

Mike Sullivan ([16:42](#)):

Our listeners, this isn't just big brother, this is part of the business, we have to do that. Yeah, it is. It's no, we're not draconian here. No, no, no, no. We're not draconian. We have to do what we do. Yeah, no, and that's part of the issue. I think people do feel like they're being watched, but it is part of our business unfortunately.

Fleur Yumol ([16:58](#)):

And I think when you are working remotely, I think it's important to have some of those structures, otherwise you can get caught up in the day-to-day of other things. Kind of intruding on that. So I would say any changes in that. The biggest thing I would say is, and this is going to sound a little bit perhaps counterintuitive, is people becoming more, I would say irritable. I would say irritability, frustration, even anger. Those are my big cues. So people who are, people are responding kind of curly or abruptly or they're more impatient, I would say that that is my number one cue or trigger for people not doing well.

Mike Sullivan ([17:43](#)):

People tell me I'm just getting old. That's the other thing I hear exactly. I've heard it myself from some of my closest colleagues. I think you're getting old Mike, you're getting kind of shortened cur with your, well, okay, well maybe it is part of that, but it's not only I,

Fleur Yumol ([18:00](#)):

And again, a change, right? People are noticing that there's a change. And honestly I think for those of us who are aging, I mean I don't think you and I are too far apart as far as age goes. I mean I do a better job of maybe hiding it. Women have more access to those means. But I think we don't have as much patience. We don't have as much tolerance I think. And some of that comes from, I think we have a lot on our plate. But I would say for anyone who isn't in a leadership role when we're not people managing, I mean that's a big part of what makes this a big crochety is people management. Because we're dealing with people that's unpredictable, right? And your people are dealing with people all the time. So that customer facing kind of role is difficult cause you never know what you're facing. But I would say that level of irritability is something to be definitely mindful of. And then the other extreme would be that

withdrawal people all of a sudden not showing up on time, they're missing. This is where we get to the more difficult is when they're missing time at work. So Mondays and Fridays are great indicators, especially if that again becomes a consistent pattern. Calling in sick on Mondays, leaving early on Fridays, just that fatigue wearing in or people, like you said, not getting ready for the work week. And

Mike Sullivan ([19:36](#)):

We see it mean Monday is, Tuesdays are our busiest days of the week, especially when the digging season really comes in an earnest. And it is demanding, it's extremely demanding it, it's kind of sweat shop almost. And in a way a conveyor built work. And it's challenging for those frontline representatives if we're going to see any breakdown, if you wish it's going to be there and it's going to be not right away, but as the season drags on, it's that fatigue that happens and it happens to the best of us. I mean not. And some of us can get through it, others, and it's a real challenge. Now, one of the things I want to talk about and beyond just the mental wellness is the physical wellness. Obviously these things are connected and the brain needs exercise and not just doing crossword puzzles or Sudoku, that's not what I mean. It needs for the body to exercise. It needs to, whether it's fresh air or sunshine cycling, whatever it might be, have has our society, our culture really embraced that. I mean, I'm always concerned that we, is there more propensity to diagnose something and provide a magic pill? Yes, medication is important and I'm not saying it isn't, but are we also ignoring the benefits of physical activity or are we really embracing that and maybe going there first?

Fleur Yumol ([21:18](#)):

That's such an interesting question. I think the one thing that we recognize, right, is that there's, when we exercise and we get our heart rates up, and we do that for a sustained period of time, more than 15, 20 minutes our body releases endorphins. And endorphins are our body's natural pain medication. So whether that's emotional pain or physical pain, that in the release of endorphins is actually part of how our body manages the natural aging process and that the chronic fatigue and the chronic, especially in Alberta or in Canada, that we have six months of winter. And so the dark, if we're lucky,

Mike Sullivan ([22:04](#)):

If we're lucky,

Fleur Yumol ([22:07](#)):

Who cares if it comes at weeks at a time. But we have that and the darkness is a really terrible contributor to our mental health, to mental illness and mental health. And so I

Mike Sullivan ([22:19](#)):

Noticed that the older I get, oh boy, man, I noticed that. I really do.

Fleur Yumol ([22:23](#)):

Yes. And so those endorphins are necessary and people that I think the problem is that we also have a society. We don't have time. Nobody has enough time to do a full workout. And this is where I always say, you don't need a full workout. If you go out and you do a brisk walk for 10 minutes, you've given your body that jumpstart, you've given your brain that jumpstart. It's given some of those endorphins. If you do a couple jumping jacks, you do a couple burpees at your workstation, you do a couple squats. I think what we have to do is understand that physical fitness can look different. It does not have to look

like an hour long run or throwing weights around at the gym for 45 minutes or hitting a spin class. It can be stretching. It's about the intention that you set around taking that 15 or 20 minutes. It can be as simple as taking that walk around. It can be as simple as doing some stretching. It can be as simple as even deep breathing, some active deep breathing. The yoga practice of that diaphragmatic breathing. It can be really beneficial to us. And so I do think that we all know that physical fitness is important, all know that getting our heart rate up is important. We know that moving is important. What we have to overcome is the barrier of the excuses or the fatigue

Mike Sullivan ([23:56](#)):

Or pull yourself off the couch or whatever. Yeah, yeah,

Fleur Yumol ([23:59](#)):

Totally. I've said to lots of people, if you can get even just walk up and down a hill three times outside when it's warm, if you can get on a treadmill, walk on an incline, you don't need to be running a marathon to be physically. Well,

Mike Sullivan ([24:21](#)):

As the president of Utility Safety Partners. I just want to stress to our employees who I know, are listeners, that you can access Fleur's and Unify's services through our employee assistance program. What we talk about today is very real and it means a lot to me as a person and to utility safety partners as an employer that we are continually making strides for an organization that recognizes and supports everybody.

([25:00](#)):

Now I found during Covid, I talk about that little bit too. We sent everybody home and we had a remote work environment and it took me, I mean here I am again looking at the demographics of me and people like me that we hadn't worked from home before and it was very foreign. And here I am staring at the same walls in the morning, noon at night, and I thought I was going to lose. I'm going to lose my mind here if I keep this up. I mean, I'm very active and I have a busy life and all that. I need to change a scenery. And I'm very fortunate that I live right near well, right beside Fish Creek Park. And I would just decide, I mean I was out there from time to time anyway, walking on the pathways to suck. I'm going to narrow it every day. And for me it was an enormous salvation. And you know walk a couple of kilometers a day. Then I got to the point I'm doing 10 kilometers a day and just as a brisk walk, and then I got stupid planter fasciitis and I can't seem to get rid of it, but I'm still going.

([26:08](#)):

I think a lot of us, and I saw a lot of people out there, a lot of people out there like me and more and more and more as the pandemic went on who were probably in a similar situation like me, but I know as well there were others who retreated further. And there was that gap that was widening between people who were forcing themselves to get out, realizing the benefits of it, and then others who were, they couldn't pull themselves away from the cocoon that society was terrified of this pandemic. And we saw such a horrible effect on wellness because of the Covid pandemic. And as an employer, as I said a few times, the work continues that conveyor built keeps moving. And in our case, during the pandemic, it increased. We saw more locate request activity than we've seen in over a decade. And the demand on people became even more dramatic. And I think it contributed to, for those who found a way, which is great, but for others who didn't and we treated it had a horrible effect. And I think we're still there. And are we still there?



Fleur Yumol ([27:30](#)):

Oh yeah. I mean Mike, my business is looking at this and the post pandemic mental health crisis that we're facing right now is out of control. Because what I would say is happening is that it's a culmination of people during the pandemic surviving. That's all we needed to do. We survival mode to get through it. It was survival mode and we did it for far too long. Survival mode. We can't be in survival mode for two and a half years. And the lack of certainty and the lack of control and power that's taken a toll. So we survive for two and a half years and then all of a sudden we're free. All of a sudden it's like, okay, everybody get back to your normal life. And it's like two and a half years is too long for me to remember what normal life was.

Mike Sullivan ([28:26](#)):

The normalcy is different now and the new normal, whatever you want to call it. Yeah, it so huge. And we saw, I think it's created some divisions that are still there, unfortunately. And whether absolutely a person was believing in that we need to be vaccinated or not to personally believe what you will and just mind your own business in a way. Because totally broadcasting whatever you think is right. I mean, who cares? Do what you think is right and just do that. That's kind of how I live in a way. But some of the things I saw and it's just stayed with me. I remember, as I mentioned, I get out after work every day and I, I'd go on the path and I'd walk and some people outside chose to wear a mask because whatever, it made them feel better. And if that's fine, or maybe they had their immunocompromised or something and there was one person I saw every now and then as I approached this person on the path, they would walk off the path maybe 10, 20 feet away and they're back to me while I walked past. But to that person, that was their reality. And I, as much as I thought, Hey, don't worry, I can't bring that person to where I believe that reality is because that's their reality. And we're still dealing with that. We

Fleur Yumol ([29:57](#)):

Are. And I think what we're seeing is that once we came out of survival mode and we had to think about how we were going to live moving forward, I think a lot of us took stock. A lot of us took stock around what are our values? What are the things that are important to me? For a period of time, we were given this permission to really just hunker down and take care of yourself and your family. And then I think now we're asked to come back into society and we're asked to do that, having the division of values. And then you throw on top of that all the mental health professionals and all the frontline workers who didn't have a chance, they were busy fighting the pandemic. And now what you you're seeing is that you're seeing an a not well population. And I'm talking generally, there are some people who thrive during the pandemic.

([31:02](#)):

I don't know who they are because they don't call my line. But Right. If you want to call me and tell me what you did, that would be great. But I don't know who, I don't know these people. So I'm, that's your reality. That's your reality. It's my reality. I'm going to talk about people who, and it's like they're just finally getting a chance to reflect on what happened. And now our therapists are burn out, burnt out, our physicians are burnt out, our EMS and fire and police are all burnt out. And then during that time, they saw such a significant drop off in their colleagues. Some people like family doctors just left the province, right? C P S tons of people are on work and off disability. We don't have enough ambulances. We know what the shortage is. And so we now have an unwell population trying to get well and the kudos to everybody who's trying to get well, trying to look for resources, but they're slim pickings right now.



(32:04):

And that's the hard part, Mike. That's what I'm seeing, is that we just don't have the resources right now to deal with the enormity of an unwell population. We would say pre pandemic, 30% of our population suffered from some form of mental illness. So that population state, and then now I would say that 60 to 70% of us are functioning but aren't well and need that resource, need a therapist, need a family doctor, need some of those allied health professionals. And it's a shortage. There's not enough people able to provide care for the 70% of us who are not doing well. And I include myself in that, right? Because I battle the pandemic front lines because one of our clients are physicians. And so we were helping them manage the pandemic. Well, I was going

Mike Sullivan (33:03):

To ask mean everybody comes to you, who do you go to?

Fleur Yumol (33:08):

Well, I have a great therapist. She's wonderful. But this is when you talked about wellness preparedness, we talk about all this preparedness that we do for everything but wellness preparedness. I am someone who because of my job, I know that I need to be well. So I do things like I'm an exercise fiend, so I exercise a lot. And that's always been my stress management. I've stayed connected to my friends, whether during the pandemic, whether that was outside running far away from each other or online, we found these wonderful ways to spin online together. I tried my best to get sleep. So I'm someone who f I know that if I'm not well, I can't do my job. And that was something I was taught from day one of psychology 101. It's like healer, you need to be in your best form if you're going to do this work. And if you're not, don't do this work. So fortunately was given permission from the get-go to say flu, your wellness is important. Not everyone gets that permission. If you are an engineer, a lawyer a leader, no one says to you, Mike, your wellness is important for you to do your job.

Mike Sullivan (34:40):

That's right. No,

Fleur Yumol (34:41):

You're right. We're only saying that now.

Mike Sullivan (34:43):

Hold it together fella.

Fleur Yumol (34:45):

And half the time it was like, Hey Mike, we think you're going to be great in this role. And you're like, okay, okay. And so you do it. <laugh> the guy, we picked you. And so if you really think about how we progress in our careers, you know, start from this, from the ground and you work your way up and that's fabulous. And I think I was going to say that that's one thing that I think is also changing. You've talked about how you knew what it was like when you started and now you're a leader and you're doing it differently because you know what it was like when you started. Yeah, that helps.

Mike Sullivan (35:20):

Well it was some conscious decision making there, right? I mean, yes. And it's not just in that regard. I mean, I've seen leadership that was wonderful and I want to emulate that. And I've seen leadership that was absolutely abysmal and to stay away from that obviously. But this is new territory that that's a different thing I'm talking about earlier. But this is new territory. And I guess I have to ask, are we getting it right now? Are we getting it right or are we still feeling our way around in the dark here?

Fleur Yumol ([35:50](#)):

Well, you are getting it right. Well thank you.

Mike Sullivan ([35:52](#)):

I dunno what I'm doing, but thank you.

Fleur Yumol ([35:55](#)):

Well, yeah, I think your openness, I think, and I've been working together for seven or eight years now. I think you've you, your openness to have your leaders reach out to us anytime they have concerns. I think your support of your employees to promote health and wellness through Unify Consulting Group, I think you are doing a really great job. I think a lot of the organizations that we have partnered with because they're open to this, they're open to the model that my organization puts forward. We're not just a checkbox, they're not

Mike Sullivan ([36:34](#)):

Just a no, we don't want to be that no

Fleur Yumol ([36:35](#)):

Is a number. Yeah, here's a number, call them, but we don't want to hear about it. So we

Mike Sullivan ([36:41](#)):

Have EAP, that's all it's a go to, right? No, that's more to, yes,

Fleur Yumol ([36:44](#)):

It's part of your benefits, but what's the phone number? Who is it? So I do think a lot of organizations want to get it right. I think a lot of organizations are looking to understand how to get it right, but a lot of organizations post pandemics are dealing with the survival aspect of their organization and how do we get the work done. So I think the biggest challenge facing leaders right now is that balance of I need you to show up and go to work and do your job and I need you to be well. So go and do that. And as a leader, the best thing you can do is create kind of a, I guess a culture of vulnerability where someone can come to you and say, I'm not well. I'm here and I'm going to do my best today. And that your only response is, thank you. And what can I do to help you be well? Because if someone can say to you, I'm not well, but I showed up anyways, that is huge. And how do you say thank you? And then how do you say at the end of the day, how are you doing? What was that like for you? How tomorrow, how can I help you tomorrow be? Because if you can't create an organization where people don't feel safe enough to tell you they're not well, then you, there's nowhere to go.

Mike Sullivan ([38:14](#)):

I agree. I think for me, and I try to listen more than I speak. And when I do say something, I hope it comes across as being meaningful. That's what I want. Yeah. I mean, at the end of the day, I like people. I really do. And there's a lot of us. Well that's good. And it takes all kinds to make a world. I don't want a world full of robots. I like the fact that we have such a diverse crew and they come from all walks of life and that together, we all come together to do one thing. I mean, that doesn't happen very often, but I mean it takes all kinds to make a world, and I really appreciate that. And I have a big family. I came from a big family. We had it all. We had people from all walks of life, from our own family.

[\(39:08\)](#):

And maybe that that's one of the reasons why I recognize the importance of this. And when somebody fails, we all fail and we all fall. I shouldn't say fail. When somebody falls, we all fall and we all embrace them and bring them back up. That was my upbringing. And maybe that's why I feel so strongly about having a workplace that is there to be supportive but recognizing still. And I balance that by, I get it, we're here for you, but I got to also be here for everybody who needs us. And if it means that everybody else doing a little bit extra to help that person get through until that person's ready again, then that's what we do.

Fleur Yumol [\(39:51\)](#):

No, and I would say that a few key things, if I'm able to summarize a few key things that leaders or organizations can think about is this idea of empathy. The idea of how do you put yourself in someone else's shoes? And as much as it might be hard that you're having to do a little bit more today because someone's not well, but just how would you feel if you were in those shoes and you'd, what would you want them to do? And then compassion. Compassion that we care that someone we know is suffering or struggling. So again, not to feel sorry for them because that's a power imbalance, but just feel bad that they're suffering. So having a bit of that compassion and if there's any way that you can interpret what someone's doing. When you think about going out into this world and if there's eight different ways to interpret what someone means or what their intention is, try to assume the interpretation that doesn't make you mad or wants, want you to not have anything to do with them.

[\(40:50\)](#):

Try to assume an interpretation that that person is doing the best they can. Because when you have that space for someone to just be human and to just be struggling, then the sooner they can actually deal with it. And that's what I mean by the vulnerable workplace where someone can come in and say, I'm not, well, we need to hold people accountable for their wellness, but we need to create safety for them to acknowledge that they're not well. And so I would say those are the things that we can work on as leaders and as organizations is saying, I need you to take care of your wellness. I need you to be accountable for your wellness. And what I'm going to do is make it safe for you to tell me how actually doing.

Mike Sullivan [\(41:34\)](#):

Yeah, I thank you. I obviously you do this because you're really good at it and because it means something to you. I mean, I'm so glad that our two organizations and personally connected with you a number of years ago. You've made a big difference to my colleagues and a big difference to me. And I feel though we're in very good hands, and that is something I say from the bottom of my heart, I really feels like we're in good hands with you. And I hope today that whoever might be listening, if it just one person feels like, you know what? Maybe it is okay that I talk to my employer, maybe it is okay that I talk to my boss or my team leader, my manager, and just say, you know what? I don't know what it is, but I

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need to talk to somebody. That is what I'm hoping we achieve whether it's today or some other time when somebody listens to this podcast. Fleur, thanks so much for joining me today. I really appreciate it.

Fleur Yumol ([42:30](#)):

You're welcome. Thank you so much for the opportunity, and I can talk about this stuff forever. So thank you and I hope that was helpful.

Mike Sullivan ([42:37](#)):

It absolutely was. Thank you so much.

([42:42](#)):

That's going to wrap things up on The Safety Moment Podcast. Really enjoyed our chat today with Fleur Yumol from Unify. What an interesting discussion that was. I want to thank our producer Stories and Strategies, and I hope you choose to follow this podcast on any directory you're listening on. And please do leave a rating. It means a lot to us. You can follow us on Twitter at Utility underscore Safety, and we're also on Instagram and Facebook and maybe on TikTok here someday. Keep watching that. If you'd like to send us a note, maybe you have an episode idea, email us at [info@utilitysafety.ca](mailto:info@utilitysafety.ca) and put podcast in that subject header. I'm Mike Sullivan, the president of Utility Safety Partners. Click to know what's above and below. One click costs you nothing. Not clicking could cost you everything.