

Disclaimer:-welcome to the thanks therapy podcast before we start if you are in crisis or need urgent support please google the Samaritans and the country in which you live health can be found online and via the phone we also put local and national helpline numbers and links in the show notes and on social media don't suffer alone things can and will get better enjoy the show

Hannah:-Hi I'm Hannah Loudon

Emma:- and I'm Emma Loudon and this is our therapy appreciation podcast Thanks therapy

Hannah:- where we hope to demystify destigmatise and encourage the appreciation of good and useful therapy

Emma:- and today Hannah in our very first episode we are going to start right at the beginning with how to get started with therapy are you ready

Hannah:- I'm very ready

* Theme song* thanks therapy thanks therapy doing all you do thanks therapy thanks therapy you don't really know if you should go you should give it a try it could be good for you

Emma:- That's an Andy Dwyer special that jingle

Emma:- okay so first of all I thought we should introduce ourselves and um what brought us here to be doing a therapy podcast

Hannah:- you go first with your introduction

Emma:- okay I'll go first I was not prepared for that but okay um so I am a research psychologist and practitioner specializing in parental mental illness I recently finished my PhD it was super good fun I nearly went mental but it was good

Hannah:- it was really good I read a lot I actually read a lot of it and I thought it was very excellent

Emma:- thank you I appreciate that you'll be one of the five people who will ever read my PhD

Hannah:- I love it I really love reading other people's PhDs tell us the title

Emma:- the title is family's experience of parental mental illness in Northern Ireland a social phenomenological study

Hannah:- I knew the first part but I couldn't remember a social phenomenological study

Emma:- Yeah that's one of my favourite bits of the title um so and I'm a mother to two lovely boys and I live here in Belfast with my partner Marty and um my two boys as I said oh my three boys sorry the dog Jack I can't forget about Jack my lovely Jack um and um yeah and I'm a fan of therapy what about you Hannah

Hannah:- um big time fan of therapy also which is the main reason that we're doing this yeah um I am about to start a master's in psychology because I would like to be a therapist in my when I grow up even though I'm nearly 30.

Emma:- you would be a brilliant therapist as we know and have discussed many times

Hannah:- and I am also a barista yes what else do I do

Emma:-well you're my niece as well

Hannah:- yes we should explain how we are related you're my auntie

Emma:- I am your auntie

Hannah:- you're my mom's sister and there's only 10 years between us yes which is not that long it's not especially when you're our ages I think what like when you were 20 and I was 10 that was a big gap then at that stage we didn't hang out in the same way

Emma:- I looked after you then

Hannah:- yeah thanks for doing that

Emma:- no problem I really enjoyed it

Hannah:- but we're you know we can go to like restaurants together now yeah and like

Emma:- And bars

Hannah:- yeah bars yeah and do things like this and sometimes I look after your children yeah well not so much anymore that they're like taller than me but yeah they can look after themselves a lot now but um that wasn't I like doing that and I love therapy I love going to therapy I love talking about therapy whenever friends ask me what to do in therapy I'm like yes let me talk about it and I love thinking about therapy and helping other people go to therapy yeah I have recently done that for like three people and I love being the person that they're like oh I kind of want to go to therapy should I ask and I love that they think of me and ask me so

Emma:- well clearly your views on therapy have already been made clear to people and people are already like wanna know about therapy ask Hannah but from now on they'll be like oh yeah and she's got a podcast about therapy

Hannah:- therapy podcast god!

Emma:- no but it's true and um yeah we're very grateful to therapy and that's that's really what brought this about um and so I wanted to start by asking you Hannah imagine you're a person and

Hannah:- I can try and imagine

Emma:- think very hard about it and you think to yourself I am feeling bad in some way I would like to speak to someone about that what would you do ?

Hannah:- so that's a good question I have both been that person and been the person who people come to say listen I want to go to therapy yeah um

Emma:- and so what do you tell them when they come to you

Hannah:- I tell them great I love it yes thank you for telling me about this I'm so in support and then I say what you should do is go online and look up don't just google like therapy because you'll get a book it'll be self-help books and probably that's not going to be that useful to you at this stage um and you can often find like especially in northern Ireland there's one specific I have like the link on my phone and it's like a directory yes and it lists

Emma:- the NI counselling directory

Hannah:- yes that's exactly the one yeah and it lists like their name where they practice their prices who they see and their availability and more specifically it lists their kind of practice yeah um what do you call that

Emma:- hmmm their discipline?

Hannah:- their discipline so say if they if they do CBT if they specialize in like body image um career path so whatever like thing you're struggling with or maybe you don't have a specific thing and you just have like I'm so sad there'll be a person on there who's like general sadness I help you with that yes um but the thing is about that especially in my experience like I've been like oh I'm super sad I need to do something about this immediately like it needs to happen today and I think by the time a lot of people decide to see a see a therapist they are already and they're like oh my god everything is um doomed yes kind of stage and that's why it's hard so this is what I always say is you should recruit someone to be like hey I am doing this this is my idea I'm going to go and see a therapist tell someone don't just like sit down at your computer by yourself that's a pretend idea by yourself because it's so hard because you're probably already depressed yes which takes things

Emma:- that's really interesting concept so recruit someone as a supporter of your therapy journey so you're essentially saying help me facilitate me doing this yeah and in that way then you can you can stand to wait a little bit longer it doesn't have to happen that day because you've recruited somebody into the yeah into this issue that you're having and you're not going oh this is a crisis situation and I must fix it alone yeah because that's extremely hard it is hard and I did want to come back to the crisis issue later um but I wanted to say from a practical point of view that there's a few registers that you could um look at if you were seeking a therapist and we will always put in um in the notes and the links of this podcast we will put links to um numbers that you can ring and get instant talk to somebody and

Hannah:- oh yeah crisis line I didn't even think about any of that quite like uh what your attitude should be

Emma:- no I just wanted to say a practical point of view that people can go to the NI counselling directory and you will get a list of counsellors who have qualified in some way shape or form and we will talk more about um things like that in a future episode probably I don't think we can touch on it today in terms of exact qualifications um and you can go to the BACP register and you can find people who are registered with the BACP which is the British association of counselling and psychotherapy yes equally you can go to the IACP and find people who are registered with the Irish association of counselling and psychotherapy um the psychologist has a register of practitioners as well um is that a magazine yeah psychology the psychologist or psychology today it's psychology today yes because I that's I think that's where I found my therapist um so those registers there's not a guarantee that that person is going to be perfect fit for you or extremely highly qualified or exactly what you're looking for one of the things is there is no guarantees with that you know you do have to shop around a little bit beforehand but then being on a register is a good start than being on some kind of register um often if they're a member of an organization um they have to adhere to the code of ethics of that organization so for example I'm a member of the British psychological society and I have to adhere to their code of ethics in order to call myself a psychologist in order to practice I am bound by their code of ethics by being a member

Hannah:- that sounds good

Emma:- it is good yes it's and I think most people take that very seriously I don't know anybody who's like ah yeah whatever yeah you can stick your code of ethics what did I tell you

Hannah:- I hope not!

Emma:- no I mean just to reassure people out there there's very few people who would be I have that attitude at all but um we're talking I've just kind of thought we're talking more about um we're not really talking about go to your GP they will put you on a waiting list for CBT that's a good

question yes that is totally an option I feel like we should mention that because that takes ages it does yeah and you don't really know how long you're going to wait and probably that brings into the discussion your GP will probably be like would you like to try tablets and people have mixed feelings about that so we're talking more about like I want to go to therapy I've maybe tried the CBT thing for six weeks it was fine I find myself back in the same spot I want something different we're dealing with that

Emma:-no 100% and I think that there's an element of privilege in that and um accessibility that we have gained through our knowledge of therapy yes and one of the things that we've realized in planning this podcast and talking about it is that a lot of people do not have the information about therapy that we take for granted about having you know about understanding the process not just of how to find a therapist but what therapy is what it does what different types are you know you pointed out to me the other day that somebody you were talking to didn't really realize that there were different types of therapy or they weren't sure what type of therapy they were going to

Hannah:- yes and that was eye opening for me but I had sort of encouraged this person to attend therapy and they sold it themselves and then they reported back said oh I had my first session it was brilliant and I said what um what discipline is it or what do they practice and they were like what it's just therapy I don't know and I was like oh I want to know whether it's like analysis psychodynamic is it CBT yeah play therapy like where are they coming from so I just thought that everybody knew those terms and probably a lot of people do but um that is if you kind of don't know that going into your quest for therapy you don't

Emma:- If you don't know that you don't know that and it's okay you don't need to know it will you know you don't need to know it for it to work but yeah also um really helps it can help yeah it can help to know what you're what you what would be good for your specific problems sometimes that means that having a gateway organization or person such as a GP can not only be really helpful because they can say oh look you know what I mean you're you seem to be feeling very anxious and you're struggling to do this and then we can give you a course of CBT that you know we have we have lots of it we provide it here in the trust you know and um CBT is cognitive behavioural therapy I keep having to remember to do the to actually say the thing out yeah rather than just the shorthand cognitive behavioural therapy which is generally delivered in a course of a set number it's a course of sessions yeah and um part of that is because of how uh counselling and talking therapy has been funded and has been sort of medicalized by the yeah and by the trust but it's fine there's pros and cons to all of those things I think being able to access something for free that's going to help you know address a problem quite quickly is only going to be a good thing yeah I would never want to put anybody off trying anything no matter what it is

Hannah:- no way like I only know that I want to go to psychodynamic therapy because I did CBT and it wasn't good for me yes so it can help to know that what you don't want it just as much as

Emma:- absolutely um and so I actually have some stats because when you were saying there about going to a GP um they might talk about medication like if you go and say I'm feeling really bad I cannot lift my mood um I'm anxious all the time I can't sleep one of the first things that they might say is um well you know would you like to try medication would you like to try an antidepressant beta blocker um you know some kind of mild sedative or something like that um and I decided to have a look at some statistics in preparation for today to find out how many people are actually going to therapy in northern Ireland well just like well let's say it's the UK okay these statistics I think these are these are UK statistics right um because this is mental health foundation which does do uh worldwide statistics but it's mostly it's based in the UK so how many people do you think what

percentage of the population do you think are in therapy Hannah:- um I'm gonna guess 20. Emma:- I knew that you would go high

Hannah:- oh really is that high

Emma:- I knew that you would go well I didn't think twenty I think it should be twenty did

Hannah:- really I was answering that thinking okay I wish it was around 60 but I think I'm gonna low ball I thought it was low balling

Emma:- no so oh so you know so the statistics in terms of mental health are like um

Hannah:- super bad

Emma:- one in five people will have a mental health problem diagnosed at some point in their lives and in Northern Ireland that's one in four so it's 25 percent higher or 20 higher in Northern Ireland um and according to the mental health foundation this particular statistic that I find one in eight people are having psychological treatment but most of those are using medication only a fraction of those something like three percent are having psychological therapy okay so I was really surprised about that three percent given that our estimates are that one in four people will suffer from a diagnosable mental illness during their lifetime there's way too little actual psychological talking therapy okay it's being given to people

Hannah:- forgive my maths problems one and four is twenty-five percent

Emma:- one in four is twenty-five percent

Hannah:- so then three percent and three percent are actually having I don't know about you but that is not enough

Emma:- it is not enough

Hannah:- I'm not happy about that and they're not just diagnosed that's just amongst the diagnosed

Emma:- well at the mental health statistics the estimates are really hard to make because of under-reporting essentially yeah so all of these are our best estimates based on surveying people asking people directly um we can we can we have much more exact figures about um prescribing trends because they are literal just prescribing trends that we have there has to be a report of but actual people who suffer from mental illnesses it's really bad because there's lots of people who never go to their GP yeah and there's people who access therapy who wouldn't have a diagnosable condition either so yeah that's true I go to therapy and I don't have a diagnosable condition so you know

Hannah:- must be nice....but yeah the diagnosable thing is it's complicated but anyway the point is three percent is [__] low

Emma:- it's very low yeah I mean there's obvious barriers to having therapy

Hannah:- yeah I mean we're talking about it like oh then go to therapy yeah everybody should go let's talk about the obvious thing is it costs money it does so much money yeah and we both experience this because we both go and every time I speak to anyone who wants to go I'm like listen it's going to cost money but you just have to kind of deal with it yeah like you just have to do if you really want to do it you'll find a way if it's going to be something you want to commit to in the mid to long term that can feel like the biggest barrier aside from like time or depending on your own personal perspective like stigma yes embarrassment um not want to alarm people that is something

that I did not personally think of when I first started going but is something that has been brought up in conversations I've had with friends they're like I don't want to I don't want to freak anybody out yeah like well I think they'll be freaked out if you continue to not uh treat your mental illness that would be worse or deal with your problems yeah problems or continue to just sort of carry on not having a good time um but yeah it would be remiss not to mention that because you know we're not people with loads of money obviously

Emma:- no I mean we're not people with loads of money but we've prioritized some of our money for this task and I recognize that that is a privilege that we have yeah and there's many people who the only option is to go for free counselling so it's not that the options for free counselling are bad um you can go to any number of charity and voluntary organizations and that exists in your local area um some of the larger ones are good because you'll be seen a bit quicker um there's waiting lists in lots of places um but that's a particular type of therapy that you're likely to get there you're not going to get free psychotherapy through the trust or through a voluntary and charity organization um but I wouldn't want to discourage anybody from doing that I think you know I definitely approach a place like that because there's lots of caring uh capable very skilled counsellors and organizations like that um but there are other barriers that I think you sort of touched on a little bit with regards to stigma because there are many social and cultural norms that make it more difficult to even you know admit that you have a problem never mind actually going to seek out help and there's definitely a gender related component to that with men finding it much more difficult to admit to needing help and a much harder time engaging in therapy you know and that comes down to the socialization of men where we you know historically men have been encouraged to not express their feelings as much as women and that level of emotional intelligence means that the process can be much harder to engage in and I do hope that that's starting to change in the younger generations it's something certainly that I've tried to impress upon my um boys just the other day actually while I was doing the PhD I was um just the other day that was quite a while ago but um I was asking um Sam I said you know do you would you think you think it's okay to cry right you wouldn't be embarrassed to cry you don't think that boys shouldn't cry or anything like that and he was like no I know it's okay to cry I just don't feel like crying most of the time

Hannah:- that's good that's so good

Emma:- and I was like that's really good and also he said that they had talked about it in one of their tutorials in school and I was like great that's really good yeah um so men find it much more difficult to you know engage in therapy um I think that's maybe a good point to talk about why you might want or need therapy I think we sort of touched on it um but I think it's worth saying that people tend to go to therapy because they're overwhelmed by painful symptoms and they can't work out the cause

Hannah:- yes this is something that I have I have a lot of thoughts on because I mean I've been attending therapy for well this current run nearly four years this summer I think um but I started going when I was 17. which is like over 10 years ago um and so I would walk there like every Thursday from school or something and one there was one day when like a kind of a classmate not really like a friend joined me on my walk and she was like I'm going this way as well and when she asked why I was walking that way I said oh I'm going to therapy and she was appalled like wow looked at me with concern she's like why are you doing like why are you all right I was like yeah I go every week I'm fine today like but I was just like oh this person thinks that's an admission of like things are very bad in my life and so I kind of always remember that and kind of feel bad for teenage me being like it's great I really like girls it's good it helps me um and before that I hadn't really had any experiences like that and I I've had a few since as an adult um but what I wish I could go back

and say to her is like well you know do you exercise do you eat well do you brush your teeth every day because those things are maintenance yeah and the way I view therapy night is it's maintenance for me personally I probably need to go like I need to go until such a time that I think I can maybe take a break from this for other people that's not the case they can do a course or they can try it out or pick it up and come back to it later that's all chill um but you kind of you don't go why do you need to go to the gym like no you're not obese no 100 of that approach what I'm trying to like say to people now anytime that kind of conversation comes up is like well for me it's just like going to the gym or brushing my teeth I just need to keep on top of it because when I first came to it when I was a teenager it was crisis mode and that is the worst feeling yeah when you're there and you're like oh man like this needs to be fixed today

Emma:-yeah and that is what happens is there's two points that I want to pick up on from that because first of all one of the things that um that I really want to come out of this podcast and come out of conversations that you and I have with people not teenage years and the conversations that I have with people for example I went for brunch today and I had to make sure I said could you come and meet me at 20 past because I have therapy before it I want to be saying that I want to normalize it should be normalized for sure and one of the things that um you've mentioned there's the word crisis and I have a big frustration that people tend to leave seeking therapy until it is crisis point um and then I feel like the first job of therapy is stabilization before the real work can begin and to add to that I think that sometimes or even often people think that the stabilization part is the therapy yeah so they're in crisis they go to therapy they stabilize the point of being able to get on with things mostly and then they don't continue with the therapy yeah but they've essentially used a sticking plaster in a situation where that is insufficient

Hannah:-yes um I so true I've not really thought about that before yeah well it's like stopping your antibiotics halfway through the course you don't do that yeah do not do that but like this is not any analogy anymore that don't do that because it's bad oh yeah no straight super bugs serious talks now guys serious just use your use your antibiotics wisely

Emma:- but I do think that that's a point to make because it can be hard to accept or want to go to therapy before you're at that crisis point and I understand that but if we were more educated about the benefits of it for your well-being um and your development as a human being in the world then people would likely not leave it so late like um what do you call it Kristen bell and Dax Shepard is it Kristen bell Kristen bell yeah and Dax Shepard from frozen and veronica mars and um the good place I love her she's brilliant when they yeah I just call her Kristen is it Kristen you know Kristen sorry is it is it Kristen or Kirsten or I get confused about those names anyway um uh they had therapy at the start of their relationship sort of pre-emptively so they um got together they really liked each other um but they started to have some difficulties in their relationship and she was like okay hold on a minute we're going to go to therapy and they and they went to therapy and they've talked about this openly yes yeah they did it before the issues that they were sort of uh seeing became massive problems that they would then have to

Hannah:- at which point you would probably break up yeah you'd be like [__] this I'm out of here yeah we don't like each other anymore yeah we're not gonna be friends yeah but it's still you guys instead they didn't do that that's really nice yeah I say it I find that romantic I hope I can go to therapy someday

Emma:- um yeah I mean I that was very romantic it doesn't often work out as well as that but again it's because they didn't leave it until the crisis point Hannah:-you can imagine if that was a different like you could have said hey I think we should go to therapy together someone who was working from a place of stigma would be like um gross I'm fine no thank you so yeah I think that's the dealing with the uncomfortable the comfortableness yes of it that it brings up Emma:-I think that so that is a good point because once you get past the stabilization stage once you go okay I am coping I am not I don't feel like I'm in crisis that's when you that's when you can do some difficult work then and that is as you say uncomfortable

Hannah:- that's the that's like awkward gross uncomfortable tricky stuff where you're kind of like ugh and I have to deal with this thing that I've discovered about myself instead of just being like right I'm not in crisis anymore I'll continue to go back to how I was like I can attest to the fact that some like mid-session I'll be kind of going ah realizing a ton of uncomfortable things about myself like how I operate prejudice prejudices that I have and you can feel the urge to be like actually oh you know what cancel this I'm not I don't need to come back anymore because I was probably happier before I realized this you know thing I've been the script I've been running off and I've got to like fix it and find an alternative or learn to live with it um and I think that this is something that I mentioned to friends who are kind of asking me about therapy like that sensation is something that never stops coming up throughout the whole process um and it is uncomfortable like you don't go to therapy and be like yay I love it so much like

Emma:-well you sort of do but in a different way

Hannah:-yeah I have sessions where I leave and I'm like oh my god that was [__] brutal that was so hard now I'm sad but then I also have ones where I leave being like oh yeah dealing with my [__] positive to that is I think back on times when I've had that feeling at session of being like never mind the never mind feeling because I think I look back on those and go thank god I didn't quit at that stage and thank god I persevered and because my life now is often immeasurably better having resolved those things that I previously thought were too big or too scary or too embarrassing to deal with or things that I thought like I'll never I'll never get a grip on that like yeah no I do have a grip on those things my point I think my point is be honest do the work uh get gross get in there yeah

Emma:- get gross don't be don't be afraid to I think the the fantastic thing for me about that bit where you get to do the work is it's an it's an ongoing journey for a start right so you know this little bit of therapy that I've recently had has been about opening up the possibility that I um had beliefs about myself from my childhood and teenage years that were that are maybe incorrect and that they have forced me to behave in ways that are not as um not as healthy as they could be and it's and it's not massive things but it's sort of massive to me and you know it's it is massive to me actually um and I think one of the fantastic things about therapy is that can help you discover that what you thought was your personality is actually just ways of being and behaving that you've been forced into by the pressures that you've been put under yeah and when you realize that it is really important for you to be able to see a different way of being

Hannah:- yeah like freedom because you don't maybe you don't necessarily like those things

Emma:- well exactly I mean I don't like having to do 20 million things all the time otherwise I feel like I'm a bad person yeah I sort of do like doing that though I did talk about this in therapy today because I was like I have realized a lot of things um however I have started to write a book and I'm starting a podcast

Hannah:- 'I know I just finished my PhD and I probably need a rest but'

Emma:- I am doing all those things however I feel it's in a much more healthy way

Hannah: I think that's true well I would not be participating in the podcast right now if I was like uh-oh she's doing an unhealthy podcast project she needs to keep busy so

Emma:- yeah I just I mean you know I do love I do love doing a lot of things and creative things that my therapist was entirely supportive of the things and she liked the fact that they were creative and she even gave me some stares and pointers oh really yeah she was talking about the um the nervous system and states of being and things like that and it was really feeding into the book work um okay so I feel like we've gone off in a big tangent here but I wanted to sort of say to sort of describe a little bit so you get you choose a therapist so you have a look on this register right and you see somebody who's got good qualifications and they've got several years experience yeah and they have a nice face maybe they have kind eyes and you think

Hannah:- I really hope they have kind eyes

Emma:- yeah that's quite a nice person and so you yeah no oh my god so you go to therapy now currently as we are speaking a lot of therapy is online via zoom pandemic yeah I mean my therapy has been zoomed the whole way you were did you do a little bit of zoom in your back face to face now?

Hannah:- yes um yeah we did zoom at the start of the pandemic which is over a year ago knowing it feels simultaneously like yesterday and 10 years ago yes um then when things were a bit more chill here during the pandemic I went back like alternating in person zoom in person zoom all right now we're back in person because we're both vaccinated okay cool um but I yeah I think from conversations I've had with other people I think not everyone is back in person I think it's still a lot zoom is the way

Emma:- yeah um so I loved it I loved zoom I loved zoom and so I think why I was actually talking to my therapist about it today because I felt like I so I ha I do it in my bed do it in my bed like everyone else you know um so I sit up in my bedroom because it's the place that I can be the kids won't come and annoy me and yeah you know yeah at times when schools weren't done and you know we were locked down or whatever I could go to my bedroom and close the door and so I sit on the bed um with the pillows behind me I'm super comfortable but I feel like it facilitated me opening up more quickly than I would have necessarily if I had gone to a strange counselling room and been distracted by the picture on the wall or the formality yes with that therapist that was your first experience of seeing her because mine was not the same yes and I feel like this is why we're two good sides of the coin on this particular issue yeah because I presumed that everybody felt like zoom was lesser because everybody hates zoom in general but I thought for therapy people would presume that zoom was lesser um and so I mentioned this to her with fully expecting her to say yes but it'll be great when we get back to face-to-face and she felt very differently about it she feels that it is much more focused because you can see the whole of the person's face and all their expressions and all the subtle expressions right on your screen in a way that you can't in person yeah and I was like oh I'm really surprised that you said that that's so interesting that's interesting to me um and because I did feel that there was an advantage for me in terms of how I um approached therapy I might have been more inclined to cancel a few sessions if I hadn't been just having to go up to my room and log on

Hannah:- I didn't think about that either because I never cancelled because I like I'm dying to go to think every week oh my god yes so in fact I was more likely to cancel zoom sessions because especially during like the start of the pandemic I was just like I [___] can't be bothered I think my

approach is very much like that's a thing I attend you do not mess around it's like a it's like a job yeah I treat it like a job so in the same way that you wouldn't just be like I don't feel like coming to work today I don't do that with therapy whereas with zoom I was like doesn't matter like she's not gonna have to I don't have to leave on time so it made it much less official for me or something because I was like oh she's just on my computer so yeah it's not real yeah I didn't treat it the same with the same I don't know reverence or importance or something

Emma:-interesting okay Hannah:- weirdly I think probably because we were you know globally traumatized at the time I don't really remember any of my zoom sessions from like the beginning of the pandemic yeah I'm like what we probably just talked about like I'm so worried about the pandemic for six weeks or something yeah um so in my mind it was a pause yeah but your experience is totally different

Emma:-well I did start a lot later I started essentially towards you know I actually don't even know how long I've been going for this session and we're just pausing for the summer night but um uh I started going a lot later so I was you know if I had of started going at the start of the pandemic I think I would have been the same I was like a rabbit and headlights at the start of the pandemic and I think a lot of people were you know so it's hard to talk about anything else yes it was all-encompassing yeah at that time but I don't want to focus on that too much because goodness knows when this will come out we could be all like pandemic schmandemic by the time we actually get three episodes recorded and get them edited and get them sent to somewhere um so I wanted to read to you about in terms of engaging in therapy yeah I wanted to um talk a little bit about in terms of how you start therapy what Freud's view was about the fundamental rule and so when he was trying to describe the process of therapy Freud said that it required really only one thing of patience that they must say everything that comes into their head even if it is disagreeable for them to say it and Freud called this the fundamental rule of therapy and the only route to successful treatment and this rule flies in the face of all our impulses civilized life constantly requires us to censor what we say in order to be deemed good very little of what we are actually feeling or thinking makes it out into the world or even into our conscious minds for long this may help us in certain situations but it can also Freud knew make us deeply sick there are tricky or disagreeable ideas that we need to be able to entertain without cleaning them up so we can liberate ourselves from their subterranean grip. According to therapeutic theory we grow sick when we fail to understand our own more troubling desires and fears when the story we tell ourselves about who we are no longer tallies with the truth the consulting room is a unique space where we can finally dare to look beneath the surface for their part therapists are unshockable and without any desire to moralize they know human nature and their own minds deeply enough never to be surprised as we watch them accept our darkest secrets with calm and patience we grow more confident about our own acceptability we no longer have to keep so many things from ourselves and grow at ease with our underlying strangeness and wondrous oddity features we share with pretty much everyone on the planet and just to credit that that is from 20 key concepts from the history of therapy from the schooloflife.com and their little beautiful set of postcard size bits of information about therapy is very beautiful but I think this fundamental rule is so true if you go to therapy yeah if you go to therapy and you are like if you keep up the pretence because a lot of what we do in life is pretence if you keep that up in the therapy room you're not going to get to the heart of the problem

Hannah:-well what's the point

Emma:-totally

Hannah:-what go in and could like be like okay I go to therapy and go and continue to be normal the only difference is like you're in there and you're paying

Emma:- yeah I mean I think you're wasting your time and money if you're not going in and being honest about why you're there what you think you know what the problems are even if it takes a bit of time to get under the surface and get to the bottom of it um you're not going to resolve anything if you go in and pretend that you want to complain about somebody else for an hour 50 minutes you know

Hannah:-I mean it might make you feel better to go in and completely sure but somebody who melts your life but it's I think the more interesting way to approach it is like why what is it about them that makes me feel so bad yes and what are my ways of dealing with it um but you know it's uncomfortable like you can't really do that sort of thing without looking at yourself and being like oh man there's a thing that I'm not really that happy about and that's it's not pleasant for anyone

Emma:-and I don't think that everybody is ready for it at any point necessarily you know I think you have to be ready to look at yourself at in that level of with that level of scrutiny you have to be able to accept the shame that will come along with it because you're not going to like everything that you see yeah you just won't

Hannah:-we were talking about shame yesterday I was in therapy yesterday and we were talking about shame um and I was kind of saying like it's such a difficult concept to get to get to grips with like I think um and she said something really amazing that was the counter to shame is connection

Emma:- empathy is the opposite of shame yeah

Hannah:- yeah and I kind of that I think I was struggling with the whole concept of it before and it's kind of a difficult thing to talk about anyway because of the nature of it and when she said that I was like okay I think I'm getting more of a grip because knowing what the opposite of it is helps me kind of place it mentally or something um but I mean that's exactly what you're saying like you are not going to go into a therapy session and say something that's going to make them recoil in horror and if you are if that's happening maybe that's not the person Emma:- it might not be the right therapist if they're recoiling in horror they're like that 17 year old girl that you walked to therapy with you know they I remember

Hannah:-that's never a good sign but it's about like um being able being like okay there's a room that I go to whether it's in person online I can say all the worst parts you can say them to another person they're not going to recoil in horror and it's like a practice yeah like integrating those uncomfortable bits into yourself so then you can go back into the real world and know that they're in there and be fine yes and function normally Emma:- and also I think that a lot of the time you'll be surprised by how tolerable those parts of yourself that you're most shamed off actually are when you speak them out loud you might find that you're not as disgusting or as intolerable or as bad in inverted commas as you think you are and somebody at some point has let you down in communicating to you that that you should feel that way about yourself because shame

Hannah:- you are under incorrect impressions yes yourself and your relationships

Emma:-absolutely because shame comes from other people into us it's it's comes from our relationships and it's imposed upon us usually and then we internalize it and believe it about ourselves um

Hannah:-like a virus yes like a virus

Emma:- and it is a very toxic feeling and it's something that we will probably spend an entire um episode on I would say

Hannah:- oh baby I didn't expect that we would bring up shame actually this deep for first first episode

Emma:-we've gone pretty deep guys and we better we better kind of um move on I think we are wanting to finish each of our episodes with a real life dilemma get our teeth into some real um problems so we are asking that you send us um your problems uh troubles dilemmas difficulties and we will have a regular agony ant corner yeah um or maybe uh you know agony auntie maybe that's less formal

Hannah:-oh my god what about agony niece

Emma:- agony auntie and agony niecey because I'm your niece yeah so um Hannah has a problem would you like to read a problem for us Hannah:- because this is our first episode we couldn't make the call light obviously beforehand so I just had to get a friend to send me a problem so they write I have a colleague is vaccine hesitant this is in the context of the covid vaccinations um I really like this person and in in normal life I would be very dismissive of this kind of person how can I have a conversation with them without losing my rag or ruining our friendship Emma:-that's very interesting and it's very very current problem that we might encounter in this this land where we're all being called for vaccines all the time and some people have different opinions on that and um the vaccines aren't mandatory but they're strongly encouraged I was for one very grateful to get mine and my second one is next week

Hannah:-oh it's next week mine is soon yeah similarly I was pumped to get my vaccine yeah um uh yeah

Emma:- it removed a lot of fear for me getting the vaccine because I felt um that I felt the risk of very serious illness was removed and I'm not vaccine hesitant in any way my children are fully vaccinated so I don't have that worry but I understand that some people are very worried because they don't understand everything to do with vaccines and they don't necessarily trust yeah the people administering the vaccines

Hannah:- I would be lying if I said I understood how this vaccine works but my

Emma:-we don't have time to go into in

Hannah:-we're not this is not a science podcast no one um so I think the ques how I would approach this is the question is not really like to educate me on how vaccines work yeah let's all just assume that anyone listening knows about vaccines

Emma:- yes and also can I just say that the point that you just made about um going to therapy and not talking about the problem that you have with another person I think this person's problem what they're asking for is how they can approach this they don't want to get angry with this person that they are fond of

Hannah:-they're not asking how do I make them get a vaccine

Emma:-yes exactly they don't want to change their minds necessarily yeah they want to be able to talk to them yeah and not lose a rag

Hannah:-yeah how can I say how can I have a conversation with them without losing my rag and ruining your friendship so they are talking they're kind of talking about themselves as much as the

other person they're saying I obviously this is disagreement quite a big disagreement in our current um

Emma:-people feel very strongly about it yeah

Hannah:-and it can be one of those things becomes like an identity you know anti-vaxxers yeah and pro-vaxxers it's like the whole you know separating people thing and I think this person wants to avoid that

Emma:-yes and I think with therapy the one of the first things you approach anybody with the client with is a lack of judgment so you try to suspend your judgment and you're not you're not just really going to moralize their behaviour or say whether it's right or wrong um you want to understand their experience of it and help them facilitate them you know coming through that so first of all maybe she could try and take a non-judgmental attitude because ordinarily she said she would judge yes people if she encountered them in real

Hannah:- she use the word dismissive she would be dismissive this kind of person

Emma:- okay yeah so but she recognizes that that's the thing and she recognizes that she doesn't want to do it with this person that she is fond of and has you know cares about and wants to keep her relationship with so removing the judgment

Hannah:- what advice would you give this person how can they have a conversation

Emma:-so I would say you start with I understand that you're worried it can be hard to know what to do when you don't feel like you fully understand um the ends and outs of things um and that can be hard I mean that that's a truly non-judgmental thing is just to say that's difficult that you feel like that personally I am very glad to get the vaccine

Hannah:-yeah it's it like it's interesting because so they're colleagues um and I'm kind of imagining that they have been through the past year of the pandemic together so maybe a good place to start would be like listen we've both been through this crazy thing nobody in our lifetime has really experienced this and now I see us going down different paths and why do you think you're taking that path and what is it that doesn't make you want to come on my path yeah or that sounds very sort of come to Jesus or something but like kind of starting from the point of we've had this shared experience I really don't want us to go different ways yeah um tell me more about why you're feeling this way yeah where has it changed for you yeah um like not being like well I think you should do this and you should get the vaccine and you're wrong wrong wrong because that's blamey and kind of it's just gonna drive them further into their position yeah so yeah and I think that's like we're in this together man kindness

Emma:-that is very kind that's what I was thinking about when you were saying that it was sort of saying um a kindness and a togetherness and not you know their colleagues there they're going through this thing together um I mean if you wanted to point out a fact you could just say that you know billions of people have had at this point and um there's no evidence of ill effects well it's just the you know the people who are on the comment section saying people are dying people are it's one of the safest um medical treatments that there is there's always side effects for things but there's no evidence of um being becoming magnetic there's no evidence of infertility there's actually there's a very very low risk of blood clots but it's much lower than many other common medications that women for example are given regularly um

Hannah:-that's been my kind of go-to thing if I've ever encountered any conversations but like oh I'm not sure about the blood clot thing I'm like picture it you're 15. you go to your doctor you ask for the pill yeah or your auntie takes you yeah or your auntie takes you later you talk about it on a podcast um yeah that is a much higher risk and it's kind of given with no real acknowledgement or warning or kind of like oh hey caution you know

Emma:- I totally understand people's um concerns about it and I understand it as well because um it's you actually feel different about it when it's your children so whenever children come are offered the vaccine um I have slightly more hesitancy than I would about myself getting the vaccine because as a parent you're so protective of your children um you want to know that this has a [__] gold stamp on it like before it goes in your child's body so I understand that I do and also because my two have allergies I'm gonna have to bring up I'm gonna have to go hi they have allergies is it gonna be okay and they might be like oh you have to have this particular one we'll have to wait for it and uh there's been a couple years where Charlie hasn't got his flu vac because um he's allergic to egg and so he has to get a particular one because the flu vaccines are got egg in them they are made in eggs they're incubated in eggs or egg embryos or something I was telling them that they actually are yeah no they have they come into contact with egg in some way so he has to get a special one yeah is to get a special one and then there's been times where it just hasn't happened and um he actually was down for his flu vaccine we were waiting on it coming into the surgery the special order coming in and he got the flu just two years ago no um he likely would have got a much lesser version of the flu he might not necessarily have not had the flu it might have seemed like a cold or a query virus or something like that it was bad luck um again I don't want to get into this too much but the flu vaccine doesn't prevent the flu the covid vaccine doesn't prevent covid it educates your body about it it's like um having a driving test before you go driving in a car it's like learning how to drive before you go out in the car you know what all the controls do so that you know what it does and you're less likely to immediately crash and kill yourself if you don't have those instructions you are going to be more danger it's going to be more dangerous basically so the vaccine is just giving your body instructions to make it less dangerous people get annoyed because they say it doesn't prevent you catching it doesn't prevent you passing it on that is true but it prevents most of the hospitalization and death so I mean come on guys sounds pretty good to me it is pretty good I don't know I ever that's not this person's problem she doesn't want to convince her with the facts she doesn't want a pamphlet to give to the person she wants to know why she might shout at her good friend yeah if she has to have a conversation about it Hannah:-that's a good point as well like I think everyone's nerves are afraid oh yeah to put it lightly um given the pandemic experience that we've had um so this this kind of conversation these conversations about vaccines or like masks are coming at the end of people's tether yeah so they're suddenly like oh my god why would you do this in this late stage of the game yeah so you can Emma:-we're nearly out of it come on Hannah:-just do the thing so you can see why there's it's such a loaded topic um and fair play to them for writing because like I think avoidance would be my main tactic in dealing with this like maybe I just don't talk about that with that with that friend yeah and if it comes up I change the subject because I don't want to get heated I don't want them to feel attacked um so it's kind of it's a it's a spicy subject Emma:-I love the way you use the word spicy and that's one of my favourite things that you say but yes it is it's a delicate topic and um I think we just have to thank that person for you know considering their problem taking the time to ask questions about it and I trust that if they're asking those pro questions um then they're going to try and approach it with kindness and with delicacy and Hannah:- rather than with shaming yes that's what we were saying that's not it's not a productive thing it's not conducive to learning or making new associations no and it's antidote is connection oh my god it's all coming together Emma:-it is um so I think that's a really good place to leave it and you may have noticed

that we didn't probably directly answer the question we just discussed it so if you have a kind of low stakes problem that you would like some solicited advice about yeah in an anonymous fashion Hannah:-yeah we have to be solicited for advice yeah I don't want to just start [__] offering it we would kind of stay in that we've got a podcast Emma:- yeah no we will we will definitely offer the advice for sure um

please do um send that to us um we will be on twitter and Instagram probably not Facebook well we are twitter I mean we have to be on twitter you can't not be on Hannah:-twitter as stresses me I it was any time I see a tweet I'm like oh god you can you do twitter Emma:-okay we actually I was listening to another podcast you were talking about social media because it's so awful and I just hate it so much but Facebook is now um like the age range of Facebook has gone up so much that you just I feel too young for Facebook this is from mostly from a music point of view so in order to get reach with music Facebook is out now really um Instagram is still there but it's crumbling Hannah:-I love Instagram Emma:-and um tick-tock is the thing and I'm too old for tick-tock Hannah:-I think we're both too old for tick toc Emma:- I literally wouldn't even know what to do with it yeah it makes me nervous and I don't want to point at the screen while music plays and put words on it I don't want to do that I don't want to point at different corners of the screen while music plays Hannah:-you this is not a visual medium but she's doing it and it looks stupid Emma:-yeah it does look stupid and Hannah:-let's make a tick tock Emma:-I can't do it oh my god it's gonna happen I just know it right okay so we're gonna um finish for today next week we are going to be doing um types of therapy yeah because we feel like we've got to cover the bases before we get on to things like shame and attachment and stuff yeah the big stuff um and please do send us your problems although if we get an inundated like you know we can't is it gonna become we're gonna have a spin-off podcast agony aunties and agony ok neicey oh my god we'll doing minisodes oh okay so thank you very much for listening we've had a great time and we'll see you next time Thank you Hannah Hannah:-Thank you Emma

Together:-Thanks therapy!