Reclaiming Your Story: A Ketamine Therapy Transformation Transcript

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Opening Reflection on Trauma and Reclaiming Power

I'm like this woman, hear me roar, I am strong now. Like before I just felt so vulnerable and weak and like just meek I guess just hiding and cowering in the corner and trying you know everything to control my situation around me so that I didn't have to ever experience that trauma again but I was just constantly reliving it every single day.

So I look back at that journey and I think about how I saw that person in a whole different light, like almost as an infant. Like this thing that was seeking power in their own way to deal with their whatever and having that power over me and praying on somebody who was vulnerable.

And then in that session, I saw this person as this infant. And I then saw them as like this, you know, this bug that's on your shoulder and you just like bat away and like squish.

It was a really visual session but I just remember seeing that person like stripped of their power and suddenly I had my power back. Welcome to the To Curious MD podcast.

I'm Dr. Ali Ahmed. And I am Dr Surya Ravan. With the wisdom from holistic, alternative, and these conventional medicines, we are here to challenge the status quo.

Podcast Introduction and Guest Welcome

We're curious about the connectivity and complexity between diverse fields of knowledge as a relief to consciousness, chronic illness, mental health, resilience, learning more about the art and science of healing, or listening to stories of extraordinary healing.

You're in the right place. Let's dive in. So welcome to the To Curious MD podcast. Today we are excited to honor and interview one of my dear, esteemed, and most valued patients who worked with us at Child Minds.

Her name is Lindsay Pipps and she is here today to really share about her story and the work that she's been doing and how she worked in terms of her development of coming through to the person that is today.

So welcome Lindsay. Can you introduce us a little bit about who you are and How you, I guess the moment you realized you're looking for something else in the hearing journey that you were experiencing.

Sure. So me as a person, i guess I've just like always sort of felt like there was a big part missing and I came to ketamine and Shaw Mines I think out of desperation.

That was probably the biggest thing. I had been living my life sort of in this like barely surviving most of the time. There were you know periods of times like maybe even years that things would be like feel okay but it just never quite really was.

And then in I think it was 2022 I was diagnosed with PTSD and it kind of like clicked and everything made so much more sense. But prior to that, I was diagnosed with depression, anxiety, PMDD, given medications, and working with psychiatrists.

Lindsayu2019s Struggle, Diagnosis, and Search for Relief

No one ever asked me, like, what's your home life like? What's going on in your life? Like, how are you navigating life. Nobody ever asks me that before.

And so I always just felt like this, I just need the right medication or something to fix me. And I got that diagnosis

and suddenly things just, like I didn't feel so crazy I guess you could say.

Like, oh, this all makes so much more sense and everything, all of my symptoms, the way I was living life and struggling through it just made so many more senses and I did not feel like there was so wrong with me anymore.

But I still, I tried therapy, the medications weren't working. I've tried all these different things and nothing would ever provide long-lasting release.

And I saw on social media a friend of mine had posted about going through ketamine therapy and how life-changing it was. It just kind of opened the door like, what is that?

I'm going to look into that. And then I found Shaw Minds and did more research. And it just sounded like I'm desperate. I don't know what else to do. Something has to work. I'm going to try this.

One of the things I often see now more and more, especially in healthcare, mental health care, is that patients feel like something's wrong with them, that they need to be fixed, as you said.

What is it that you felt you needed fixing? and what felt wrong to you, what fell not right. How would you describe that? I think the biggest thing for me was that, like, I felt like I had this amazing life.

I'm living through these incredible experiences. I felt really abundant in my life in so many different aspects, but I wasn't happy. Inside, internally, I was constantly struggling with this deep, drowning sadness all the time, and it just didn't make any sense.

Why am I feeling this way all of the given that externally everything is just going so amazing? And I think that was like the sign that like, or I kept telling myself, I need to fix me.

Like, what do I to need fix about me to like flip this switch and like finally feel good in this life that I have instead of just constantly feeling like I would rather be sleeping and in bed and just.

isolating myself. Looking to the future, I just thought, there can't be more of this for the rest of my life. How can I live through the last of our life feeling this way?

And it was this constant message of something's wrong with me and I need to fix me. So then as you felt this uneasiness, this discomfort, something's not fitting for you in your life, didn't make sense.

And the key word being ketamine coming in, and that light that sometimes shows up and says, huh, ketamin. Then there's this curiosity to ketamine. What did you know about ketimine?

What was it that you were curious about? you know, as you saw it, you heard from your friend on social media, something clicked. What was that? What did you think ketamine was at that point?

Looking back, I was very uninformed about what ketamin was and what Ketamine-assisted psychotherapy looked like and, what journeys were. I really had no idea.

Going into it, I thought or I think I was hoping it would be this like passive process that I really didn't have to actively participate in because therapy for me up to that point was very terrifying.

And I had this idea in my head that healing from trauma meant I have relive trauma, had to talk about trauma. at all the different parts of trauma and really like revisit it and that was something I was just I didn't want to touch with a 10-foot pole.

Don't take me anywhere near it. And so my misunderstanding was like I can take this ketamine and then feel better because I read so many stories of other people saying that it changed their lives like it healed them and so I think I really hoping that I'd be able to go through ketamine and as like a passive participant in the whole thing and not

have to face any of those fears about What do I have to actually do to deal with and heal for myself?

Yeah. Revisiting trauma, of course, can feel very unnerving because it's unsettling. You don't know what's going to show up knowing that you've been through it, right?

And sometimes the uncapping of something that feel like you're actively doing in a very subtle way, but it lives in your body. through that experience, at what point did that change for you?

Because obviously there's work involved, obviously that it's not a passive experience. When did it change? When was that acceptance? And we do talk about ketamine therapy being a very big and strong and important component to treatment of any kind, right?

Especially in psychedelic medicine where you're dealing with that heavy trauma and then having therapeutic support around that is so valuable. How did you actually prepare for that experience where it wasn't a passive experience?

I think for me, there was no preparing. I was just so terrified. And for my experience with PTSD and trauma, I have so much hypervigilance and I need control of situations in order to feel safe.

And this was absolutely about letting go, control completely. I think I was in a mindset of so much desperation that I will do anything to feel better.

There were parts of me that honestly didn't think that would be able to continue living. You know, I didn' see a future because I just was struggling soo much.

Discovering Ketamine and Facing the Fear of Trauma Work

and I remember coming to that first session with you and my husband's next to me and i'm just like terrified and I hate crying in front of people and i struggle with emotion anyway and just I just started crying because it was like suddenly I felt like I was in a safe space with you that you have really created for me and then you and the therapist that I worked with at the time like went through like this is what it is and you know I think you call it the pre-flight appointment and we really talked about what this, is What do you expect from me?

And I remember you talking about like you need to eat healthy and need you to be active and get outdoors and you gave me this outline of things I needed to do.

And I was like, all right, I'm writing this down and I am doing this. There was a mix of so much desperation that this has to work, and i'm willing to anything.

I think that's really important to realize ketamine is really just this key that unlocks this door that you've been boarding shut for so long and putting so many barriers in front of and with no willingness to even peek around.

For me, Ketamine was like, here's the key, we're unlocking this door, opening the door and it felt okay to do that. And it sort of like gave me this sense of you can do this now, you could walk through this store and do the hard things and the work.

That's what it was for me. It was just opening that door in stepping through and then on the other side of that, I had to be willing to the do hard work and really be an active participant in the whole process.

Yeah, right. It is about unlocking and letting go and allowing one to experience something in a very different way and a supported way, and knowing that you're safe to do that.

There's a lot of fear even around that too, so I don't want to say that this is something for patients, that there is a preparation that's very much involved.

And that preparation is the preparing the mind, the body, health of that person, the resources around that. Would you be able to describe to our audience, because our audiences is a mix of patients, people who are interested or curious about ketamine, or people are in the healthcare field, and I will say that that's a variety of different perspectives.

But to give perspective to our audience, how would you describe a session or a collective of sessions for you? And what did you feel, what opened? What did that unlocking of that door look like?

I think the big thing is like every session was so completely different from the one before it. and you really have to lay aside your expectations about what you want out of a session.

I mean, you can set your intention as part, like we do as a part of that ritual, going into a journey, setting your intentions, but then you have be willing to just completely let it go and lay back with your eye mask and the powerful music and just let ketamine take you where it takes you.

You have definitely to have that willingness. And I don't think at any point in my life up until then had I ever been able to just like let control and see where this goes.

And so, you know, at Chameins you create such a sense of safety and care and like, I'm going to be okay, even though I am so scared and I have no idea what's going happen.

I had a lot of like fear around like Breaking my mind, I guess I could say, you know, what are psychedelics going to do to me? Am I going do this and be worse off on the other side of it?

There was a lot of fear about that. But with Chameis, there was so much care around setting up that process. And I really loved how it was treated like a ritual.

It wasn't clinical, I guess you could say. I wasn' t coming into this doctor's office and laying back on this paper-sheeted bed and being administered a medication and then staring up at this bright light above me like you do on a typical doctor appointment.

It was like laying on the couch on pillows and having a blanket. having this eye mask and curated music really set the stage every single time you have a session.

And it was almost as if like telling your mind and your body, okay, here's what we're doing now, because this is the ritual. This is how we go into it every signal time.

Then just letting that medicine do its work and being willing to see what happens. Those first several sessions were incredibly visual for me. And it makes no sense in the moment, like what is happening and where you're going and you just sort of flying through the motions and the experience.

And then as you come out of it and begin to journal about your session, which I feel like is so important because the further away you get from that session you start to lose those important details.

But as you're journaling it and talking with the therapist after about your experience, that's when the insights come. And it's like, okay, this seems so weird and incredible, but this is what maybe it meant to me.

This is maybe what it means in my experience and making that meaning collaborating with a therapist or with you as we go through that process. You know, after that journey, I created a ritual for myself every time I left Shaw Mines.

And like, this is what I'm going to do after I leave Shaw mines. This is my ritual. and I stuck to that every. Time. I think that helps like reinforce what the journey was and not forgetting and new insights would come in the days following.

. And I just really felt myself transform from the very first session. that I was looking back at my notes and my journal entries and I think my PTSD score like before we started was like 40 or something like that and i think by the second or third session I retook it and it was one and so it's the first time I ever felt relief like immediately and every session just gave me new insights and like I thing the big thing was the making meaning of what it is and for me it like There's this little girl, Lindsay, and when she was born, she supposed to become this.

But because of my trauma and my life experiences, I never got to be her, right? And I think through ketamine and the healing and this whole process, am her now.

And, without that, would have never been able to realize that. What was that little girl and what is this Lindsay now? How would you describe that girl?

And going back to your natural self, I would say, but what would I feel like the way I describe it when I talk to people is like my whole childhood, like childhood trauma and adult trauma, is all on this.

I think about this analogy, my life was on Island A, this island over here, and it's kind of isolated.

Preparing for Treatment and Entering the First Sessions

And there's this Island B, This beach I see off in the distance and that beach, I seen the distances like this image I have of who I want to be and who, really see myself as like, if all these things could just line up, and I'm just out there on this tiny little canoe like rowing over to that beach so hard through the storm and never able to get there.

That's what like depression felt like for me, that I was just trying my best to row myself through this storm to Get to Island B and sometimes I would be in the ocean drowning and i would go under and be like swimming and trying to break the surface.

And I would get a gasp of air and that was like the moments when things were okay. Then I'd be shoved under again and it was just this constant fighting for life, fighting to survive.

Over on Island A was this individual who had all these horrible experiences and didn't know what to do with it, and had spent her whole life burying it and putting concrete and bricks and mud and like, how deep can I bury this and just avoid it?

And at the point when I came to Shaw Mines, it was like it seeping up, like you can't keep this down anymore. You have to face this. It was all just like falling apart.

And that Lindsay was just like hurt and lost and defensive and shameful and just all these negative, sad, horrible emotions, you know? But I just was out there trying to get over there.

Like, I know I can get it over. And Island B was like who I am now. I get to feel positive and happy and realize a whole new career. And I always saw myself as this athlete who loves the outdoors and mountain biking and carefree and has a sense of humor, just so much lighter.

I realized, oh, I'm on Island B now, like I am her now. It was just such a powerful experience. Let's talk a little bit about getting there, right? Just getting to the island with some of the integration practices, some the rituals that you mentioned earlier.

What got you there to The Other Island? What were some those practices that spoke about? And tell us a bit more about that. Yeah, so it always started with coming out of that journey, laying there on the couch and just grabbing my pen and journaling it as all the things that happened in the session right away so that I wouldn't forget.

And then I would leave your office, my husband would pick me up always with like my favorite coffee and a little snack since I hadn't eaten, you know, for like four hours or whatever.

And then we would go do some sort of water therapy. For me, I feel so connected to water, whether it's sitting by a creek or cold plunging or sauna, swimming, whatever it is.

I just feel connected and free and safe in water. So he would pick me up. We would do water and then talk about my journey. because it really helped to verbalize what I experienced, again, to not forget it.

And then also, as we would be talking about it, I would just have so many new insights that would come up throughout that process of talking. So, Lindsay, you were telling us more about how important water is to you and As you were describing that, I was thinking, wow, thus the island, right?

And that even though water was your challenge, because you had to swim across to one island to the other and often feeling submerged and taken over by the weight of that water or the energy of the water overcoming and trying to, it's just very interesting how in narrative medicine or in the story of people's illness, some of words, the language become so revealing of What it feels like, right?

What does that struggle feel like? I just wanted to highlight that that's an interesting metaphor you bring in, Island A and Island B and getting to there.

So some of the practices that got you there, tell us more about that. Water has been a theme through my whole healing journey and it's often a scene in my journey, in sessions as well.

So after a session, my husband and I would go have water therapy of some sort. A lot of times it looked like, you know, just sitting in the hot tub and talking or in a pool and taking or by the river and just going over my session again and getting those new insights.

And that would really help just like implanted in my brain. and give me things to think about and hearing his take and having that partner to really share the journey with.

Because it's so hard to describe what you're doing to your friends and family because if you've never done it, it is impossible to understand what the experience is like.

But having a partner help with that was really big. And then the days following, before I would have my next session, I really focused on the things that you all told me to do, like eat healthy, get outside, exercise, journal.

you know, anything that we talked about at the previous session could integrate my experience, I would do that. And a lot of times that was a little bit of meditation, affirmations, statements of gratitude.

Then I think the biggest one I discovered, which was surprise to me after that very first session, and that has always continued, is this new level of awareness you have that you never had before.

And that's like awareness, just how you're navigating through your daily life, like how do you exist and noticing the little things that you do, your behaviors, and your thought processes.

Suddenly you are able to get outside of yourself and see it for what it really is and be like, that is why I do that, or oh this is this thing that I did.

come with that level of awareness comes like, all of a sudden I have the ability to do something about it. And I never was able to that before. So I think that was a big one too, is always being willing to be aware of what I was doing and how Iwas experiencing the world around me.

and then beingwilling to notice it, take note of it latch onto it and dosomething aboutit. We said before like really just be an active participant in my hearing instead of this like passive journey I thought I would get to have and not have todo much about It's such a different frame that we get to have on healing itself that you're describing.

It is like there's a common idea that when you heal, something else from the outside makes you feel. And this is

something from inside actually appears.

you know, what was already there maybe is tapped into as a resource. And it's a journey of self-discovery, as you're describing. I really want to also recognize that, yeah, when you are with your partner and you sharing that or they're noticing what's happening and they are reflecting that back to you.

How does that feel? What did that add to it? And, you know, obviously you didn't expect that to happen. How did it come about? It was reaffirming because in my mind, I'm feeling all these changes and noticing all of these new things and having all this new insights.

But is that really going on externally in the world around me, and hearing my husband say that he notices me thinking differently or approaching things differently, or reacting differently to things.

that was really reaffirming that, oh, this is really working. It's not just in my head. it's, not like a placebo effect that I'm hoping this actually happening.

No, he's actually seeing it happen and seeing me sort of transformed before his eyes. And, you know, and he says like this person that fell in love with, I got to see you just really blossom and become like who you were meant to be all this time.

So that that really big. Absolutely.

Visual Journeys, Journaling, and Early Integration

As you're embodying that new being, that new sense of self, which is really reclaiming your own true sense self. What have you seen appearing? What is showing up for you?

I think the biggest things that showed up from me throughout all of this, looking back, is that like new doors were opening for me that I didn't think were there.

You know, I earlier already talked about like this feeling of looking ahead into the future and not seeing anything but more sadness and more drowning and like, this is never going to get better.

like suddenly I had hope and suddenly i felt like i can dream but more than that i Can actually realize these dreams i actually have the capacity to do the work to go out and discover and try and not be so afraid and like there's purpose for me that I didn't feel I had before.

This is sort of this weird sense of like selfishness when you're lost in this like depression that you are so involved in yourself and your internal experience and you know looking back it felt so selfish but now it feels like I have so much more to give that i don't have to spend so many of my mental and physical energy on staying alive I guess you know and just coping and dealing with day to day like I have so much more to give to other people and so, much, more I, guess to, give the world and to get back and pay it forward and experience and it's just like so many new things that I it so hard to put words to sometimes for me but it has been like miraculous I You mentioned a little bit about that selfishness of depression, and it is true.

I mean, the neural pathway to that self-protection, say, because trauma has occurred and there's this, I have to protect it, to have the guard it. And then, you know, that breaking through that experience of I don't have think that way anymore.

How would you say that showed up for you when you didn't think have that anymore? What was that like? It opened so much more space for everything else that, you know, this person that I saw on Island B or this image I had of who I wanted to be, like, I finally had the space that because it wasn't being taken up over here.

And it's weird because I need this like sense of control to feel safe. And by having this willingness to come into Shamai's and just completely say, here I am, tell me what to do, and I'm giving up control for the first time in my life,

it's weird when I think back about the experience.

The ketamine almost gave me back the control, but in a way that… showed me that I had the ability to make the change. Like, I have control in a whole different way instead of control as if trying to protect myself in the situation and the outcome.

It was like, oh, actually have some control over actions that i can take to change and be better and different. So it was this new way of like a more inspirational type of controlling.

I guess you could say a healthy version of it where I can actually go and take action. I think back as a child and you know you play like make-believe with your friends and I always wanted to be Little Mermaid.

Like I just loved this idea of living in the ocean and being part of ocean life and that has stuck with me. My husband calls me a mermaid all the time.

I feel so drawn to water. I love to go paddleboarding, but I will spend half my time paddle boarding just laying on the board floating and listening to the trickling water and just closing my eyes.

It's one of the few places I actually can feel like I can be meditative. and just the feel of water against my skin. Like it's funny because we'll go swimming or something like that and then Jeremy will just be like, you just have the biggest smile on your face.

It reinvigorates, it energizes me, just like fuels my battery to be around and in and on water in some capacity of some sort. And I think as a child, I just love to swim, I will swim until my parents are like, all right, that's it.

It's time to go. We have to leave now. I'll be the last one out of the pool. And I still am. My husband's like all, right. You need to do. One of my concerns I had when I did your intake, there was a concern and you related to your diagnosis, and maybe we talked about this, but because what I mean is indicated for treatment resistant depression.

A lot of people ask, well, Ketamine is also a dissociative medication. It's a medication that does dissociate. That's how we were trained to understand it in that way.

And it is an dissociating medicine. Trauma is a also dissociated experience. So why would one want to give a disassociated medication to somebody who has had a associated effect due to their trauma?

Dissociation, just for the audience, is really a separation of the mind and body, right? What does the body do when something bad occurs? If there's trauma that occurs, the response to trauma is, well, I have to even imagine I'm in a different place or I disconnected to my body.

I had to stay protected. We're always on guard in the head space. or the opposite, right? Dissociative. Some break that results because of some effect of that experience has on the body and the mind.

And then ketamine being a dissociative medication, why would one, you know, administer that? And for that question of diagnosis, because you've had extensive trauma, extensive traumas, say complex and chronic and more recent.

So some of the concerns around that Well, for me, I had to sit with that diagnosis and I recognized that, is this going to be effective? And how long is it going, you know, what is going be the opening that unfolds here?

Yeah. And you don't want to re-traumatize. I think that's where the concern comes from is, as a practitioner, inadvertently send somebody into a space which connects them with their trauma in that way.

So then comes the, well, how do you re-associate and what is ketamine doing? Ketamine is allowing one to kind of revisit something. you can provide another perspective or to reconnect to that dissociated art, right?

That child that was hurt, to see her, love her. And so we get this opportunity to reassociate it to the dissociative break. What did you feel was your re-association to your experience that you held in your body or mind?

I think in thinking about disassociating as the person with PTSD and that struggle, I see that as more of this unhealthy loop that you're in constantly and reassociated to it through dis-associate with ketamine was more like breaking that loop and maybe having the ability to add more parts to and being able to see it from a different perspective, see your trauma from different perspectives.

Island Metaphor, Water Rituals, and Growing Awareness

I think you might remember in one of my sessions I was able to forgive my abuser and that was something I'd never even like considered that I Was capable of doing or that?

I felt I even wanted to do and I Think going into that session that wasn't even my intention I had some other intention that i wanted To work on that day.

But as you say ketamine changed the channel was like nope today. This is what we're working on and It gave me a whole new perspective on who that individual was as a person and maybe why that person carried out the actions that they did to me for many years and it gave me, I guess, a new perspective on their life experience.

and I had this realization that they placed them in such a powerful position and control over me and my future. And I always said, don't let your past control your future, but here I was letting my past to control my whole adult life up until recently.

When you said you forgave your abuser, what was the effect of that for you on your body or your mind or on you experience? I'm like this woman hear me roar I am strong now like before I just felt so vulnerable and weak and like just meek I guess just hiding and cowering in the corner and trying you know everything to control my situation around me so that I didn't have to ever experience that trauma again but I was just constantly reliving it every single day.

So I look back at that journey and I think about how I saw that person in a whole different light, like almost as an infant, this thing that was seeking power in their own way to deal with their whatever and having that power over me and praying on somebody who was vulnerable.

And then in that session, I saw this person as this infant. And I then saw them as like this, you know, this bug that's on your shoulder and you just like bat away and like squish.

It was a really visual session but I just remember seeing that person like stripped of their power and suddenly I had my power back. And in forgiving it was almost like taking my power back and not being this vulnerable victim anymore.

And it instead was like I am strong now, I'm me now. I' m powerful now and this is no longer going to dictate my future because I actually have the capacity to have control over it.

And visually in that session, I just became this huge woman standing there on earth and this other individual was just nothing. It was literally meaningless and nothingness to me.

How can I not forgive this person? They don't matter. you know, what matters is like here and now and me and I just was like on top of the world. You know that was the feeling that I had and in the days following it was, like, I remember telling my husband that i had forgiven them, that person that had done that to me, and he was even really surprised about it.

But I think he could see that just like I'm standing taller now. I, you, know standing with so much more strength now it, was it a really incredible experience.

the power that somebody can have over your psyche, right? Over your life, even in abuse, that is often the way of power, whereas somebody does have that level of control over you.

And really being free from that fear or from the effect of that trauma I had on you, where you were really governed by something else. and having to be meek about it and scared and coward.

So I would say your trauma response was that, right? That feeling just that I don't have me, you know, I'm only here and everything else has been controlling me.

Now, who is Lindsay in her power? What is Lindsey doing? where you are now and how that's been for you in the purpose and work that you're doing. Yeah.

So I think before it was like, it almost as if my purpose was who do I need to mold myself into to make this other person happy and to manage their emotions and manage like what life, home life is like.

And that transferred over even when I left that marriage that transferred over into all of my other relationships, adapting myself and molding myself into whatever that other person needed and always carrying that work and that emotional weight of doing that.

And so since forgiveness and since going through all these journeys, it was like, I don't need to do that anymore. I get to be who I want to, have the thoughts and feelings and actions and dreams and whatever it is that I wanted to have for myself.

I don't need to mold myself for other people. I can mold my self however I want to. And one of the later sessions at the end of The Journey, I had this realization that I came into Shaw Minds like needing my handheld, needing healing, meeting healers.

In one my sessions, it was like, okay, that stage is done now. You've done the work, you've been healed. Not to say that like I'm completely healed, there's still triggers, still symptoms, and still work.

I think to maintain where I'm at, there's still a lot of work involved with that. But it was almost as if the universe or whatever was telling me, now it's your turn to be a healer.

Now it is your time to pay it forward. You have the strength. These life experiences have given you this special gift that I wouldn't have had otherwise to become a healer myself and be able to understand and relate to what people go through that were in my position.

So it inspired me to go back to school and become therapist. And so I started graduate school in March of 24. And now I'm at the phase of my graduate program where I am in internship and actually putting into practice being a therapist trainee.

Looking back, I was always interested in psychology even in high school, but I didn't really know what therapy was or that therapist was a career. I had never been exposed to that.

And then I just realized like, this is what I was always meant to do. This is why I had to have those experiences in my life so that I could be a healer myself and have the ability to be what other people needed me to, but in a positive way, right?

And in an helpful way. And at my internship site, we're doing equine assisted psychotherapy. which has been like a really big full circle moment for me as well, not just in being the one that needed healed and now I want to help others heal.

But I did my undergrad in equine science and wanted to be in the horse industry in some aspect, but never really found my place in it all this time ever since I graduated back in 2012 with that bachelor's degree.

And now this opportunity presented itself and I was like, oh wow, this is why I went to school for equine science because now I compare it with, you know, psychotherapy and have this really unique special way of helping people heal and deal with their trauma and, in a really way that a lot of people don't get to experience.

Thank you for sharing that. It's amazing how when we open up to the path, the paths kind of appears and then it all kind makes sense. So the synchronicities and being able to see that, tell me a little bit about maybe you can share a bit now that you're stepping into the therapist realm.

A lot of people who come for this kind healing have tried all the different psychotherapies have sometimes even gone to therapy and felt like every time I recall what happened to me, I get re-traumatized.

And so sometimes what we find is people were kind of burned out on therapy, and they're saying, well, therapy didn't work for me or I'm too far gone. Like there's this broken story that kind starts to form.

So as therapists in training, what would you say to those people who are stuck there? What was your experience like of having experienced probably therapy in a different way and now having this kind of therapy?

I was somebody who hated therapy because I didn't want to talk about my trauma. Don't ask me about it. What other ways can we dance around it but not actually go there?

And I'm not a person who likes to sit on a couch in front of another person and talk. Like I am introverted, I take time to warm up to people. I don't like the attention.

And so that was hard for me and I can see for a lot of people how it would be. You have to shop basically to find the right therapist, to be willing to try multiple people and see who has that right connection for you.

And then in going through my graduate studies, there are so many different theoretical orientations and types of therapy and ways to go about therapy.

Forgiveness, Reclaiming Power, and Healing the Inner Child

And so I think it's about finding the one that hits home for you and really connects to who you are and what makes sense to how you view the world and how you think people heal and maybe you can heal.

So for me, it was really neat to be like, you know, I don't have to sit on these couches in front of my clients to help them. I can be outdoors and we can connecting with nature.

And we can do guided imagery about rivers and we pet horses and learn from horses. And I think a big thing for me was realizing you don't necessarily have to talk about your trauma if you do not want to.

Some people need it. They need to verbalize and externalize their experiences and what happened to them and that's the only way they are going to heal.

There's also a lot of us who that is going to be re-traumatizing and it's going make therapy really hard if every time you go in to have therapy you're just talking about all your traumatic experiences and then 50 minutes later or an hour later you are like okay now what I've been crying and I don't know I feel more depressed than when I started.

You know, I think that there are ways to process and heal from our trauma without having to verbalize them. And in my experience with equine assisted psychotherapy, that can be working with horses and seeing how your interactions with horse translates into your life in the outside world.

How do you build relationships? How you do build boundaries? And having a horse as like a co-therapist in that space with you, I can step away if you need to say something out loud about your trauma and you can say it to the horse, you don't have to say to me.

You can tell the horses what you're afraid of, what your experiences were, and it's so incredible to see that these horses lean into those clients. They will walk up to a client having an emotional moment and just be there in presence and share that energy with that client and create so much space for healing.

Because with the horses, they're not judgmental. I mean, I'm not judgemental, but the client doesn't necessarily trust that because I am another human, right?

But they can trust this horse is not going to judge who they are, what their experiences were, their shame, or what they identify as, any part of who are.

That's something you can share with an animal in a really safe space. One of the things I think that comes to mind is, as you're speaking, is that relationship.

What that is like, whether that be the therapy healer, therapist-doctor, therapy therapist relationship, I will admit I've had to learn The importance of that relationship.

I've learned as a physician and patient, there was a relationship that there. And we talk about this in narrative medicine as well. There's a hierarchy in that.

Right. Just because somebody's coming to the doctor to seek help. Of course, the doctors supposed to know all the answers. Sometimes they don't know. But we're kind of figuring out a problem together, but there's always this relationship of known what's known.

What I'm appreciating in therapy is that the therapist's relationship with the patient is almost There's no judgment. There is no hierarchy. It seems to be.

You know, there seems be much more of an alliance, a connection that makes sense to the patient and to their therapist because there's an Alliance of that.

And I'm seeing that and I witness that as well. Your coming-to story is you're coming to the person that you are, where equine therapy, science, the coming towards something that brings you whole circle to something I think you already knew.

You already knew your path and it didn't just happen, it just was there and you were able to see it. Synchronicity or the, you know, or it showed up. It actually was already there.

And you knew that process was the right combination. Acquaint therapy, acquaint science, and that relationship which you're describing is so revealing of kind of who you are.

Yeah, I think when you're sort of lost in the depths of your experience of PTSD, you don't see the other side of it. And I had always been drawn to like these professions of healing and helping people in some way, but I never felt I was in a right place or had the right knowledge or tools to be helpful in way that I wanted to.

And through the healing journey, it was like it lifted the veil so that I could finally see and put all the pieces together and see like this is what was really meant to be.

And for me, It was so much about like the universe is always laying a path in front of you and it's about whether or not you walk on it. And I feel like when you walk on the path the universe has laid out for you, it's the pathway of least resistance, right?

I mean, there might be a lot of work involved, but when your like, no, I'm going to go this way, that's when things get hard and you have constant struggles and obstacles and I, feel, like it is like universe is, okay, come back to the past that has always been here, just get back on it, you know?

And with the healing journey was like the clouds lifted and the sun came out and it was, oh I can see the paths

again. even as you're talking, like this idea of fragmentation, right?

Where trauma is a fragmation, and it's a protective fragmentation. It's the psyche saying, I can't deal with what's here, so I'm just going to protect the parts I, can and then, you know, we're going keep moving.

And then there's this kind of coming together or kind, of clarifying, You know? I almost think of it as, on a telescope, these big telescopes that we are making right now, the lenses.

You know, when they talk about grinding the lenses, there's a process of clarifying the lens, making it more and more, and, more clarified. So you get the impurities out, you know.

There's kind of like this sense that with trauma, we have like a broken lens that we're looking through and there is a distortion field and everything looks distorted.

And then as we are doing this work and things are being clarified, There is like, a cohesive story. that appears, that was always there, but we just couldn't see it.

And when that vision clarifies and you connect with it, it's like, oh, everything within you aligns with that sense of self, the sense that says, I know my place in the world, I know what gives me purpose and meaning, and now they all kind of are here.

Yeah, I love how you described that because the trauma, it distorts your lens, right? It distirts your worldview, how do you see yourself, others, How you experience the world.

It's so true. So what's the vision that's coming through? What's that clarification that you're finding? I mean, you've kind have recognized the pieces and you told us a little bit.

I remember once when we did a group session, we noticed that you had even noticed a physical difference in yourself. Like you noticed you were standing up differently and kind of presenting differently.

So yeah, what's that vision, not just of self, but who you truly are that's coming through for you? Yeah, it's like I see myself so differently now. Like I think about or even look back at pictures of my life before.

And my husband actually just talked the other day about this picture of me standing in my first apartment after I had left that first marriage and just the sadness in me eyes.

She just looked so sad and broken. like, I don't know what to do now, but here I am. I'm trying. You know, i'm going to start life over again. And I've had these opportunities, as I say, to like completely start, life, over.

It got a second chance at life. When I left that marriage, and then I was like I love horses. iI'm gonna go back to school for horses, so iIm gonna do whatever I want. I get to make my own decisions now.

you know? And then my journey through Shaw Minds was another chance, at Life again, And it's like… I get knew was in there and wanted to be. And now when I look at pictures of myself, I see lightness and happiness.

Not only do I feel like I looked different, and I moved different. Sometimes I talk about having to differentiate the symptoms of PTSD that still exist in some capacity.

Depending on my stress levels throughout my week or month or whatever, they might come up and be heightened a little bit, but also this new experience of real human emotion that I never had before.

Like I could never differentiate is this a PTSD symptom or is a real Human Emotion symptom that people who've never experienced trauma also experience.

And so sometimes I have to sit back and understand like I'm just having a normal human to whatever's going on in

my life. And I never had that before.

Everything was always blinded by like trauma and, you know, suffering and anxiety and depression. But sometimes you get a little blips of that just in your normal human experience.

So literally everything about my live has changed. My relationships have changed, being able to set boundaries or being to have confidence in myself has change, my outlook on the future.

From Survival to Purpose and Becoming a Therapist

You know Jeremy and I love to travel and we live this life of like work the minimal amount you need to support the life that you want to live rather than just working yourself to death and you don't really get to experience life.

And so we do as much as possible of experiencing life every single day in whatever way we can. I'm really excited to get through the graduate program, get your licensing because it's such a long process to become a licensed therapist.

Two years of supervision, 3,000 clinical hours, it is a process. I'm looking forward to that process and everything I am going to learn because every single day I leave my internship site with new, like, wow, this was incredible or I learned so much from that experience.

So I look forward that learning process. And then I also really looking for to having a private practice of my own in some capacity and really implementing ecotherapy implementing nature into that, going out on a trail for a session rather than being inside of an office room or an off a space, maybe incorporating animal-assisted psychotherapy and that because I can really see that power that animals have, especially horses being empathetic beings and sensitive beings, and horses have their own life experience.

All the horses at our facility are rescued, so they have trauma. Many of them have illnesses. Many have anxiety. Some have depression. And seeing how that is exhibited in them as individuals, they're just such a special creature to share our human experience with.

So I'm looking forward to figuring that out. My experience at Shell Minds really inspired me to also want to incorporate ketamine-assisted psychotherapy in my own practice.

And that's why I'm here too, because I want to talk about my journey with ketamine-assisted psychotherapy because it saved my life. I truly believe it saves my lives.

And more people need to know about it. More people to need know what it is, how it works, if it's right for them, and I think also more need people know the work that is involved with it, it not a passive treatment, you have to be an active participant.

So I love sharing my story and spreading the word about so that more will hopefully have access to it Yeah. What would be a question now that how would you ascertain the patients should do ketamine or equine therapy or, you know, what type of patient would say, because I had that caution and can learn from your process that the importance of the resources and things like that.

But what would it be now you're a therapist and What would be that way that you would recognize this? Is this the right patient for ketamine or not, or something else?

I'm not sure I know that answer just yet, but I think looking back on my experience, I feel like the the person does need a mix of desperation. to make this work.

It involves a lot and you have to be willing to listen to what people tell you you need to do, you know. You have that openness to say, I'll do whatever you tell me and I will actually follow through and do it.

Because I think when you depression, at least in my experience, it's so hard to like do anything, like you can make promises, say I journal five times this next week or I go for a 30-minute walk and get out in the sun five times this week, but you actually have to wake up and at some point during that day do the thing.

And that's one of the, I think, the hardest things to even do as someone with depression is just existing takes so much energy. So I feel like there has to be some level of desperation on their part to really want to see that change and do whatever you say.

An individual needs to have some sort of desire to explore and be open and lose that sense of control and just be opened to whatever comes and hold it in their hand and say, okay, what is this?

What does it look like? what can I do with it? And make meaning of all of these different things. I think if somebody is not willing to, you have to be willing look at your trauma in a way that you never have before.

You have to be open-minded to say, maybe I'm wrong in how I've interpreted this experience or in using this in my life right now. And maybe, I can look at it through a different lens.

There has to, be that willingness in a client to do those things. But otherwise, you know, still figuring out that journey of what it would look like in the client, to the right candidate for something like this.

I think those are important for sure. Well, you've obviously done the work and now putting your work into practice, both for yourself as well as for others.

And you did answer the question quite eloquently, I would say. You know, a level of desperation, right? And a willingness to, to show up. A willingness, there's some things driving that.

This idea of curiosity. You know, I want to learn something, something maybe I don't have those, asking those questions, which again, when you ask those question, that's where the neuroplastic chain starts to begin.

It really does open up that willingness, the willingness to let go, to not to say, okay, have I, don' know. And I'm willing to listen or willing be guided.

I think that is an important part of trust and have trust in the process. So you definitely answered all of those questions that I think are very important.

And that there's something that may show up and you just don't know. You have the resources to maybe later on figure it out. There's an arc of the experience in which you described.

So thank you for sharing that. I do think it's important for people to hear that message because obviously some people maybe not ready now, maybe will be ready later, or maybe there is another option for them.

Yeah, and I think you said a really important word there and that was the word trust. I feel that it's so hard from my experiences with my own specific trauma to have trust in others and like full trust and feeling safe with others.

And so I really think that word is important as well in a potential client to experience this. you need to have some level of willingness to trust yourself with somebody else and trust your healing with someone else, and that they know that you're coming from a big place of experience and to the trust the process that your laying out for them.

And then I think also finding the ability to just yourself. Because I thing with certain traumatic experiences we lose the abilities to our own intelligence or our decisions about how we Like, I made this bad decision and it resulted in this trauma.

So how can I ever trust myself again? So I think it's really important also to learn how to establish that trust within yourself again. It truly is. The more we work in the space, we recognize that there are these themes that you both are mentioning and trust is a huge part.

And thank you for sharing that piece. It's like, yeah, to learn to get back to trusting oneself again is probably some of the hardest work there is, especially when we've lost that the way.

to that. But it's lovely and it is beautiful to hear that it can be reclaimed. Definitely. And it might look like letting go of shame and letting of guilt and having forgiveness and forgiving yourself.

It sounds weird to say that I needed to forgive myself, but I think that's something important too. I'm going to speak a little bit about developmental effect, right?

Because this is kind of the theme of some of quadcasts that we've been doing is that developmental break and where that happens, especially as pediatricians where we know that there's a developmental process for children as they grow their milestones that they achieve.

And then the self-trust, you know, then there is the identity and then, there are some stages of growth and development. What would you say was your age where trauma hit you, and what do you think happened at that point, thereafter, to that child?

I did experience trauma at a very young age. I have limited memories of it, but I was under probably around the age of five when I first experienced trauma.

Therapy, Trust, Safety, and Trauma-Informed Ketamine Care

And I think when you experience trauma as a child, it really takes away the sense of like, the world is this amazing, wonderful place to explore and be safe in.

And you lose that sense safety and then forever, I just think you're trying to find that feeling of safety forever again. Depending on maybe how you develop or what your life looks like as you are getting older, it continues to impact how you look for safety or in what ways you looked for a safety.

And that could be in really unhealthy ways or ways that lead to more trauma, right? And then looking back on my experiences, there were other ways in which I experienced some trauma as I was growing up throughout my childhood.

Then getting into a relationship at the age of 16 with somebody who was 21 and that turning into like I think maybe my sense of safety was with that person or trying to find an outlet or a way out of where I had experienced my life up until that point.

And so I latched onto it and then was married in a in this relationship from like 16 to my mid-20s before I finally left and in that I experienced you know mostly emotional and mental trauma, but I also experienced abuse, I experienced some physical and sexual abuse throughout that relationship as well.

We know that our minds are still developing until we're in our mid-20s, so in that space of transitioning into adulthood, Like once again, I was experiencing where I would say is most of my trauma is from that age of like 16 to mid-20s is where most my traumas happen.

And it's such an important age self-discovery and rites of passage. After I left that relationship in my mid 20s I looked back and I didn't have any rite of passages that a typical teenager has or typical 18 year old or when you turn 21 or going to college, living in the dorms, having your first apartment and roommates.

I never experienced any of those rites of passage. And then they really quickly happened once I left and was trying to figure out what do I do with my life now?

And so I can see how my upbringing and then those years between 16 and 25 taught me at that time, this is what relationships look like. This is how it is to be a wife.

this is how you navigate the world, this who you are. It taught me about marriage, but it all taught all these things in the wrong way, right? In a very unhealthy way.

So once I became 25, I had to then go through I think all that learning that I would have gone through otherwise and figure out what does a healthy relationship look like?

What does Lindsay look to be independent? what is being an adult look? I just had all of these misconceptions. I had the wrong teachers in my life, I guess you could say, up until that point.

And so I really had to like relearn everything. You brought that developmental framework, because when we talk about arrested development, right, it's like, okay, something happened.

Then the development just kind of stopped. But then when you were back in safety, you was able to resume. That's something we kind forget is that development is one of those things that can resume, when it's given that space and time and energy.

And so it is just this beautiful hope that I'm getting from your story and I hope others can also recognize that that trauma is not the be all and end all, that's not who you are.

People carry this real story within themselves. Well, I'm my trauma I am broken as a result of it and I'll never get out of especially childhood trauma and so just recognizing that the human body the mind body space the psyche has a self-healing capacity and if we can just Put it back into safety put it into that place of growth that it can resume That those steps that didn't happen can happen for you and that brings completion and wholeness and authenticity.

So thank you so much for that. Yeah, and you speak about like that sense of safety is so true because my husband now, I mean, we've been together 15 years, 15-years coming up in a few months.

And we spent a lot of our relationship with me not feeling sense-of-safety because of what I brought with from my past. I am forever grateful that Jeremy has stuck by my side and not given up on me because he had every right to be like, This is not so hard.

I definitely put him through the wringer for a big part of the beginning of our marriage. He put up with a lot from me and I'm so grateful that he stuck with me because I feel like a lots of marriages go through this transition of honeymoon phase and then things get comfortable and sort of stagnate a lof of times.

And for us, it was like tough in the beginning. And then since then, every year we're happier and healthier and we are best friends and love each other so much.

Our souls and our beings are just so intertwined with one another. He really created that sense of safety for me that I needed to be able to heal and it wasn't until even just a few years ago, that I finally was like, okay, I trust Jeremy to hold me in a safe space and not harm me, like I had been harmed so many times before.

And I really agree that like that sense of safety that he has created for me to just exist in was definitely needed in order to have this journey work for knee.

I don't think if I if had that with him, i wouldn't have been able to make the progress that i have Well, I think it's a combination of things that you said that I can make the story whole.

One is you're showing up to the experience, and I was concerned that wouldn't show up for the sessions. I remember telling the therapist, well, the dosing will have to be very delicate with her dosage because there's gonna be, she's not gonna fully go, you know, and there is this, I could see that there was some resistance there too.

And so our dosaging had to me very gentle and supportive of what you're, trusting the medicine. That's the rich element of this is trust the medicines.

Really it's really about trusting yourself. because that's all the medicine does is it just lets go of the ego a little bit and allows you to just hey just yeah just see your you are yourself the message of safety which you described came early you knew that you were unsafe as a child you Were unsafe and you know it and so you had to be that You had To be vigilant you have to Be taking care of yourself you Have to at the same time and then that repeated, you know, and feeling unsafe in a relationship that should be safe.

That should just naturally be saved and the maladaptive type of things that show up because we don't know. We haven't had that experience to really know and we have this idea of a marriage and it's not what we know already.

Yeah, I want to ask a little bit of what you meant by that, the dosing, because I think we don't talk about that piece enough. How can we be trauma informed about the ketamine dosage, right?

Because right now we're in this situation where everybody's getting access to ketamines from all these different perspectives and massive doses and everybody, you know, there's this culture of like more is better, blast through it.

And here we are talking about childhood trauma. We're talking about relational safety. And we're also saying that when you first start with a practice like Shah Minds, that it's really important for the healers, the people who are dosing you, to be very aware of what the medicine can do and to respect that, yes, starting slow, going gently, honoring that almost kind of like when your with the horse, and the horses, you know, not tameable, You have to take permission, approach with respect, and you have establish a sense of we see each other in that same way.

I feel like ketamine dosing, to go gently in the perspective of trauma, go at the pace of what the person is ready for, I just wanted to drop that in and ask you a little bit more details as a practitioner.

You know, I'm kind of curious. It's like, how did you approach that when, you know that your own trepidation of you, notice what was happening. You knew that if you hit this too hard, You might find that these controlled, these protectors, right, would fight back because that's what happens is when you're vulnerable and you open up and it's too much, the protectores come back and say, no, this isn't safe.

you can't trust this. And I am sure that has happened to many people with trauma who've gone through ketamine therapy and been scared by it. and been re-traumatized by it, right?

So just want to acknowledge that that was a really intuitive way that you approached that, and I want bring that in. It really goes back to, I think, the ethical components of this work.

And I there's a lot to be said about ketamine. psychedelic therapy treatments, and the ethics of that, the importance of knowing that this is the right thing to do.

Curiosity, Future Vision, and Closing Remarks

Because there's a lot of things that come up for patients and providers, too, that could put things to question, right? A patient doesn't feel safe in a setting, there is a clinical approach that is not really addressing the patients.

set and setting in the ethical way. So there's questions galore that come up with this. And so yes, you know, every person who I think should undergo treatments with ketamine, we need to kind of really ask those questions like, is this the right thing?

You know? be honest and transparent about what this might look like and allowing for that person who is experiencing to have some agency to speak to what they know already.

I believe everybody knows what we need to know. It's all there and it will show up at the right time. and trusting that process. And so there's so many ethical questions that rise up, but yes, thank you, Simi, that dosing is important.

There's a very delicate way to do that. Although there are protocols and there is research, there there such a

delicacy in how you carry through those sessions dose by dose.

Yeah, I don't see that written about a lot and I think that's really important for us to share that the, you know, to respect where the person is, To be partnered together in that conversation.

It's like, what are you ready for? You know? And so the personal knows that I don't have anything to be scared of here. of this first session is going to be a little lighter.

And then, yeah, we can go to the deeper ones later. We're not going drop you right into the deep end. There's no benefit to doing that. It can actually harm.

I feel like that therapeutic relationship, there's so much of it that's about alliance and collaboration that it's really important to piece, to focus on.

Without that, you don't have anything else. Yeah, absolutely. And ketamine is a single drug that has unique experiences on everybody's process. It's a completely unique experience for each person.

Even for the same person, the next session is going to be uniquely helpful or not, but be a unique to your healing journey. So as we come to a close here, one of the questions that we often ask our guests is to curiosity, the importance of curiosity.

And what would be a question that you are curious about looking back with your retroscope on yourself or to this process or us in the partnership that have?

What would a be question you'd like to ask? idea or not. I think I would look back and ask her, are you ready to like have your mind blown in a way that you've never even imagined?

Like I, think back when we're younger, we dream about our future lives as adults and we sort of like imagine it in The Lindsay that was five, the Lindsay, that it was 16, 25, Lindsay was Lindsay-ing like, you know, before I came to Shaw Minds in 2023. Like I can't even like there's no way I could have said, here's what you're going to be doing on October 12th of 2025. And this is what your life is going be looking like at that point in your like.

I would have thought you were nuts. You're crazy. My life isn't gonna look like that. So I think I'd just look back and be like you know, put on your bootstraps and just be ready because are you ready for this?

Because you just have no clue what this is going to do. I love that. Get ready. Because yeah, there's this like, we have these lowered expectations. And it's just lovely that you just connected with that.

It's like, yeah, just dream big, allow yourselves, be ready. There's something big here that could happen. And so beautiful to hear your story and to connect with the various parts of it and just how it has led to the next phase of your own journey as a healer.

Thank you. I really appreciate the opportunity to share about it. I also want to say thank you for being here and making this, you know, really sharing to your pain and vulnerable moments in your life and how what you're able to discover in this conversation, right?

We talk about curiosity. Curiosity, we, it invites our discovery, Right? It invites it. It says, hey, come on in, I'm curious about you. You invite discovery.

And then what does discovery do? It creates, it allows for creativity to be there. So I love how this conversation has kind of opened me to me curious more about, you know, the work that you're doing and who you are and even to your Your journey, the arc of your journey to be part of that.

So thank you for allowing us to have this conversation where we are able to discover more and open our minds even more. Yeah. And I'm still curious, like, where will I be in another year?

Like, who will it be? And, I don't have expectations for it. I have no clue. and I am just open to seeing, Like where it goes. We hope today's episode inspired you to ask new questions and explore fresh perspectives.

We challenge you ask us those unasked questions that you're curious about in your medical practice, condition, health and wellness. If you enjoyed the podcast, don't forget to subscribe, share it with somebody just as curious, and leave us a review.

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