Optimizing Mental Health with Amino Acids & CBD Transcript

(Transcripts are generated by AI and may contain errors)

Introduction and speaker background

Welcome to the bio optimized summit where we are exploring the next level of physical and mental health you can reach through intentional and targeted optimization.

I'm dr amy and I'm very excited to bring to us highly cast today. She is an integrative psychiatrist, author and author of many books, not just author of one books and she actually has been a mentor of mine for many years and when I was first starting out and I think I was still in residency, I reached out to her and I said, hey, if I wanted to become you, if I wanted to do what you do, where would I start?

And she pointed me in the right directions and so I'm very grateful to her for that and very grateful that she has agreed to bring her knowledge and expertise to us today.

She combines the best of leading edge natural medicine with modern science and her clinical practice writings nationwide, media appearances, print tv radio podcasts, summits, doctor series and documentaries.

She helps individuals withdraw from psychiatric medications and substances of abuse or to avoid medications altogether for mental health through the use of targeted nutritional supplements. And one of her latest discoveries and uses is with CBD And so we'll be talking about that as well today.

She is an advisory board member for the Journal of Cannabinoid Medicine and the author of several popular books and I have one of her books right here to show you that eight weeks to vibrant health and so I definitely recommend that everyone check out your writings, dr Kass. Thank you so much for joining us today.

My pleasure by the way, that's an old cover. That's an old edition. It is, yes, it is. I need to update that cover, yep. Well, I remember that when I first reached out to you years ago now, you first said you should go get trained in the brain chemistry and the biochemical imbalances using amino acids to support the brain health, because that's fundamental to this work of whether we're going to avoid medications or if we're trying to get someone off of medications and this has been a struggle for many people, many people get on a mood medication and they reached the point where they want to get off and are really struggling to get off. So, I would love for you to share with us, like what is the use of amino acids? Why are those so important in this work to either avoiding medication or even being able to get off of a psychiatric mood medication?

Okay, thanks for asking. So amino acids are the breakdown products of protein. So we eat protein. Broken proteins broken down into amino acids and those amino acids make our neurochemicals are neurotransmitters are chemical messengers.

So, for example, just there's something called serotonin. We, most people have heard of serotonin from the serotonin.

Why amino acids matter for brain chemistry

Re uptake inhibitors like PROzac, Zoloft, CeleXA and so on. And um serotonin is calming and it also raises your mood and in order to, for your brain to make serotonin. it actually doesn't need PROzac, what it really needs because that just is just fooling your brain into thinking this more and then ultimately it's not really doing the job. What you really want are the products that make the serotonin. So they're called pre precursors, the precursors to a lot of the chemistry line. So that chemical reaction where you have food that contains trip to fame and that is converted with the help of co factors or helpers like B vitamins, magnesium, zinc, um so many so much goes into it, kind of like baking a cake.

You know, you need to have the right ingredients and the medications aren't really the right ingredients. They're

they're stop gap and they're often helpful in the short term, but they're not meant to be used long term.

And what we really need to give people long term are these um precursors and being very specific to which ones they need because if somebody, for example is um irritable depressed tends to overeat, especially in the evening. Those are some of the signs of low serotonin. So we would give them a trip to fine or its relative um five hydroxy trip to fine.

And this is what I love about this type of work is because you can, through different assessments really be able to find out what imbalance they have a lot of that is based on their symptoms and symptoms that they wouldn't even think of like this is just their life, this is just their normal day. They always crave sweets at this time, they always get tired or anxious around this time like they don't they don't realize that hey this is a way that we can actually pinpoint what neurochemical imbalances you may have and that we can be very intentional and targeted in how we support that.

Yes, absolutely. Um and people are amazed at how they change. It's like oh I thought that was my personality, you know and it isn't your personality is very often tied in with your deficits and why why we have deficits.

It could be dietary, it could be stress could be a genetic predisposition but we can overcome all of that when we know what to take or in my case what to give to a person what to prescribe.

Um If somebody has difficulty concentrating, they have trouble getting motivated, they can't get started on things. Um maybe a. D. D. Jumping from one thing to another or these people are low in dopamine and dopamine is the reward chemical.

How do we make dopamine? We make it from tyrosine. So again the tire scene and the co factors of tyrosine comes from protein, you take it and lo and behold you can start focusing feeling happier more motivated and it's a different ballgame. So what we do is and I learned this um Well from a number of people but Julia ross has been teaching us a great deal.

And there's some courses through the alliance for addiction solutions which teaches you how to use the amino acids for addiction, but also just for mental health issues because addiction is so tied in with mental health, you know, so often people are addicted because they have deficits in these specific amino acids and when you give them the immuno assets, they stop being addicted, the cravings actually go away and something very simple like craving sugar or alcohol. You think that's a tough one?

Like, oh my God, people, I can't, I can't I can't help myself or I have to have that drink and I struggle with it. You know how people talk to us. Well, I've had people take capsule of glutamine, l glutamine, which again, is a drive from protein. It's an amino acid, open it up under the tongue, let it dissolve. And it actually tastes kind of nice and it satisfies the brain in such a way that the craving right on the spot goes away because of that. It's like that's the itch that wanted to be scratched with sugar or the alcohol and instead you're giving it something that it really can use, the brain utilizes the glutamine is fuel and it doesn't have, you don't have the gravy, right? So when a person has any of these deficits, their brain is going to be looking for solutions to feel better.

And exactly whether that's gonna be food, sugar, alcohol, whatever it is, it's going to be looking for that solution to feel better so that it can take away that that deficit and be able to focus better or or live life better.

And so when when we have these deficits, that's often how we know we have these deficits is we have these cravings, we have the sugar cravings, we have the cravings for the drink at a certain time and so these are all just keys and signs that we can use to know.

Hey, maybe amino acids would be something really beneficial that could really help me leave. Some of these things that I feel are now impairing my life, my health and other ways but yet I haven't been able to overcome yet because the cravings can be so intense.

Your your frontal cortex goes offline the part of your brain that can make good decisions, your judgment is not

there. So you just, you know, you do, it's it's very primitive, you have a craving and you go for it.

Mhm Yeah, very much is part of that survival system in our brain. And medications can be very helpful in the short term because if there is an imbalance that can fix that imbalance but the ways that the medications fix imbalances are not providing that the nutrients and the building blocks it's artificially creating more of that sub straight of that chemical of that serotonin or dopamine or whatever it is.

But then the body is compensating for for that felt sense that there's more of it right? So then the receptor levels go down and people can often find themselves weeks two months later in the same position feeling the same way.

But now on this medication right with the side effects. So then then they raise their dose to change the drug. It's really such a slippery slope. So I'm saying start naturally whenever you can don't even bother with them. It's if you can at all help it because they're difficult to get off of but it is difficult when they're accompanied.

This is this is the trick you need to and I do know this that you accompany the withdrawal. Very gradual withdrawal. But you accompany it with these amino acids and co factors and it makes a world of difference. It's much quicker.

Much smoother. People have had had gone off in the past gone off their meds in the past and then had gone on and they said that this time going off with the help of nutritional supplements was a world of difference.

Oh it makes all the difference because yeah the brain now has what it needs to build those chemicals. It's not struggling anymore. Exactly mm hmm. And what's happened in the past couple of years.

I've actually added in C. B. D. To the mix. Okay everything.

Using amino acids to reduce cravings and support withdrawal

Let's talk about that CBD actually helps to modulate all of the neurotransmitters so it works on something. This is a lot of information. So bear with me it works on something called the endocannabinoid system that we didn't even used to know about nope. I mean it wasn't discovered until the nineties THC was discovered in the sixties. That's marijuana from the cannabis plant.

CBD is also from the cannabis plant but it's from the hemp division of the cannabis plant and it's not going to get you high. Whereas marijuana which has THC does get you high. So the THC receptor was discovered but they didn't know what what it was for. And then it was finally discovered that we make our own, it's like THC we make our own what it's anandamide.

They're called endorphins. So anandamide is one of them to a g. Is one of them and these they're called they're called endocannabinoid actually but they act like endorphins that make you feel good, they make you happy and that is built in so we have a built in happiness chemical and the way to um augment it is through when before we knew about CBD people would smoke pot and that would make them happier. But then they also get high and maybe not working working out so well and some people don't like to get high they want to feel good but they don't want to be really altered. So along came CBD not too long ago.

And and what we discovered was that it was part of the endocannabinoid system that it helps to control these endocannabinoid and it helps to control all of the neurotransmitters. It also talks to the hormones the gut, the organs, the immune system. There are receptors for the endocannabinoid system all over the body. And um in the brain the most C CB one receptors, one certain kind and in the rest of the body it's more the CB two receptors and they're very active. And we can come in this is so cool we can come in give someone who has low endocannabinoid. They just naturally have them low either from their diet, from their genetics, from stress stress trauma, trauma will lower the endocannabinoid system. So these people will be um depressed anxious, may be more prone to PMS may have bone loss.

I mean that sounds like what does it deal with bones to it does migraines. So looking at somebody has all of these symptoms, they're not going to have to go to a different doctor for each thing. What we're gonna do is what we do

is raise the endocannabinoid system by giving CBD and lo and behold these symptoms go away.

So you may be treating for migraine and joint pain goes away right? You know? So different things like everything gets helped you have a good functioning endocannabinoid system with the help of CBD and by the way you don't have to take the CBD forever.

Sometimes you take it for a while and then your body kicks in well. And when you're giving your body a healthy, healthy nourishment through a diet, that's right for you. You're supporting it with the amino acids.

With time, the body will be able to produce more of the endocannabinoid by itself and not need that additional support. But it's when we're still running on on deficits, we're stressing our system out. Our biology is stressed to the max to try to get us through our day in our life. Then all of those systems are going to be affected. The endocannabinoid system is especially going to be affected. Exactly. So it's been it's really been miraculous to have it because I can give it to somebody who's experiencing acute pain and they take it and put, you know, half a dropper under the tongue.

And that may do it. Or they may need another dropper or half dropper under the tongue and lo and behold the pain goes away. You know, that can last for a few hours and then take some more.

Um but ultimately they may build up their own. They may not. So that's that's really the individual also, it's very useful for addiction. Mhm. And there's there's good research using using it for addiction. What types of addictions is it's especially helpful for? Well, in one case there was a study on people who had um heroin addiction. And what happened was they started to take CBD and that actually prevented their usual cues from activating them.

Which is huge. Right? That trigger is is the slippery slope so we can avoid that trigger. Mm hmm. So they see their triggers or experience the trigger and not feel the need to use. Which is gigantic.

Right? And when we can if we could use that like right in the period after they've gone through a detox where their triggers, their cravings may be higher than ever. That would be a very awesome short term use for this cannabinoid system to support a period in which they are going to be more sensitive to their triggers And the cravings that will be as a result of those triggers.

Yeah. And that that brings up something else. And that is that a lot of addiction um comes after someone has PTSD way of dealing with the PS PTSD drowning it out. Well what happens, this is so cool. CBD actually helps to mitigate um and treat PTSD and we don't have a lot of we have more treatments now but we don't have good medicine for it. I mean drugs have been really bad and you have these these military men, you know I mean veterans on a whole like 20 drugs but they're still they still have their PTSD and you give them and and a lot of them were smoking weed which helped. But I don't think that's the ultimate solution because particularly now the marijuana is so high in THC that you don't have enough of the CBD to be therapeutic. So you need to have a balance the old the old products, you know, 2030 years ago, we're more balanced.

CBD and the endocannabinoid system

And I'm not even gonna speak to that because I don't deal with THC per se. I'm I'm the CBD world. So when you give CBD to someone with PTSD, it actually goes to the nucleus incumbents, which is where you store that fearful memory and it helps to unwind the fear that gets locked in. It's like it unlocks it and instead of being reactive and going into a whole fight or flight every time you something happens and you remember something you remember an incident but it doesn't impact you. It's just Oh yeah, it's like the cues that I was talking about with the heroin, the cues just are separated because now have an adequate endo cannabinoid system. That's just brilliant.

It's an amazing discovery and I'd like to see it more widespread in its use in medicine. It should be more a first line along with other nutrients, which would also be a first line rather than giving prescription medications.

Yeah, I'm thinking of so many of the trauma therapies and approaches that I'm aware of and especially like all of them try to disentangle this fear from the memories and from the states because it's that fear that then puts them

right back into that place within their their on the hyper alert and it's a real toll on their body energetically even. And so to be able to use this as a tool in therapy in order to be able to just help that person disentangle disconnect that level of fear from the specific memory would be a huge benefit to them.

That's exactly what happens. And um we've seen it time and again. So you can use the therapies like tapping E. M. D. R. Um sensory experiencing, there are many of them are gonna be comprehensive, comprehensive here and they're great.

But if you bring in some CBD with it then you're going to get a much faster response. Yeah. You can really accelerate the results when when you're able to work with the nervous system, especially at the nucleus accumbens level with the cannabinoid system. Mhm. And and by the way I need to explain, you know, I keep talking about CBD and what I'm really talking about is a whole spectrum of uh ingredients that are in this hemp plant. So you have, first of all this cannabis which is the whole category, then you have what the the product that's grown for, let me have a drink of water. You have the product that's growing for its THC to get high and that's a bushy plant with a lot of lot of flowers.

Then you get the hemp plant that spread to that have long stocks long term stocks that are used for you for making CBD for making hemp um hemp rope hemp paper and so on is actually you know it was actually very well ingrained in America before it was banned due to the fear of you know devil weed whatever that was about. So um which was highly political.

So the what you have in this plant, what you have in the in the product and the extract and it's like this is what it looks like here here for example is a bottle of Hempel out its oil extract and in it is not just CBD at all because just CBD is CBD isolate and they do sell CBD isolate but it's not actually as good because in in the whole plant you know that in like an herbal medicine we use the whole plant, we may have a marker substance that's kind of the main ingredient or the main active.

But we need the entire plant and all its components because that's how nature works best. So in this in the hemp oil extract we have vitamins, minerals, um cannabinoids, they're over 100 cannabinoids.

Now they're not 100 cannabinoids in every plant but the traces of various ones and there's ter pains and turbines are these aromatic compounds that are medicinal that occur in all plants.

You know lavender has its own smell. So that's the ter pain that's the Turpin of lavender or lemon. So they're very powerful, very healing. So you want to have the full complement, You want to have the full entourage effect of of a either full spectrum or broad spectrum. This full spectrum with a trace of tea you can have up to 0.3% THC which won't get you high anyway.

And then there's uh the full broad spectrum where the THC has actually been removed. So there's not even a trace. So then how does a person actually take the hemp oil?

What's what's the best way for them to get those benefits? Different the ways that I prefer. I like this sublingual they take proper put under your time and hold it for 30 seconds and you let it Um then you swallow it. It'll become systemic.

Um there's also capsules so they take a little longer to come on but they last longer. So for example if people have trouble falling asleep staying asleep, I have them take the capsule say half hour or 45 minutes beforehand and then take the dropper just before and then have it handy for during the night.

Also topical. There's SAB's there's also skin serums and skin creams because it's very good for the skin. So it has different delivery systems. I've seen sprays.

I haven't used them but seems like a good idea. It seems very similar to the whole opioid receptor system in our body as well where you have different types of opiate receptors And they're actually in all these different tissues.

It you know they're not just in the brain and so we have these endorphins we have these endogenous um opiate molecules that bind these receptors and very similar to the cannabinoid cannabinoid system where it's going to affect multiple systems and so a person can be experiencing one symptom but then when they boost, you know their endorphins they realize oh this symptom over here goes away as well. So it really is um supporting so many different aspects of our health and the different systems when we are able to to identify this as an area where hey I think that if we boost your cannabinoid system that you will experience some benefits in all spheres and things you didn't even think about.

You don't even realize we're going to be affected. So that's the good news. I think when when you work naturally as you know it's it's so much more powerful and people will say, oh no you need I need medication. I have, I'm very you know I have a very serious condition, I need medication. Oh contraire if we can get to the root cause see what's going on. It could be hormonal, it could be certain nutritional deficits, whatever it is, it could be infection when we get to the bottom of it and treat it there.

That's powerful. That's that's really where you want to, that's where you want to be. So when you're working with someone can you walk us through how you combine um your different approaches with the amino acids with the uh cannabinoids in order to help a person say get off of a mood medication. What's the approach that they should expect if they were to come to work with you and go through this process?

How CBD supports trauma, addiction, and symptom relief

Well based on the specific medication that they're on um there's a likely neurotransmitter that is in a deficit. For example if there are in S. S. R. I pretty much they need serotonin if they're on stimulant medication pretty much they need dopamine. So we give them precursors.

There's also a questionnaire that I give that allows us to see but based on symptoms is it a serotonin deficit? Is it a dopamine deficit is an endorphin deficit and so on. And then we can trial we can test a person.

In fact I have a nutritionist who does this for me and she'll take the um well the individual will take capsule and see if that works. Does that work for the symptom? Not exactly.

Okay. Take another one and then you try until you get the exact right dose and that becomes your dose and then you try on the next one and the next one it's very precise. So it's basically testing each item using education to start with. I mean it's an educated guess based on what medication they're coming off of And then adding in the CBD and that kind of extends it's kind of like hamburger helper for the neurotransmitters so it helps to expand and balance them. Mhm. So um it's a really wonderful adjunct here because it has its ways of reducing addiction just by itself.

It reduces cravings. So you have that going for it, it's modulating the trans neurotransmitters and it's having all its wonderful effects. So in some cases people just start with CBD that they'll just start with that and then add in the other the other items.

They said some people will take it for one thing and then, you know, five other things get better. And you know, at first when I heard about it, I said it sounds like a panacea.

I mean like really? But when you understand the endocannabinoid system, you understand the dynamics, you read the research and there's plenty of research, lots and lots of research on it. Then you get it.

We know this is this is what works and it may take a while for it to get into mainstream medicine, but it certainly is an alternative medicine. Mhm. Do you have an example that you can give us of someone that you've worked with and the results that they've had the changes that they've been able to experience with this type of approach?

Yeah, I'm thinking about when one case was an elderly woman who was on far too many medications. Common story these days, it was wrong and they were going to put her in a home because she really wasn't functioning very well.

So she came to see me on these meds and I gave her her daughter in law and son uh withdrawal schedule with some amino acids and some CBD and she it was she was supposed to go off them over a couple of months and what happened was I don't know if they misread it or what but they ended up taking her off her medication, her medications in a couple of weeks.

So um but what's interesting is that they were kind of really making her like she was had her head down, she was disoriented, she wouldn't really talk to me, she just she was not home and what happened was they gave her the nutritional supplements and multivitamin. And um a product I had that had a number of amino acids in it.

And the C. B. D. And what happened was within two weeks when she was off the medication. She came alive and over the next few weeks they were reporting she's doing great because I was following her, I wanted to see you know how she was doing. And then a month later she came in again and sat in front of me and made eye contact and we talked and she she was aware of her surroundings, she knew where she was going to go for lunch that day, she was with it and they did not put her in a home.

So and she continued on the C. B. D. Thereafter because of all the products she took that was the one that had the most bang for the buck. She wasn't it was hard to give her a lot of supplements.

So and she was also on other medications not psych medications but others. So she settled on the C. B. D. And her other medications and did great. Yeah she was in her eighties and so I wasn't expecting her to be 30 but there you go. Also you need to know by the way and sometimes about medications that you need to know what the interactions are with certain medications.

And there are places where you can look online. I have a blog. Um And most of my blogs where I talk about this I will give a resource for where to look up specific medications uh and and their interactions and the nutrient deficiencies that they cause. That's another one. Yeah.

Right order book on that called supplement your prescription. But in talking about CBD we're really dealing with. Are there any drug interactions with it? Right. You need to be cautious there.

But then the real truth is that if you if you're under 100 mg of full spectrum or broad spectrum I wouldn't worry.

Practical guidance on medication decisions and root-cause care

Um Now interestingly the isolate is something else isolate, you end up if you anybody's reading the research You're gonna read things like 600 mg. Which is if you're using just the regular products the ones that were buying like crazy, we don't use 600 millimeters, we may use 25 mg 30 mg 50 mg, maybe 100. But the 600 comes because it's an isolate and it doesn't have the the synergy of all the other ingredients of the plant.

Right? So it's always good to have one that is not an isolated. So I have a product that it says full spectrum on it, but at this point they changed the nomenclature.

So it's actually a broad spectrum, which means it's full spectrum. But without the THC well, to finish up the interview today, dr Kass, I'd like you to speak on people who may be considering going on a mood medication and what you would want them to know ahead of time to help them make that decision.

Certainly in our country we are having a growing mental health epidemic and more and more people are experiencing depression and anxiety and so more and more people are having to make this decision now of do I go on medication.

Do I not go on medication and they're confused right. Like this is a hard decision and it should be a hard decision based on, especially what we've talked about today and how hard it can be to get off of the medications. So what would you say?

This is the whole point. This is the conversation that doctors should be having with patients that it's it's not to be

taken lightly because when doctors are prescribing they think that they're prescribing it for life.

And they may even say that you know they say it's you know it's like diabetic with insulin you need it for life. Well in fact diabetics don't need insulin for life either. If they many many of them can use diet and nutrition and lifestyle and not be on and not be diabetic for heaven's sake. I mean it really has to do with carbs and insulin resistance and lack of education in that regard.

And then food cravings cravings for carbs that they don't know how to combat right we do. You know you take some glue and put it under your time and you're not craving that sugar for that carb. So a lot of education has to go in.

So what I would say to someone is look at healthy diet, healthy lifestyle, look for toxins that they have to be tested. You want to detox just heavy metals, chemicals, all of these things can be contributing to your depression or your anxiety. So why cover it over with the drug that's ending up going to have a lot of harmful effects rather than go to the root cause.

See a practitioner there are many others um M. D. S. D. O. S. N. D. S. Nurse practitioners nutritionists acupuncturists and I'm sure I've left out some chiropractors that specialize in this.

So don't sell yourself short give yourself the absolute best chance because coming off the meds is very difficult, and I'd rather you didn't have to do it.

Mhm. It's easier to start supporting the system before person is on medication and getting their neurotransmitters balanced with the amino acids with the cannabinoid system than it is after.

They've been on medication for a long time. Yes. Mhm. Good. Thank you, Dr Kass. Thank you so much for joining us and sharing your knowledge with us. It's been a pleasure.

Thank you so much. And I'll give you some resources to put on your page. Perfect. Yes. Give us some links and we'll put them in the show notes so that people can reference those. Perfect.

Okay, thank you so much and have a wonderful day. And thank you for joining us today together. Let's find that next level of health and aliveness.