Building an Integrative Mental Health Community

I think that's so important, and that is one of the things that I'm really trying hard to do, which is build a community, right, build community that can support each other.

So we have MDs, DOs, nurse practitioners, physician associates. We have nutritionists, naturopaths acupuncturists chiropractors, psychologists, psychotherapists.

So anyone who works in any way with patients with mental health, and that's frankly most people, so even if you're a gynecologist or, you know, it's always going to be a mental-health component, but it is bringing together all these different practitioners who can then create this community which can look at all the different angles, almost like an MDT, a multidisciplinary team, And I think that is one of the strengths and the beauties of IMH, have this amazing community of practitioners who can then feed off each other, who could help each and the patient benefits from having these different perspectives essentially in different angles of approach.

A warm welcome back to the Evolution of Medicine. Kirkland Newman, welcome Kiki, how are you? I'm good, thank you so much James, thanks for having me.

I'm really excited to jump into the journey that you're taking with integrative medicine and mental health and the leadership that your provided there.

We got to know each other a few years ago where you step forward as a leader to coordinate practitioners in London with some of the early functional forum events there, but your passion is functional medicine but really on the mental-health side.

So let's just start from there how did that come about and what led you to put yourself from So basically I had postpartum depression after both my boys and I was, you know, offered Prozac, I offered all sorts of different antidepressants and sleeping pills and the first time I didn't take them and then the second time my depression was a lot worse so I did actually take the and had a really bad reaction to these drugs and they made me much more tired and messed up my skin and my And they actually made me more depressed.

Kiki's Postpartum Depression and Healing Journey

And so I said to my psychiatrist, look, I really don't want to be on these meds. What can I do instead of this? And she said, oh, you're going to on this indefinitely.

This was a psychiatrist in London. But I've never been on any psychiatric med before. Why now? And she just had no answers for me whatsoever. And of all the different practitioners that I saw, I on my OB-GYN, an endocrinologist, two GPs, and two psychiatrists.

None of them had any answers as to why I was having these issues with my mental health. I had panic attacks, anxiety, insomnia, depression. No one could give me any answer.

So I went on a healing journey. breakthroughs, which got me started and I traveled to Belgium. I went to see Thierry Erthog, the hormone specialist, and he said, you need to be on all these hormones.

And I thought, okay, that's a little excessive. So I came back to London and found this endocrinologist in London who is doing female hormones, Marion Glock.

She's the GP, but Jan Toledano was her endoconologist. They said okay well, let's start looking at what sort of hormones you're missing. And of course, it made sense.

I mean, you know, here I was postpartum and of, course I had hormonal imbalances. And then I started working with a nutritionist who said that I have heavy metal toxicity and gluten intolerance and, and adrenal issues.

Basically I'd been just, I, had a very high powered career before the babies. Then basically when the kids were born, that was in the middle of doing a master's and It was just all a lot on my system and I wasn't properly supported and they had low omega-3s, I had no vitamin B, low D, et cetera.

So there were a lots of nutritional deficiencies and other sort of biochemical imbalances including the hormonal imbalanced which really explained that I have these imbalance in my moods and my anxiety, etc.

What really got me was that none of my conventional doctors had ever suggested even doing like a thyroid panel. And I went to see a cardiologist because I was having all these ectopic beats and he put a halter on me for 24 hours.

He said, yeah, you're having a lot of eectopic beets, but they're benign and we don't know what causes them. Well, he didn't check my thyroid or didn' even say you should check your thyroid and I So I just felt, you know, and then gradually as I discovered functional medicine and I started working with Sarah Gottfried and her webinars in California, this was back in 2011, I had discovered adrenal issues and dysfunction and the HPA access, etc.

And I thought, why do more people not know about this? I mean, it's crazy, like I was offered all these psych meds and yet there were very clear biochemical root causes as to why I'm having these symptoms.

and no one was addressing them. So having discovered functional medicine, I then educated myself as much as possible. I did all the webinars. I went to the first IMMH, Integrative Medicine for Mental Health Conference in 2011. First for me, it started in 2009. l listened to James Greenblatt talk, who's a conventional psychiatrist, talking about nutritional approaches to psychiatry and to mental health.

And I thought, why do more people not know about this? And this is crazy. So I made it my mission to then really educate and go to all the conferences, find out whatever I could, and find who the key people were.

And I really wanted to bring this to the mainstream because I thought, you know, this is a root cause, personalized, precision approach that is absolutely necessary to sustainably heal mental health and is not available in mainstream treatments for mental And so I started MindHealth360, which was a website to provide free resources around integrative mental health and functional medicine psychiatry.

It has a global database of practitioners. What are your symptoms, what are the potential causes, and what the are potential treatments. I then started a podcast interviewing all the leading integrative practitioners in mental health from around the world.

And then I took over IMMH, which is a conference that I'd been going to for seven years. When Dr. Shaw retired, I basically took it over from him. So I've been running it now.

This is my fourth year. It's taking place in San Diego from the eighth to the 11th of October. And the movement has really grown from, you know, 400, well, essentially when it started, it was 50 people in a room in 2009, and now we have around 2,000 in-person and virtual, which is a testament to, I think, two things.

One, the increasing interest and integrative approaches, root cause approaches and the recognition of the need for much more precision, personalized root-cause approaches to mental health.

Founding MindHealth360 and IMMH

And second of all, I think also the crisis in global mental health, which, you know, in September of last year marked over a billion people in the world are now struggling with mental house and according to the WHO.

So there's a real need to revolutionize mental, health and make it more root cause and look at the three areas

which I always say, there are three that you have to look out in mental.

The biochemical, so hormones, nutrition, gut, infections, inflammation, genetics. the psychosocial spiritual, so your relationships, your chronic stress, you're trauma, ACEs, and your lifestyle behavioral, exposure to sunlight, exercise, sleep, etc.

And only by looking at those three areas can you sustainably heal mental health. So that's my mission. Sorry, that was very long-winded, but I'm very passionate about it.

Yeah, no, I see that. And I've experienced it. I guess one of the things that I'd love to ask you about is that your journey reflects the place that we are.

On an individual level, there's never been more interest in any of things you're talking about, like the psychosocial stuff, getting your own labs. That's a big push now in the UK and in US.

You know, you're dealing with essentially, one of the most conservative specialties in psychiatry, essentially. Right. And I guess you've created this conference specifically for mental health professionals and hopefully a lot of psychiatrists to come through and see what's new.

How do you see that sort of juxtaposition of interest on the personal level, but still a of resistance. A lot psychiatries still, only using psych meds as their only tools, even to this day.

I mean, it's a really good question. I think things are changing because, and I, think, you know, one of my ambitions was to really drive a revolution from the ground up.

So by educating those suffering from mental health issues, their friends, families and their health practitioners, You create a groundswell of demand so that practitioners would have to listen, right?

So you have so many patients now going to their practitioners saying, hey, I've heard it could be a zinc, copper thing or it could be a B12 deficiency or could it be Lyme disease.

By educating people, lay people at a sort of very basic level, I think you really then create a demand which then creates a momentum in the practitioner body.

But then also top down, you also have increasing frustration on the part of a lot of practitioners who are not able to, you know, find solutions for their patients.

And they're basically frustrated by the lack of progress of their patience on psych meds, because let's face it, psychmeds treat the symptoms, not the causes, right?

And so I think practitioners who were ethical, and most of them are frustrated, by this and really want to be able give their patient something that's more substantial, more sustainable.

and they realize that what they are offering in the way of psych Meds and maybe some CBT is insufficient to really get them sustainably better. And so there's a growing awareness and interest amongst that practitioner body around integrative approaches and functional medicine.

You know, they're interested in, okay, you can do lab tests to measure different markers, and so the conventional idea that depression has no biomarkers or mental health has, no bio markers and it's only symptoms-based according to the DSM, We now know that that's not true.

There are biomarkers that are very clearly correlated with depression and anxiety. And so yes, a lot of it is correlation. But we also know lime disease and mold exposure and these infections, etc.

can cause chronic neuroinflammation. We know neuroflammation is one of the main drivers of psychiatric and

neurological symptoms. And so there's a growing awareness amongst practitioners that they need to do better, they want to better.

And there is an increasing curiosity about what's out there. They're finding that functional medicine integrative approaches with their lab tests, with supplements, the much more precision modalities, which are also more personalized, are actually much more satisfying.

And so I really believe there's a groundswell of interest and as the evidence comes in, and there is a lot of scientific evidence behind this, you know, PubMed is full of these research.

Now, probably not enough because a a of things, these things you can't patent vitamin C, there there a whole sort of commercial angle, which we all know which is hard to get over.

You know, the smallest RCT trial costs hundreds of thousands of dollars. But the point is there's increasing evidence out there of the importance of this approach and the efficacy of approach.

And the fact that, you know there are biomarkers, neuroinflammation can be measured, can't be treated, and that there a lot of, whether it's hormonal imbalances, or whether its neurotransmitter imbalanced, is whether is toxins or pathogens.

You now there're a lots of things that we can measure and we treat. So, I just want to take a minute to talk about the incredible mission partners that we have here at The Evolution of Medicine that have made this possible.

Why Patients and Practitioners Want Root-Cause Care

So first and foremost, a lot of thanks. Fullscript and FullScript Journeys. Foolscript has been an amazing partner for 10 years. We only pick partners who can help us achieve our vision and help you achieve your practice vision.

And Fulescript have been incredible partners for a decade, but their new offering journeys, this is why we called it The Evolutions of Madison Journies, is allowing practitioners to combine the relationships that they have with the newest technology to sell direct-to-consumer lab testing and use it as a funnel to bring into your practice and it's a game changer for the whole industry.

So go to goevomed.com slash journeys and you can get started on building the journeys for your practices an optimal way into practice. We're going to have some conversations about it.

This is a Game Changer. Next, Jenova. Janova have been fans of the Evolution of Medicine for a long time. We're big fans with them and they now have a lot more specialty testing.

They have lot of more tools and it's a key part of understanding the body ecologically. So go to goehomed.com slash Jonova to find out more. Come on over here and I want to show you about the other mission partners.

If you've been following us for a while, you know that these are organizations that we trust, that add a lot of value. Freedom Practice Coaching, I have been supported by them since the beginning.

And so many of the issues that practitioners face in building a successful practice, scaling a success practice come down to having the right support with people who have being there and done that.

Go to goevomed.com. Big boost marketing, Uli and his team are the best in the business when it comes to really understanding how to market your functional medicine practice.

Go to goevomed.com slash big boost and see how they can help you. And then what you're going to be hearing a lot about is the formation of clinical networks.

Ultimately, True Neura is our first effort at that, which is to build an integrated clinical network combining

independent practices from across the country into a network that can reverse cognitive decline.

And if you go to goevomed.com slash True Neura, you can get a demo. You can see what it means to be part of an integrative clinical networks. That's mentorship, that's software, and that making it easier for you to get incredible outcomes in a disease state where there are no other options.

So thanks to our mission partners. Let's get back to the content. Yeah, well, I would say, you know, for practitioners that I've spoken to, like a case of say like pandas, right, where a child goes into, acute psychiatric issues from almost nothing.

And, then nothing brings them back because they don't have the right toolkit to then, get a test to see that there's an infection in there, deal with the infection and then it completely goes away.

You know, that level of, what would you say, elegance of a solution, where it's like a permanent solution to something that looked untreatable, you know is the kind of experience that I think both mental health professional see and psych, psychiatric see, whereas like once you've seen that, You can't go back.

You have to go and practice in a new way. And I'm really glad that you created a place for that. You know, as I've been to IMH the last few years since you brought it back in person, both in San Diego, the DC event, you know I see that there's sort of like, there is the integrated mental health side.

There's like a pretty clear functional medicine piece, There is a particularly like brain health piece. You've always had Dr. Bredesen and Cat Toops and others on that side of things.

And then you also have the psychedelic elements. How do you sort choose how to bring all of those things together because I think the future of mental health that we see in common is at the center of all of those things, but how do you sort of choose which parts of that is to bring into a certain conference?

Such a good question. And, you know, when you're doing the programming, it's always so challenging to get the balance right. When I took over IMMH, It was much more functional medicine.

Conference Mission Partners and Clinical Networks

So it was about sort of, gut, brain, stool tests. Originally, the conference was designed to explain to practitioners how to use Great Plains labs. test, right?

So it was very biochemical. And when I took it over, I wanted to widen the remit and have the bio chemical, but also bring in the whole trauma piece, which is why I had Gabor Mate.

This year we have Bessel van der Kolk, we I think it's so important to have those three areas to, have the biochemical, but also to the psychosocial, spiritual and the lifestyle behavioral, because you cannot treat mental health in isolation.

And so being able to bring all these different approaches and then of course the neurological piece as well, Psychiatry is one thing, and of course I was brought to this through my own postpartum depression, which was a psychiatric issue.

But since then, I've had interesting neurological symptoms due to exposure to mold, Which has made me super interested in that whole neurological piece of neurodegeneration.

And so that's a super important piece. And then the trauma piece, which feeds into both. To me, you can't look at any in isolation, and it's really important to try to represent a balanced approach to all these things so there's this smorgasbord of these different modalities that any practitioner going to IMMH can say, okay, fine.

Let's test the urine, let's look at the hormones, look the metabolites through an OAT test, or let us look a stool test

and what the gut is up to. But then also let is look what might be contributing to this.

Let us also look people's relationships, people childhood trauma. Look at their nervous system. I think the nervous systems piece is so important and increasingly we are understanding that mental health problems, whether they are psychiatric or neurological, have to do with the dysregulation or regulation of someone's nervous system.

And we know now, for instance, that people who get Lyme disease or who gets mold poisoning tend to have childhood trauma. You can't separate the two or the three.

or the mini, you know, to me, that's the key is that it's, we have to really look at this from a systems perspective, from the whole person perspective of, what are your relationships doing?

What's your inflammation? Is your information due to a pathogen or is it due childhood trauma or maybe both because the two are linked. And I've really tried hard to keep a balanced representation of all these different pieces at the conference.

I was reading an article yesterday that is relevant to this where there was some organization that had bought a network of clinics that were doing, I think, you know, TMS.

And, the commentary was the interesting part where they were saying that what they see is a sort of a movement away from psychiatry and neurology as just like independent silos, but to talk more broadly about brain medicine.

I, think that like that reinforced the process that you've taken, which is like, it's called integrated medicine for mental health.

Brain Medicine, Trauma, and Systems Thinking

Why is Dale Bredesen? you know, speaking. And it's because, you now, Dale is on the cutting edge of really understanding how to keep a healthy brain. For some people, that shows up as a mental health issue.

Some people that show up early cognitive decline or cognitive. Ultimately, it is the same brain, the stressors. I've actually had some of my big aha moments that I have had over the last few years of being at IMH.

listening to Chris Palmer talk. He was talking about the sort of drivers of mental health issues. And obviously he's known for metabolic inflammation and metabolic psychiatry, but he was taking about toxins and mold and these other things.

I was like, this is exactly what Dr. Bredesen is talking, driving these different areas. So what we need is a scalable delivery of something that can identify these areas and deal with them.

Some people, they'll be able to access that through consumer-facing tools. But with severe psychiatric illness and with cognitive decline, you literally can't do it to yourself.

You need a team of people to do that. And it seems like your conference is building those teams of the future. I think that's so important. And that is one of the things that I'm really trying hard to do, which is build a community, right?

Build a Community that can support each other. So we have MDs, DOs nurse practitioners, physician associates. We have nutritionists, naturopaths acupuncturists chiropractors, psychologists, psychotherapists.

So, anyone who works in any way with patients with mental health, and that's frankly most people. So even if you're a gynecologist, there's always going to be a mental-health component.

But it's bringing together all these different practitioners who can then create this community which can look at all the different angles, almost like an MDT, a multidisciplinary team.

And I think that one of the strengths and the beauties of IMMH is to have this amazing community of practitioners who can then feed off each other, who could help each and the patient benefits from having these different perspectives essentially in different angles of approach.

And you know, because there's always going to be need for a good nutritional approach and a say you're being treated by a psychiatrist, you might need also an OB-GYN to look at the hormones and the nutrition and then some therapy.

And how can these people work together to develop and deliver the best solutions for their patients? Because all these angles have to be taken into account.

I think that's a real strength is being that sort of excitement and energy that is created when you get all of these different practitioners in a room.

Yeah, absolutely. Well, look, take us up to this year. You know, I found in DC when I showed up there, we made a functional forum from it. So you can actually go back and you, you could view that.

And you see some of the interviews we did with Chris Palmer and others. It's an amazing show. Last year I was there and I had an opportunity in San Diego to listen to some other sessions, really enjoyed.

I actually had a, again, like a moment of clarity in that first year with me, with, was with Kris Palmer where I realized like, The drivers were the same.

You know, last year was the first time that I heard Dr. Bredesen talk about Alzheimer's as network insufficiency. That as someone who's written a book on social network, insufficiency really got me fired up for that theme.

And so that was really powerful and I'm looking forward to getting this year's jolt of inspiration. So what have we got lined up? For us in October this.

So we've got some really great talks. I mean, we have Robert Lustig and Alyssa Apple. So Alysa Apple is the other author of the Telomere book, which was all about longevity and telomeres.

They're talking about mitochondria, about stress, and about metabolism. And I'm really looking forward to their talk and the amygdala and how that can impact your metabolism and your mitochondrion.

We have Bessel van der Kolk, who will be talking about trauma and, you know, the sort of biology of trauma, and his whole team from the Trauma Research Foundation.

This Year's IMMH Program Highlights

So Leisha Skye, will talk about embodiment and trauma. Wendy Dandrea, whose absolutely wonderful, leads the science on his Traum Research foundation. Mike Ninkenschuk.

Marlene Gonzalez, who will all be talking about trauma in the context of, you know, society and war-torn areas, but also the biochemical effects of trauma.

We have Robin Carhart-Harris who'll be taking about psychedelics and also a panel on psychedelic with Dick Schwartz and Robin, Will van der Weer. and some real experts.

We have an addiction panel with Hila Cass and Rob Lustig and Arwen Podesta, who'll be talking about addiction. Natia Winters will be taking about cancer and mental health and trauma and health.

But we have Dick Schwartz, the founder of IFS, will talking and its impact in mental health treatment. And he's also doing a talk on relationships, which I'm very excited about because he wrote this wonderful book called You Are the One You've Been Looking For.

So it's going to be a slightly different angle. We have Alison Harvey from Berkeley who will be talking about sleep. We have Felice Gersh talking about hormones, we have Del Bredesen and Cat Toops and Richard Horowitz who will be doing a whole afternoon on neurodegeneration.

And I'm very excited about that. Richard Harwitz has just published his book on chronic complex illness and his specialty obviously is Lyme and sort of infections.

We have a whole morning on psychoneuroimmunology with Dr. Jill Carnahan, Dr Neil Nathan. We had an afternoon on metabolic psychiatry with Matt Bernstein, and he's got a wonderful panel with some amazing people who've completely turned around their schizophrenia and their bipolar using ketogenic approach.

But Youssef Ehlemann, who will be talking about cardiomyelodic metabolic approaches to mental health. we have the morning of neurodevelopment, we had Eliza Song.

Chris Winfrey, we have Dr. Shaw, the founder of IMMH. I'm sure I am forgetting so many people, but we just have such a wonderful lineup this year. We have James Greenblatt, of course, who's talking about OCD.

And we also have a panel on eating disorders with Jean Cantazaro-Schwartz. who's written a wonderful book on IFS approaches to eating disorders and Christina Bjorndahl will be there as well.

We have also this year, so we have two CE tracks and people can earn up to 40 CE credits or I think for either 40 or 45, I can't remember, but there's a huge number of CE credits available this year.

And then we also this here have sponsored speaker talks because we think that's super important for companies and scientists to be able to feature their latest research, their And there we have some fantastic, you know, we had Craig Shimasaki from Moleculara, who does the Cunningham panel, which is the autoimmune panel.

We have Designs for Health and Oscar Coetzea who's going to be talking about their latest research. I mean, just have Pure Encapsulations and James Greenblatt.

Debbie Hamilton from Neutromedics. Some fantastic genetic talks from NBX. We have just some really wonderful both sponsored and non-sponsored talks with really the latest scientific research and the best clinical practice out there in integrative health.

So I'm really proud of this year's program. I mean, we've had some wonderful programs, but I think this is one of the most comprehensive and we're super excited about it.

Awesome. Well, I know you pack a lot in. It's for full days. San Diego is a great spot and I'm excited to support. If you're listening to this, you know, whether you are, deep in mental health, interested in cognitive decline, or even if you just, delivering functional medicine and looking for deeper insights into what's going on with every patient.

Closing Remarks and Fullscript Journeys Promo

I highly recommend it. Kirkland, thank you so much for your leadership in this space and bringing together this conference. And thanks so much for leading the charge.

Thank you so, much, James. Well, you do an amazing job in this space as well. And you have done so to bring together and galvanize this whole world of functional medicine.

So we owe you a big debt of gratitude. We know it's hard work, but we really believe in where we're going. I think you and I share that vision of really trying to transform health care for a better world.

Thank you. Well, this has been the Evolution of Medicine podcast. I've been with the founder of the current executive director and leader of IMMH, Kirkland Newman.

Thanks so much for tuning in and we'll see you next time. Thank You. So we are here asking practitioners about their practitioner journeys. And the reason why is because journeys is a new product from Fullscript.

Journeys allows you to set up your own lab offerings as the top of the funnel. Give the patients what they want. They want to know about themselves and it's the easiest way to bring them into your practice.

We have all types of practices from across the country that are building their own unique lab panels for their unique practices. selling them to their community and acting as a great funnel into their practice.

This is a massive innovation. I think this will accelerate the evolution of medicine. You can go to goevomed.com slash journeys to find out more, set up your own journeys in half an hour and transform the health of your community.

Go get it. So that was the podcast. What an epic session. Thank you so much for tuning in to the Evolution of Medicine podcast, we'll be back again next week and thanks so