

THE RESILIENT KID PODCAST

Season 2 – Episode 12

Therapy Why Kids Are Choosing To Go

Hello and welcome to the Resilient Kid podcast with me, Ashley Costello, author, podcaster, speaker, yep, all the things. So today I want to talk about mental health and we've got, we've just had in the UK here on the 10th of October is our Mental Health Awareness Day. And so, I thought it was really important to talk about it.

But with a bit of a different slant. So yes, of course, it's important that we look after our mental health, that we, manage our stress, build our resilience to it. But actually, I'm going to come from a little bit of a different route. And this comes from one of my students because I was having a session with a uni student.

He's just finished his third year. Absolutely amazing. I'm going to call him Tom. That's not his name. And he did actually say I could use his real name, but it feels really awkward because I'm always very conscious of confidentiality. We were having a session. Now, Tom came to me with, he was really struggling with motivation.

It was just before his finals, and he was getting quite down. There was a little bit of substance misuse there. And as a total avoidance to finishing and what that brought. Now, this young guy is very charismatic. He has a lovely personality, really empathetic, really sensitive, really funny. He doesn't, he didn't grow up in the UK.

He grew up abroad and came to uni in the UK. He is amazing. He's great to work with. He has a really good bunch of friends around him, but he was coming to the end of third year. And yes, there's lots of pressures there, but actually the pressures were about what's next. What were the expectations on him?

What his family thought were next for him? And actually, the thought of growing up, having to make those responsible decisions, maybe getting a job, doing a

masters, all those kinds of things. And we were doing some work in the session, and I said to him, how are the sessions going for you?

How do you feel like they're going now? I've been probably working with him six months. He is amazing. He's worked so hard. Will try and avoid it. I will challenge. He knows we have; I give him that book and he knows it's going to be a challenge. But he's done absolutely amazing. His confidence has just started.

He is starting a new job next week, which he never thought he would do. And I've kind of supported him through that process, giving him tips and strategies and things to help him. But the conversation turned around to actual therapy. And I said to him, how's the sessions going for you? We always have a little review.

What's, you know, you still getting stuff out of it. It's still stuff that we want to look at. I have my list, but I want to check in with you. And he said, I don't know if I ever told you this, he said, but I always thought going to a therapist was a little bit like a doctor. They just go, what's your name?

What's your height? What, what you're doing? Do you use drugs? Do you drink? Blah, blah, blah. He said, and actually at first, he said, I thought, Oh, absolutely not. I'm not doing this. When his mom approached the idea, he said, and then I read an article about KSI, the YouTuber. If any of you know him, he's a big YouTuber, he's involved in the Prime drinks that have gone wild.

I think he's not, sometime in October, he is fighting one of the Furies in a boxing match. But he's a big star. Really big star. Really influential. And he said he was really open to KSI. Sorry, this is was really open to why to share in his journey about therapy. And actually, not only did he say that therapies helped face his feelings, give him a deeper understanding of how he actually works, what makes him tip, as a human.

But he also said, I know there's a stigma to therapy but it's more understanding your own mind, the way that you think, the way that you are, why you are that way. And actually, once you be able to understand that, then you're able to control it and able to do things to your advantage and make you the best person.

that you can be. Now, KSI talks about having weekly therapy sessions on Zoom, like I do with this student, Tom. But he's now a massive advocate of that. And he said, occasionally we all have bad days, and There's different things that I now can

do, including going to the gym, but actually he's found it's like really giving him a purpose and I was really taken aback because I hadn't seen this, it's not something that KSI wouldn't necessarily come up on my timeline and I was taken aback and I said, did he really kind of give you that motivation?

And he went, absolutely. Why would he not? And we underestimate the power of influences on our young people, don't we, and we underestimate, whichever way that is. And sometimes we can see it as a negative, but this, is absolutely is a positive and amazingly.

So, so I kind of had a little look at some that I do know Davina McCall. I would know that she's absolute advocate of therapy and an advocate of going back to it in different times of your life to work out different things. I know when she split with her husband, she wanted to work out how to navigate that for herself, for her kids, because they've been together a long time, things like that.

But also, like, the actress Zendaya, who I know my daughter's big into, she's a huge advocate for therapy. And almost the way that she talks about it, it's like, of course I go to, of course I go to therapy. Anybody who can possess that financial means. Then they should do it. It's a beautiful thing.

There's nothing wrong with working on yourselves with somebody who can help you, who can talk to you. It's not just your mom or a mate and who has no bias. So that, it's really cool. Olly Alexander. If you know him as a singer, but I know him not just from kind of years and years front man, but knowing from "It's a sin", which if you have not seen it, it's absolutely outstanding.

Please go and watch it. He was saying, anybody who isn't straight will tell you that when you don't fit in, it can be quite a traumatic experience. And so, he spent the last few years really going to therapy, working on getting better support, and, he's He said he did it with the NHS. He's done it privately, that it just really, really helped him.

There's quite a few people, Alex Scott. Alex Scott, who is massive in the world of women's football. I follow her. She's she is amazing. She said that that helped her recognize, other people have support for her. And when you're in the public eye, particularly in the position that she's in, quite often, there's lots of negative situations.

And actually, the impact of receiving professional help gave her such a positive outlook. So, there's lots of celebs who are coming out. And I, I just, obviously it's not a stigma for me. I've had therapy its part of. working as a therapist is that you have to have your own therapy. I have monthly supervision.

So, I have an hour and a half every single month. And sometimes more if I'm busy. And that is to look at my client case, make sure I'm working to the best of my ability, make sure that, I've got my client's best interest, make sure I've not missed anything, but also to work through stuff that might pop up or might be triggered by a client.

So of course, I'm an advocate because I am a therapist. Of course, I will be an advocate, but it's really lovely to hear these celebs influences coming out and talking to kids and saying how important it is for them and for them to be the best that they can be to get help. So, what I thought I'd kind of, after having that, A little look at those is I, I kind of thought I would talk to you about the kind of things people come to me, particularly students, younger, older students come to me, the kind of issues they, present with, and sometimes the kind of issues that might come up.

So, even though it might not be a presenting problem, it might after a few sessions come up and we find out. So, give you an example off the top of my head. One of the things that quite often come up like Tom is what's next element of, they've been supported all the way through school, even sometimes then to sixth form, then to university.

That university is amazing. It's freedom. It's, hard work for the work. They are suddenly responsible, especially if they live away from home, there is that responsibility of self-care and not somebody going. Have you washed your hair today? it's that the responsibility lies on them.

What are they eating? Are they eating enough? Are they getting the right nutrients? I know we joke about students having pot noodles, things like that, but actually looking at that because self-care is a component of resilience. And so quite often we'll get something like that where they're really worried about the pressures of uni.

So, we can, that's something that often I will be get called in to work with that student for. Then, after, kind of afterwards as well, around, what is next this is it

now, I've got to be a grown up and the responsibility, the 9 to 5 kind of thing, what am I going to do? Like, I don't actually know, I've done a degree in this and I don't actually know what to do now.

So, they're the kind of things. Other things will be sometimes around, where do they fit in? Particularly if it's a blended family. Sometimes it can be that, mom and dad have separated absolutely the best thing for them and for that child. But then mom has also got, a new partner, maybe a new sibling.

Dad might, have married a new partner and they've got children. So, this one child is then between two houses and the only one that is not connected. Does that make sense? And actually, it's really important sometimes that we look at how they fit in, where do they fit in, how do they feel special.

So, stuff like that, divorce, separation, things like that. Emotional regulation. Younger kids, it's a lot around not being able to manage their emotions. Lots of anger issues, lots of Meltdowns where they just don't know how to manage and sometimes if parents have got more than one child and one child has managed it really easily and they're not, sometimes parents need a little bit of support, like it worked for this, but it's not working for this one.

How do I manage that? So that's where I step in. So, I'll do some work with the children, but then I'll also do some work with the parents as well to help just manage that. Because, one of my things is, if they gave you, when you have a baby, if they gave you a book on how to raise that child, if you have another child, they have to give you another book.

Because kids are different. Absolutely, they are different. And we can't raise them all the same. It just doesn't work that way. Another kind of aspect is sometimes is recognizing that some behavior that we have in children is not the run of the mill or not what they've seen and actually starting to recognize neurodivergent traits in children is something that parents struggle with and some particularly if the parent has not recognized those kind of traits in themselves, or they do recognize it, but they don't realize that is because, maybe they've got showing ADHD, ADHD, ADD traits or autistic traits, and they recognize the traits in the child, but they don't actually recognize that that might be because they are neurodivergent.

Or that the parent themselves are neurodivergent. So, it's things like this that I have all the time come to me. Now, university students, what I will say, and actually I

was talking to a mum the other day, and because I do... Quite a bit of work with students who have lived abroad, particularly in Abu Dhabi, because I lived in Abu Dhabi for a while, they come to the UK because parents are usually British, they come to the UK to study at uni, but parents might still be in Abu Dhabi working and things.

One of the mums said to me the other day. Ashley, do what it's like having an extra pair of eyes on your child, even though I text every day, I'm not having those in-depth conversations because they don't always want to open up and just knowing that you're there and keeping that extra pair of eyes.

And if there was anything wrong or any worry, you would be in touch and having that check in, constantly. Really, really helps. And so, you know, things like that. So, the way I usually work is if it is a primary kid, quite often I'll go into the school if they're local and did have a little boy up in Scotland and we did it on zoom and he was just brilliant.

We had such good fun over zoom because I had to get more creative to some of the work that we did. So, but we did have a really, really good fun. So, the way I work is if it's local, I'll go into the primary school. If not, we'll kind of do it on Zoom. But then after a few sessions, I always have a parent session as well, how to support your child, how to support that parent.

Like that's a lot of my job is some is a little bit of education, some is a little bit of awareness, but actually giving them tools and strategies to help with that child and the child's behavior. Because, every behavior that we display is to fulfil a need and that doesn't matter if you're five or fifty, it is to display a need that you have and actually we, we need to be able to fulfil that for the behavior to then stop or calm down.

I work with high schoolers and six farmers quite a lot on zoom because that's easier. They like that modality, they like this method of working. So, I do a lot with them and we work through and the teens are just amazing. Absolutely amazing. And I, I get kind of everything from identity to how do I You know, moms and dads might come to me and say, I'm not quite sure they're really struggling with anxiety and things like that.

So that's how they, you know, that is the, what we call the presenting issue. However, behind it could be that they're, they're not quite sure how to break it to

mom and dad, that they are non-binary. It could be that they're anxious because... , they've had a lot of hassle on Instagram and again, they don't want to share that with mom and dad.

It could be that they're self-harming, so there's a real breadth to what often can be behind anxiety for them. , that's what mom and dad are seeing. But actually, when we dig down, it can be different. Can be substance misuse, a lot of uni students quite often turn to substances because yeah, they're having a good time, but actually it's a way of avoiding , some of the issues that are coming up for them.

And so, my, my whole. ethos, I guess, is to meet that student, no matter their age, where they're at, provide a listening ear, provide a space where they feel safe and trusted, and they have a trust in me, and then also to be challenging. But to give them tools to, help them navigate this very difficult life particularly in times of social media.

So, I guess with Mental Health Awareness Day, I've talked about self-care on the podcast, but actually one of the things I really want to emphasize is if your car is broke and you're not mechanic, you take it to the garage and None of us are broke. We all just need some, sometimes, some professional support to help us.

And so, if your child is struggling, there's a real... Bravery and a real strength in reaching out and going, can you help? And I'm not just talking about me. I'm talking about whether you sign up for a course, you read a book, you approach a therapist, but if you're struggling as a parent and you want to know your child better and you want them to be the best, digging down and getting that strength to reach out and say, I need help is amazing and you will often not look back because that's what we're here for.

You know, that's what we, there is therapists around the world that do this. And I actually had a conversation this morning.

I met, randomly met a dad of a younger client of mine and he said, oh, have you got a day off? And I said, no, no. I said, I've just got an hour off. So, I thought I'd have a little walk and just chill out a little bit. And then, come back to work. And he said, oh, you look very chill considering. Like you, you, you've got, that's why I thought you had a day off and I said, no, because , my job is, I'm not saying it's always easy, but it, it's not just a job.

Anybody who comes into therapy more often than not come to therapy because of the love they have for kids for the want to be able to make this world a better place and give those kids the tools and strategies to help them in life. And so, it doesn't always feel like work, So I'm very lucky in that and there are lots and lots of therapists out there that feel the same as me. Always go with your gut instinct.

Have a look at the BACP website, which is the British Association of Counselling and Psychotherapists And just on that note Counselling is Therapy. I'm a psychotherapist, which means I have a psychology background. That's why you hear me talk about brains, how the brains work, behavior, things like that, but it's still a therapist as well.

So, they've done kind of extra training. Yeah, have a look on BACP website for a therapist near you and look at what they specialize in. Go with your guts, go with that instinct of you are the right person or you're not the right person for me and my family and my child. So, with that, with that, I'm going to end it here and just say to you, take care of yourselves, take care of each other.

Particularly in this week where we have mental health awareness day, do something nice for yourself, just like me going for a walk today. Any questions, comment under here, whether it's YouTube, podcast, Spotify, or email me at Ashley@theresilientkid.co.uk. And just as a little side note, if you want to do what I do, drop me a line.

I'd love to have a chat with you. Lots of love for now.