Lyme Brain: Understanding Cognitive & Emotional Challenges and How to Heal Transcript

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Opening on Lyme trauma and healing mindset

There's something really funky about Lyme that it's more than just misdiagnosis. It's to your point, like people being told they're crazy, people being told it's all in their mind, people being told they just need an antidepressant or an anxiety med, even, you know, family members turning on them, friends.

turning on them, you know, there's so much that's gone in the past for a lot of people. And so going back and cleaning up some of that stuff with tools like EMDR can be really helpful.

But the work I do is also encouraging people like, okay, but that's your story. And the more you read, the more you tell your story, the more you live in your story, the more you're stuck in your story.

And it's really easy to get stuck there. I know it is. And it's easy to feel justified in wanting to be stuck there and wanting to tell that story. But, and I say this with love and compassion, that will just keep people stuck looking backwards.

And their healing is not in their past. Their healing is in their future. Hi, and welcome to the Lime Bites podcast, where we shine a light on the misunderstood science of Lyme and other vector-borne diseases, as well as the truths that many still miss.

I'm Dr. Mariah Hinchy, naturopathic physician and fellow of the Medical Academy of Pediatric Special Needs. I specialize in treating chronic Lyme disease as well as other complex inflammatory conditions.

In this podcast, we break down what's working and what's not. We share the facts that most people miss, we challenge outdated thinking, and we give both patients and practitioners the tools to heal smarter.

So let's get into it and change the way we heal Lyme. Hi, and welcome to another episode. I'm your host, Dr. Maria Hinchey, and today's episode is all about Lyme Brain, a term used to describe the brain fog, cognitive difficulties, and mental issues that a lot of Lyme and co-infection patients suffer from.

Not only are we going to talk about how Lyme affects the brain, but we're also going to talk about ways of coping, including mastering the mind or overcoming these mental and cognitive difficulties.

So here to share with us is Dr. Nicola Ducharm, and she is a Lyme literate naturopathic physician, bestselling author, and educator.

Podcast introduction and episode overview

So welcome, Dr. Nicola. And please tell our audience how you came to specialize in treating complex chronic illness. Yeah. Well, hi. Thank you. And thank you for having me.

It's great to be here. So yeah, so when I first got out of naturopathic medical school and went into practice, I started working with children with autism, children on the spectrum.

And I was very fortunate to have a great mentor who kind of trained me in that work. And it was wonderful, super great. And what ended up happening is some of the moms of these kids came to see me and they'd be like, oh, God, I'm wiped out all the time.

Everything hurts. I've got headaches. I just thought it was new mom stuff. And then I thought it was moms of

special needs kids stuff. And then they're like, but this is kind of ridiculous.

So I would do a functional medicine workup and look at adrenals and heavy metals and all the thing. And surprisingly, cause I was even then in Southern California, Lyme came up time and time again.

And so it was sort of just a natural fork in the road for me to then focus more on Lyme. Um, and I still do work with kids on the spectrum and I love that, but lime is really sort of 99% of my practice now.

That's wonderful. So when you talk about lime brain, as in one of your books, what are you referring to? Yeah. So most of the time when we think lime brain, we're sort of referring to like cognitive issues, right?

So people say, God, I can't. Remember my kids names. I drive up the street and forget where I was going and have to turn around again and come back or just, you know, I can't find my words or I mean to say one thing and something else comes out.

I can't focus. I can't concentrate. Um, but light brain is also, in my opinion, it also includes like the psycho-emotional elements of these chronic illnesses.

And so. You know, some of the depression, some of the anxiety, even sort of OCD kind of behaviors, panic attacks, things like that, that are really, really common in people with chronic Lyme.

And so, you know, they can be very real symptoms. They're symptoms of the infection just as real as joint pain or headaches, but they're also the repercussions.

They're the secondary effects of dealing with these sorts of, you know, complex illnesses. And being sick, you know, for many years and often having gone undiagnosed and, you know, potentially having some medical PTSD about things they've been through.

And so I see this kind of real element of like. hopelessness and despair and frustration and bitterness. And, and so that's kind of where more of that mindset piece comes in.

And what I've learned in recent years is helping people to overcome that aspect. And we'll certainly talk about, you know, the elements of line brain, the infections and the toxicity and the inflammation and, and go into more of those kinds of solutions for those things.

Dr. Nicolau2019s path into Lyme and chronic illness care

in a little bit here, but what I realized so much in the last couple of years is how important it is for people to address those elements and work with their mind and almost like rewire it and train it to kind of overcome those negative aspects and to be more hopeful and feel more positive for the future and be more able to cope with what they're going through throughout their treatment.

That makes a lot of sense. So how important do you think this is in someone's treatment plan to focus on this? It's massive. It's huge. And so now, I mean, you know, as I worked with patients on this aspect, you know, they tell me things like, oh my gosh, I wish I'd had this in the beginning of my treatment.

Oh gosh, you know, this is helping me to progress through treatment and not get discouraged. Or when I have bad days or herx reactions, like now, They have tools to be able to cope with those things better or tools to be able to cope with the anxiety of going to a doctor's appointment or the anxiety of having an IV or the therapy or whatever the case may be.

So I see it as a game changer. I really do. And I feel that it's not. widely enough talked about, you know, and sometimes when we say like mindset, it's like, I'm just thinking positive, you know, but it's not, it's so much more than that.

And there are ways that we can actually work with our mind to rewire it. And so. You know, a lot of it's sort of based in neuroplasticity and some of this sort of really cool stuff that we're more aware of.

So for our listeners, what is neuroplasticity? Can you explain what you mean when you use that term? Yeah, absolutely. So back in the day, it was thought that our brain was just what it was, right?

We had a certain number of neurons. If a neuron or a brain cell, a nerve cell died, then that was it. We couldn't make new ones. If a certain part of the brain was damaged or had, you know, whatever issues that that part of the brain, say, for example, for simplicity, if the part of the brain that deals with visual changes or whatever is compromised in some way, that those functions would go away forever and there was no getting around it.

And so, you know, a lot of people say, and we can talk about this in a minute about You know, the temporary versus permanence of line brain and some of those issues.

Well, our brains have major capabilities to heal and to rewire. And so neuroplasticity is the brain's ability to grow and change and adapt and create that so that we can get so much more.

What Lyme brain means and why mindset matters

functionality back, you know, we can really like grow new nerve cells, we can strengthen neural pathways. And so this is a big part that I talk about with the sort of the mindset piece and creating more of the positive wiring is that the more we think a thought or the more we do an action, the stronger the neural pathways become for that thought or for that action.

So we know this, right? Because we know that if we learn the piano and we practice the piano, we get better at the piano. Why? It's because we've created stronger neural pathways around that activity.

And what people don't realize is that the same thing happens around our thoughts. And even our emotions too, that if we think a negative thought over and over and over again, we're going to strengthen the neural pathways with physically giving strength to that thought.

Whereas if we think a positive thought or take a positive action, or say an example of this would be spending time in gratitude, right? Or spending time thinking about happy things or feelings, conjuring up feelings of like people that we love or things that we really care about that make us happy.

The more time we spend in that, the stronger the neural pathways become. And so our brain is really rewired that way, but it's not, it doesn't happen by itself.

It's, it's something that people have to do deliberately and have to practice. Just like if you want to learn a sport or a musical instrument or a language, you have to learn it.

And then you have to practice it to get better at it. And then it comes more naturally. So it's the exact same thing. And so the analogy I give is, you know, when we start out having a thought, it's like a little winding dirt track, right?

One person can fit on there and it's just a sort of little, just a dirt path. And then as we think that thought again, that dirt path or the neural pathways, We'll get a little bit wider.

So all of a sudden it's two or three people across. As we keep going, it gets wider and stronger concrete path or driveway. And as we keep going, it gets stronger and wider and.

And more, more easy to navigate. So all of a sudden then we've got a five lane freeway of those positive thoughts. And we catch ourselves like letting go of resentment towards that doctor six years ago that laughed you out of his office.

Or we find ourselves naturally forgiving a family member that just didn't get it. You know, and we find ourselves

being able to face treatment and face the ups and downs of Lyme.

in a much more gentle and positive way. So what are some of the techniques that you use and teach your patients to be able to pave these new pathways in the brain?

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Neuroplasticity and rewiring the brain

Yeah, well, there's different ways to do it. And some work kind of, well, the first thing we have to do is calm the nervous system, right? So we have to kind of get out of that constant sympathetic fight or flight kind of response.

And so the tools that I'm teaching my patients to do this are helping to shift to the parasympathetic response. But then there are some tools that are using more the conscious mind.

So the conscious mind is where we think our whole mind is, right? We, that's what the thoughts that we have. It's very deliberate. It's very, you know, we're, we're, it's like a monkey mind in our way, but it's how we make decisions.

And it's the thoughts that we have over and over again, but. What really drives a lot of that is our subconscious mind, sometimes called the unconscious mind.

And the subconscious actually accounts for like 95% of our habits, of our decisions, of our actions on a day-to-day basis. Like when we get out of bed in the morning, we automatically take ourselves to the bathroom and then we automatically take ourselves to the coffee machine.

Like we're just on automatic pilot and it's the subconscious mind that has the wiring that tells us to do that. We're not making that up in our conscious mind time and time again, every single day.

And so some of the tools like doing emotional freedom technique is a really lovely one. Like doing affirmations and reinforcing positive thoughts and positive like mindset, doing gratitude journaling.

I find that to be huge. You know, and I have people every day write down three things that you're grateful for. Write down three wins that you had today.

Write down three ways you took care of yourself or you nurtured yourself today. And when people start doing those kinds of things, they sound pretty simple, but with repetition and consistency, they're beautiful.

They work beautifully to help you with that rewiring. But the other thing we have to look at is how to reprogram more on the subconscious level. Like how do we get to those deeper levels?

And so there's some tools that are really wonderful for that. Meditation is a really, really nice one. Hypnosis is a nice one. And so. You know, my folks that I do these programs with, I give them the meditations that I've created.

I give them healing hypnosis tracks that I've created. And you know, there's a lot out there available too. I mean, whether it's everything from apps to YouTube, there's so many resources and tools out there.

But the hypnosis and meditation to me are two really lovely ways to get to those subconscious levels. And then, as I said a few minutes ago, doing all of those things helps to promote the parasympathetic nervous system response.

It calms the nervous system. And when we're in constant fight or flight, that's not where healing happens. You know, and it's really easy to be in fight or flight with, you know, the way that Lyme impacts adrenals and cortisol responses and the fear responses and And like we said, with the different things, and we'll talk about this in a little while about how are the pathogens and the toxins and the inflammation and all the stuff that's going up in the brain making things feel really crazy.

But we have to calm that nervous system response to be able to get into the parasympathetic state, which is that's our healing state. And so that's part of it is.

You know, it's just calming everything down so that conscious mind quietens down a subconscious mind can sort of less than better. And then, you know, the, the neuroplasticity helps to actually like on a physiological level helps us to do that rewiring.

So it's a whole host of things that come together. Yeah. So is there a part of this where, I mean, I swear a lot of my patients have like a PTSD, right?

Just from being chronically ill, from being mistreated, from being told they're crazy, you know, family members not believing them, et cetera. Yeah. My practice is very big with EMDR.

Is this a thing where you almost have to undo a PTSD or do you think just focusing on paving the positive, settling the autonomic nervous system, working on the subconscious, working on the positive, is that enough to override that PTSD loop?

For a lot of people it is. And then there's a lot of people like, I love EMDR. Like I really think that going back and doing some of that more specific trauma work can be helpful as well.

But I do definitely see people. And, you know, one of the things that I work with is a process it's called ho'oponopono and it's a Hawaiian technique that helps facilitate forgiveness and release.

Tools for calming the nervous system and subconscious work

And so we have practices around that too, that really, especially help in that area. But I think, you know, Lyme is really kind of unique in the journey that people have been on.

People with cancer don't get treated like this. People with HIV don't get treated like this. Like, you know, there's something really funky about Lyme that It's more than just misdiagnosis.

It's to your point, like people being told they're crazy, people being told it's all in their mind, people being told they just need an antidepressant or an anxiety med.

Even, you know, family members turning on them, friends turning on them, you know, there's so much that's gone in the past for a lot of people. And so.

going back and cleaning up some of that stuff with tools like EMDR can be really helpful. But the work I do is also encouraging people like, okay, but that's your story.

And the more you read, the more you tell your story, the more you live in your story, the more you're stuck in your story. And it's really easy to get stuck there.

I know it is, and it's easy to feel justified in wanting to be stuck there and wanting to tell that story. But, and I say this with love and compassion, That will just keep people stuck looking backwards and their healing is not in their past.

Their healing is in their future. And, but to do that, you have to kind of have a little bit of discipline and like getting up and going to the gym in the morning, you've got to, you know, go to the gym for your mind and deliberately push that focus forward and out of the rear view mirror, forward through the windshield.

And that's where I see if people can get a handle on that, that's where I see the changes are really profound. Yeah, I firmly believe that if someone does not think they're going to get better, they're not going to get better.

You know, we have a lot of discussion about having hope, you know, or at least letting go of that. I'm never going to get better. I'm a victim. This is who I am.

This is what I identify with. And, you know, it doesn't matter how long they've been sick for. They have to be willing to like let go of that identity.

Absolutely. That is such a huge part. And this is where, you know, It's hard for people to find positive, positively oriented community too, because a lot of people like Facebook groups and support groups and things like that, like a lot of people are just sort of telling their story over and over again and very stuck in that.

And it's a, you know, it's a double-edged sword because understanding that Olima is very isolating and people are looking for that, you know, camaraderie and support and other people going through the same thing.

But I always caution my patients, like, just be aware that lot of people do recover from Lyme. They're not in those support groups anymore. They're out doing life.

You brought up cancer and other illnesses and it's like most of the time those illnesses are isolated to one part of your body. With Lyme, it affects every part of your body for most people.

And then so you're going to have like, you know, the emotional issues of dealing with a chronic illness, like depression, anxiety, etc. But then on top of that, it's like your brain's on fire.

So like, you're literally having like, depression, anxiety, OCD, all of these things, because your brain's on fire, not just because you feel like, oh, woe is me, like, I have this chronic illness, you know, so it's…

Correct. That's the double-edged sword. But you know, the more you can work on being deliberate about the mindset piece, the more you can recognize like, Oh, this is just, this is a symptom.

This isn't who I am. Like I'm not broken and I'm not going to be like this forever. This is a symptom that's happening in my brain right now. And they can connect the like, this is a very real symptom.

And it doesn't make those things magically go away. That's not what we're saying, but it helps them with. dealing with it and being able to work through it and stay more positive.

I've actually had patients say when you realize like you're being paranoid, you're being, you know, fill in the blank, just say, line brain, you know, I've had, and it just helps because it's like, oh, this isn't me.

This isn't me. This isn't my personality. It's my, it's my line. It's my line brain. So that that's always been very helpful. Okay, so when you were talking about damage, obviously the damage isn't going to be permanent if you work on strategies to rewire the brain, correct?

Or do you feel like some of the things could be permanent? 99% of the time, damage is temporary. I don't even want to use the word damage because that sounds so permanent, but 99% of the time, People can have wonderful healing once they address all the underlying elements.

And, you know, I have seen bodies and brains and minds be so resilient, you know, and had super sick patients who were in wheelchairs or literally like, you know, one of my longest term patients and she's doing amazingly.

Now I stay in touch with her because we're friends, but. She, she needs to drive, drive from her house and then forget where she was going and have to turn around and come back.

Or, you know, she forgot to pick her kids up from school. And, you know, I mean, things that just seem so hopeless and so serious.

Trauma, EMDR, and moving beyond the illness story

And since then she's gone and done a PhD. I mean, she's, she's in a highly demanded lecturer and professor. I mean, she's incredible. And so. I always tell my patients like, you can recover from this.

You can get your brain back because a lot of people say, and I know you would have heard this too, like I could kind of live with the pain. I could kind of, you know, they can rationalize their way through that, but they're like, I just feel so stupid.

Like, I just feel like I just need to get my brain back. And so that's a multifaceted approach. There's no one super simple way to just turn on that switch and But all of these things together, you know, the right treatment for the Lyme, looking at different things like inflammation and toxicity, along with the mastering the mind, the rewiring them, you know, working with that neuroplasticity.

That's the way to make the best, the biggest difference. Yeah, I agree. So Dr. Nicola, tell our listeners how they can reach you if they're interested in becoming a patient and also share with us your program and how patients can learn more about your program as well.

Yeah, absolutely. So I have two websites that I'll give you. One of them is my practice website, which is Restore Medicine. R-E-S-T-O-R medicine, no E on the end of restore.

And then people can also go to drnicola.com and dr is D-R and then nicola.com. And that's where I have most of the information about my transformational healing academy, which is my eight week mastering the mind program.

You can find me on Instagram at Dr. Nicola Duchamp and the same on Facebook. Okay, wonderful. So for those of you who are Summit subscribers, sit tight because we're going to dive deeper into all of this fascinating information about LimeBrain.

And for those of you who are not subscribers, if you would like to come with us, click on that button and become a subscriber. So Dr. Nicola, you were talking earlier about the mechanisms of Lyme brain.

Can you elaborate on that more? Are you suffering from Lyme disease or another complex chronic illness and aren't sure who to trust when it comes to herbal supplements?

Hi. I'm Dr. Mariah Hinchey, founder of Lyme Core Botanicals. As a naturopathic physician specializing in complex, chronic, infection-driven illnesses like Lyme disease, I needed herbal medicine I could truly trust.

That's why I formulated Lyme Core Botanicals. where our herbal tinctures are handcrafted in small batches right here in Connecticut. We use the whole herb, never isolates, to preserve the full spectrum of medicinal compounds.

Every single step from sourcing to extraction is done with precision to ensure maximum purity, potency, and consistency. These are the same herbal formulas I used to heal myself and have used for years to help my patients

and family members heal, too.

And now I'm making them available to practitioners and patients everywhere. Lyme Core Botanicals, herbal medicine you can trust from a doctor who lives this work.

Learn more at Lyme Core Botanicals. That's L-Y-M-E-C-O-R-E dot com. Yeah, absolutely. So, I mean, I see Lyme brain as sort of like a multifaceted piece, right?

So it's not just one single thing going on. We do have the infections themselves. And so that's obviously the big, you know, the big central thing people think about is like, oh my gosh, these infections are actually in my brain.

And that is possible. And there's so much more too, that can be going on. So I look a lot at toxicity. So obviously the infection itself can create some toxicity, especially when we do antimicrobial treatment and we're killing off these pathogens and they release toxins of their own.

So those things can become toxins that then our body has to deal with and clear. There's also a big inflammation component. And so this is where, you know, I talk to people a lot about diet because People think the brain's just kind of it's separated thing up here and then the guts separate thing down here.

And so, well, you know, if I have inflammation in my gut, how's that going to impact my brain? But it does because inflammation anywhere in the body is going to create these chemicals, right?

It's going to create these markers like cytokines and chemokines and chemicals of inflammatory response that can travel around the body and that can then cross the blood brain barrier and make it into the brain.

And it's like setting off fireworks in the brain. So managing inflammation and working with, you know, looking at how ways to reduce inflammation is a big part and diet is a piece of that.

Lyme brain mechanisms: infection, toxins, and inflammation

If people are eating a lot of inflammatory foods, they're going to be, you know, creating more inflammation everywhere in their body, including their brain.

The other thing I look at is neurotransmitter balance. So I have seen a lot of people where their serotonin levels are off or they don't have enough GABA.

You know, there's two calming neurotransmitters, serotonin and GABA. And then there's more stimulating neurotransmitters. And so if we talk about neuroplasticity of being the wiring of the brain, neurotransmitters are the chemistry of the brain.

So we have the nerve cell. But then we also have these little chemicals that help transmit the message from one cell to the breath to the next. And so sometimes working with amino acid therapy and helping with the neurotransmitter balance can be helpful.

We know a lot more now about heavy metal toxicity, mycotoxins. I mean, that's huge in Lyme is mycotoxin illness. And so that contributes to what people consider like what they recognize as their Lyme brain.

can also be heavy metal brain or mycotoxin brain, right? Or, you know, inflammation brain. So we want to look at some of these different aspects on more of a physiological level and help to balance those, like get the inflammation down, balance the neurotransmitters, you know, detox whatever toxins we find.

Even Candida can release toxins that affect the brain. So there's different elements to it. Are they're over and above just treating the infections? In terms of the infections themselves, like I always talk about the three B's as being the big ones, right?

Borrelia, Babesia, Bartonella. And in my view, the anaplasma Olichia ricketta tends to be more secondary. So the three B's are the biggies. And, you know, in my experience, when I see a lot of like the cognitive aspects, the short-term memory loss, the difficulty with focus and concentration, that's a lot sort of based in the Borrelia infection.

Babesia causes a lot of dizziness and wooziness, which makes people feel very foggy and also creates a lot of like low grade anxiety or just sort of generalized anxiety.

And then Bartonella causes a lot more like seizure-like activity or panic attacks, like severe anxiety, OCD kind of stuff. And so to some extent, really healing Lyme brain, like one of the primary things is recognizing the co-infection.

and addressing the co-infections adequately because that's where I see a lot of people are kind of like their treatment is falling short and they're not getting the results they want because they've got untreated co-infections that are also contributing to this Lyme brain kind of scenario.

But we have to treat co-infections comprehensively. We have to look at biofilm, breaking down biofilm, like all of those things that sort of impact everything in the body, but really, really do impact the brain as well.

Yeah. So it's beyond just looking at killing infections. We have to understand how and where these infections live and what they do to the body. And in each individual patient, it's kind of like, It's funny because everyone's like, or I will say, we need to find the underlying cause.

And they're like, well, duh, my infection is the underlying cause. And it's like, well, I would argue that you probably have two, three, or even maybe 10 other underlying causes that this infection has now created in your body.

Things like you've said, issues with being toxic and possibly heavy metals and mycotoxins and What about increased intestinal permeability and now food sensitivities and like all of these other things.

You know, all of these other things that the infections make inside of your body. Yeah, well, and then you have to go after them. Like the thyroid tank, you know, the adrenals are tired.

Right. So there's a lot of hormonal stuff as well. You know, I've had some male patients where, you know, they, they end up with low testosterone as a result of it all.

And, you know, if you don't have testosterone, you're not thinking well, you know, your brain's not sharp. So there are, you know, lots of different things.

And that's why, you know, I love the integrative approach to Lyme because it is so comprehensive and so holistic. But, you know, to your point that you were talking about, like, we've got to isolate which infections and go after them, but it's even how we do that within the infection.

So with the, with the Lyme itself, the Borrelia piece, one of the things, and I do a lot of antibiotic therapy with my patients. I never do antibiotics just all by themselves.

I use a lot of naturopathic support and really sort of bring that integrative approach. Even with that, isn't it? Some antibiotics cross the blood brain barrier and are great for Lyme brain and some aren't.

And, you know, I'm not, it's not in my scope of practice as a naturopathic doctor to do IV antibiotics, but I use a lot of Bicillin, which is an injectable form of penicillin, crosses the blood brain barrier.

And if I had to say, what's my one medication that's been most successful for people with Lyme brain, it's Bicillin. Heads and tails above of anything else.

Co-infections, blood-brain barrier treatment, and targeted therapies

So, you know, it's even sort of how we choose different medications or different antimicrobials as well to target the right things and optimize how they work in the brain.

Minocycline, for example, crosses the blood brain barrier just a little bit better than doxycycline. You know, tinnitus can be pretty good too. So we want to make choices in our protocols based on what's going to be the most effective in that regard.

Right, absolutely. So what are your favorite treatment strategies in addition, obviously, to mindset and helping to balance the autonomic nervous system?

Yeah. So, I mean, I sort of fall into some of those categories that we talked about, right? So, I mean, definitely treating the infection and the, you know, the right infection comprehensively is going to be a very, very central part of the strategy.

But there's also, I mean, there's so many different things, like we could be here, you know, for a couple of hours talking about different things, but, you know, just to throw out a couple of my favorites.

I love glutathione and I use a lot of glutathione because it's one of our major antioxidants. So it helps. balance oxidative stress or free radical production.

And the brain creates more free radicals than any other part of our body because it uses up more oxygen, right? So we want to help with that. Speaking of oxygen, I love oxygenative therapies like ozone therapy or hyperbaric oxygen.

That's not accessible to everyone, but that, you know, but it can be wonderful. We can use cognitive enhancers like B, methyl B12, huperazine, gimpocetine.

alpha lipoic acid, like there are some really wonderful nutrients that can help support the brain while we, you know, do all of this other stuff. I've even seen low dose naltrexone be helpful.

Like one of the things low dose naltrexone does other than being immune modulating is it increases endorphin production. And endorphins are our feel good chemicals.

So a lot of people on low dose naltrexone find their mood is better, their sleep is better. They're less irritable. They're sort of less anxious. And then I do use amino acid therapy, like 5-HTP is an amino acid that fuels serotonin.

We can supplement with GABA and C-amine and some lovely amino acids to help feed those calming pathways. And then there are some people who need more brain stimulation.

And so sometimes we'll use like tyrosine is an amino acid that fuels more of the sort of stimulating pathways in the brain. So that's all, you know, on a very individual kind of basis, but there are some of the things I really like.

There's some other tools too, like neurofeedback can be great. Other modalities that, that can help plan as well, but you know, looking at managing inflammation in the body is a big one.

And so we have our favorite herbs like curcumin and white willow and holy basil and, um, and things like that, that can help dampen inflammation and diet.

Diet plays a big role. When people, when my patients get off gluten and sugar and to a slightly lesser extent, dairy, dairy's sort of third on my list, their brain gets more clear.

There's no doubt about it. So, and looking at sort of not eating saturated fats and processed foods, which just fuel inflammation. And then as we said earlier, inflammation in the gut becomes inflammation in the brain.

And then obviously the detox part is huge. So I didn't really talk about that. So Lutefion is one of my favorite detox

helpers. I use a lot of Smilax Blabray.

It's very specific herb, very specific strain of Smilax. that does cross the blood brain barrier and helps to neutralize neurotoxins. So I use a lot of that.

Sometimes binders like charcoal and clay and silica and things like that can help pull toxins out. And then looking at, you know, the mycotoxin piece, the heavy metal piece, they're more specific, like they have a little bit more specific treatment part, but you know, we look at colonization of mold in the sinuses that can contribute to the brain fog and the brain issues as well.

So there's lots of different pieces. I feel like functional medicine testing is wonderful because it gives us this information, right? It gives us this These clues of where we need to focus our attention and, you know, can feel a little overwhelming at first to be like, oh my gosh, all these things like, but, you know, we just got to be strategic and take it one step at a time.

And, you know, again, there's that, that mindset piece of like, I'm going to get there in the end and there is no doubt in my mind. There is no question.

I accept no other possibility than I am going to get healed. Yeah. And I think a lot of times it comes down to finding a practitioner that you trust and you know, knows what they're doing.

Right. And then you can kind of stop searching, stop being in that fight or flight where you're literally fighting for your life and searching and researching and, you know, looking everywhere for answers.

Being up on Dr. Google at midnight. Gosh. Yeah. Yeah. That's the worst. So would you like to talk or would you talk a little bit more about your program and this rewiring and what your approach is?

Yeah, I'd love to. So I put together an eight-week program that teaches people how their mind works, right? So the first thing is to be educated and aware so that you can recognize what's happening and then make different decisions and adopt different practices to change it.

So I do teach fundamentally, like, how does a conscious mind work? How does this subconscious mind work? Like, how do we create this thing that we call reality?

Right? So I say to people in my program, I'm like, if you put your fingers like that, I can you, and you look through this teeny tiny little space and it's a teeny tiny little square.

And that's what we think reality is, the way our conscious mind sees it. But really reality is sort of like everything else that's out here. And so if we learn how our subconscious mind works and how our conscious mind constructs our reality, then we see that we have the power to recreate it and influence it.

Like we can change how we filter information. and how we filter our viewpoint. And some of that too is working with people on like, what's their identity?

Like what do they say after I am? What are the words that come after I am?

Detox support, nutrition, and brain-focused supplements

And how can we change that to be more empowering? So I am a lime sufferer. I am super sick. I am never going to get better. Like they're all like at our deepest level of our identity of who we are.

And so that's one of the things that we look at. We look at, you know, our values and how we create values. Like, where do our beliefs come from? Where do our limiting beliefs come from?

How can we change your limiting beliefs? Like, how do we actually do that? And then so it's walking people through

all of that and giving them tools. And then I give actual strategies.

Like, you know, we do it over the course of like the introduction and then the eight week program, they'll be given tools. They will learn tools that then they are encouraged to incorporate in their day-to-day life.

And that's really, you know, I can teach them all day long, but then people have to make the decision to like actually practice and do the work. It's like, you know, people have to go to the gym.

People have to practice piano. Like there's that sort of day-to-day kind of playing it out. And so the program is eight weeks. I have released it as a sort of DIY program that people can just enroll in.

They get the recorded lessons, they get the workbook and they can just move through it by themselves. The magic for me happens in the group coaching program, which I run three or four times a year.

I keep it to very, very small groups. So people will still get access to those recorded teachings. each week but then we have a weekly zoom in the small group setting where we can really unpack it and we really kind of you know we can get coached on it we can share our experiences and really create a very beautiful sense of community as well within those small groups because by the end of the nine-week period those folks are close you know and but they're there to support each other and lift each other up so So I think the group coaching adds so much value to it.

If that's not accessible to people, they can also just do it as, you know, an online digital learning platform and still get the information and get the worksheets and get the practices and get all the meditation recordings and all of that.

And they have access to that forever. That's wonderful. And I love the live group piece of that. I think it's really important. You know, obviously there's support groups online and chat groups, and we had an in-person support group.

And I would say the hardest thing about the support group is actually keeping it positive, you know, because it always can become very negative and a lot of times very toxic.

I think it's so important for patients to find a community space that is focused on being positive. Yes. And to be clear, we are not expecting people not to feel anger or sadness or have human emotions.

We're not trying to overcome those things. What we're trying to do is give people tools to move through them and move through them in a timely fashion so that they don't spend a lot of time in that horrible space, kind of having those things, you know, go around on a loop that then, you know, we all feel sad.

We all feel angry. We all have things happen that we don't love, but it's a question of how long are we going to stay there and how long are we going to kind of keep that story going versus, okay, that happened.

Okay. Let's, how do we move forward from there? Wonderful. So if you had to, when it comes to LimeBrain in general, if you had to talk about the three most important things to our listeners, what would the three highlights be?

The three highlights would be one, become aware of that mindset piece and whether it's my program or another kind of program, like it is foundational and fundamental to work on that.

Two is making sure you're with a practitioner who is looking at the different elements and not sort of tunnel visioned online or tunnel visioned on mold or one thing that's looking sort of more holistically and making sure you're getting the right kind of treatments.

Transformational Healing Academy and closing advice

And then three is do all the things you can at home, like work with your nutrition, do the Epsom salts baths, do the

coffee enemas, like whatever it is that you can do at home by yourself.

It's not going to cost you any money. It's just things that you can make choices day by day. I really encourage that because it's important to have that sense of self-responsibility as well.

And it gives you more of a feeling of empowerment of like, I can do things in my everyday life. They're going to help my outcome. So yes, you want a practitioner who's helping guide you in the medical aspects and yes, a hundred percent.

But there's a lot that you can do on your own as well. And so they're the three pieces that I think are the most important. Yeah. And I love that piece too in the end.

It's like the self-care at home. You know, you mentioned in the beginning of our discussion, like doing the gratitude journal and just thinking of three things at the end of the day that were positive and that went right.

You know, those things are so easy and so simple. Yeah. But they're profound, especially as they add up over time. And I think a lot of times people feel silly, you know, doing it, but it's one of those things where it's like, you know, once you get used to doing it, you don't really feel silly anymore.

And instead of struggling to come up with three things, it's like, you know, you've got a list of like 50 things. Right. That's the neuroplasticity, right?

You're training your brain to be sitting in gratitude and sitting in those positive places. So The three things that I mentioned earlier, and I have all my folks do this that are going through my program.

They do this even before we start week one. This is like introductory. What are three things or people or whatever I'm grateful for today? What are three wins I had today?

And what are three ways I took care of myself or I nurtured myself today? And it's just three by three, right? It takes a few minutes, but it's such a great practice to get into.

And it really does shift the way people start looking at things. Yeah, that's wonderful. Thank you. You're welcome. So tell our listeners again what the name of your program is, how they can find it, and then also how they can find you.

Yeah, sure. So the program's called the Transformational Healing Academy. Um, if they, if they go to drnicoladusharm.com and doctor is drnicoladusharm.com and they will find information about that there.

And then my practice has also has its own website, restoremedicine.com, r-e-s-t-o-r-medicine.com or Instagram at drdrdusharm.com. Awesome. Thank you so much, Dr.

Nicola. And thank you, everyone, for watching. I hope this really helps you on your path to healing Lyme. And we will see you at our next episode. Have a great day.

If this episode gave you an answer, brought you new insight, or made you think differently, subscribe to the Lyme Bites podcast and share with someone who's ready to take control of their healing journey.

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