

10:00:09:10 - 10:00:18:18

Sarah

Welcome to Braaaains, a podcast exploring the inner workings of our brains, mental health, and disabilities, and how film and television portray them. Hosted by me, film and television editor Sarah Taylor.

10:00:18:18 - 10:00:37:13

Heather

And by me, writer-director Heather Taylor. Before we begin, we want to acknowledge the lands from which we recorded this podcast and from where you were listening are part of territories that have long served as a gathering place for diverse indigenous peoples. And we are thankful as guests on this land to be able to live, work, and gather here together.

10:00:37:14 - 10:00:41:15

Heather

We continue to learn about the history that came before us and encourage you to do the same.

10:00:41:17 - 10:00:54:05

Sarah

This is episode two of our three-part series You're Not Alone Navigating Life with Mental Illness, which we created for Mental Illness Awareness Week 2023. It explores mental illness and the barriers that can block your journey to good mental health.

10:00:54:08 - 10:01:04:04

Heather

Today's episode is about the journey to diagnosis with our guest, Dr. Lily Le, a registered psychologist and director of clinical innovation at the Mental Health Tech Company, DiveThru.

10:01:04:07 - 10:01:18:10

Sarah

Lily joins us to discuss how to take the next steps when you need help with your mental illness or looking to improve your mental health. We also get advice on what to do when it's difficult to see a therapist due to affordability or long wait times and the importance of having a support system in place.

10:01:18:17 - 10:01:37:05

Heather

Lastly, we talk about how the diagnosis and therapy experience is represented on film and television. A quick reminder to our listeners that this interview should not be taken as medical advice, and it is for informational purposes only because everyone's brain is different. Please consult your healthcare professional if you have any questions. And now, Lily.

10:01:40:09 - 10:01:42:19

Sarah

Lily, welcome to Braaaains.

10:01:43:05 - 10:01:45:04

Lily

Thank you, Sarah. Delighted to be here.

10:01:45:10 - 10:01:49:03

Sarah

First, we want to ask you to tell us a little bit about yourself and the work that you do.

10:01:49:04 - 10:02:13:14

Lily

I'm a second-generation Vietnamese Canadian, born and raised in Edmonton, Alberta. I'm a registered psychologist. I did my Ph.D. in counseling psychology at the University of Alberta. And then right now, I'm the director of clinical innovation at DiveThru which is a mental health tech startup. So we offer therapy community through workshops and mental health events, self-care resources through app.

10:02:13:18 - 10:02:25:12

Lily

And I oversee the clinical side of the company bringing that clinical lens as we roll out our products and our processes. And it's been a rollercoaster, but a lot of fun and excitement.

10:02:25:20 - 10:02:28:20

Heather

I love that that intersection of tech and mental health.

10:02:29:01 - 10:02:34:02

Lily

I know I didn't even realize it was a thing and when I learned it was a thing, I'm like, Oh yeah, I'm in the right space.

10:02:35:22 - 10:02:37:22

Sarah

We're glad you're here. Yes.

10:02:38:04 - 10:02:50:12

Heather

Today we are going to be talking about the journey to diagnosis and all the things in between. And so first question really is like, how do you know when it's time to talk to someone about mental health issues?

10:02:50:16 - 10:03:20:16

Lily

I think on the maybe more severe side of the spectrum, if you're really, really struggling with your mental health, so maybe your symptoms are interfering with your everyday life, that could be something like feeling really low, having a hard time with your health care. Maybe you have thoughts of hurting yourself or harming yourself. You have worries or thoughts that are hard to kind of control, and they prevent you from doing things that you want, that you're experiencing symptoms like that.

10:03:20:16 - 10:03:43:14

Lily

Then perhaps that's a good time to reach out and sometimes you might not know you need that. But a good sign is also if there are people in your life who are concerned about you, that could be a good to as well. And then I'd also like to say you don't really have to be like really, really, really struggling to seek out mental health support.

10:03:43:19 - 10:04:07:22

Lily

And you might be functioning fine. You know, your typical person. You go to work, your family, you do typical things, but maybe there's something that bothers you and you want to work on it. So usually when people ask me, how do I know if I should go to counseling, usually I say, if you have some sort of mental health related goal that you want to work on, then you can reach out for help because you have something you're working towards.

10:04:08:08 - 10:04:22:12

Lily

And then lastly, I think therapy can also be about prevention and maintenance. It's not typically what we see or what we think of when we think of working on your mental health. But some people go like myself, actually, I will go kind of for a tune up.

10:04:24:10 - 10:04:29:10

Speaker 4

That's what I call it. I don't know. I love clinical language, but you know, you do.

10:04:29:10 - 10:04:46:18

Lily

A lot of work on yourself that you want to keep that going. And sometimes it's natural to revise that old pattern. Things will happen in our life and we want to explore that again. So it really depends. It really depends on what stage you're in now.

10:04:46:20 - 10:05:04:00

Sarah

There's lots of things that we can think about, like who do you go to? How do you take that first

step? What are the barriers like? There's so many things and so many questions, so many, so many answers. So who do you go to when you start to think, Maybe I do want to explore this therapy saying.

10:05:04:00 - 10:05:21:05

Lily

Yeah, it can be really overwhelming, right? I think that's part of the experience people have is like, I don't know where to look, I don't know who to talk to. I think if you think you need professional help, there are a bunch of different routes. If you want to explore medication, talk to your physician who will refer you to it.

10:05:21:05 - 10:05:46:06

Lily

Like higher trust. If you're open to doing counseling, you can look for a psychologist or a mental health therapist in your community. If you're not sure where to look, Google go on something like Psychology Today, which has a big database. Or you can always ask your physician. Usually with health professionals, we I mean, our goal is try to support our clients and our patients so we know people in the community.

10:05:46:06 - 10:05:50:18

Lily

And if your physician knows other people, they can offer you.

10:05:51:03 - 10:06:04:19

Heather

Mhm. Yeah. I know my friend recommended a place for me, She went to a clinic so they would you talk to them and they would figure out which is the best psychologist to talk to you. So it wasn't, we wouldn't have the same one. But she's like, you should go there because I would be a little weird, but she's like, You can go there.

10:06:04:19 - 10:06:25:19

Heather

But it was also because it was more affordable than maybe some other choices. So, you know what? Before we started the podcast, I reached out to a few people and said what questions you like to ask? And the biggest question was, what do you do when there isn't a therapist or a doctor's appointment available? What can you do if you can't afford talking to someone?

10:06:27:08 - 10:06:49:22

Lily

That is a big barrier. I think first and foremost, if you're wanting to see someone and there is a waitlist, the first thing you do is get your name on that waitlist and then you can kind of do the self-guided piece, I would say explore different self-guided resources. So that could be something like finding an app related to the issue you want to work on.

10:06:50:03 - 10:07:15:08

Lily

There are tons of great apps. Some of them are free and they have like articles and exercises, even a community aspect where you connect with other people who are going through something similar. There's also opportunities for peer support. The peer support is when a peer, so someone with lived experience, they've undergone some peer support, counseling, training. They can provide support and guidance.

10:07:16:08 - 10:07:25:02

Lily

Oftentimes these are free or pay pay what you can model. A lot of people don't know about them, but peer support groups exist.

10:07:25:02 - 10:07:27:01

Speaker 4

Yeah, I didn't know about it. I was like, Oh.

10:07:27:10 - 10:07:29:16

Sarah

Maybe this is something we should investigate.

10:07:29:18 - 10:07:33:16

Speaker 4

Wait a minute. I did do that before. Yeah, people don't.

10:07:33:16 - 10:07:57:21

Lily

Really know about it because it's Yeah, you know, you know about going to a psychiatrist or psychologist, but peer support can be so great. So I know universities will have peer support, they'll be like parent groups, there'll be different organizations that offer peer support related to a certain topic, or they have like a drop in. And then there's also apps where you can, you know, pay a subscription and then you have peer support online.

10:07:58:00 - 10:08:20:15

Lily

So they exist. You just have to look for them. And then I say another thing you could do is to do some like research or learning on your own if that fits for you. Find books and articles about what you might be experiencing and do some of your own psycho educational learning. So I would just say ensure they're legit resources.

10:08:21:00 - 10:08:24:05

Lily

Don't rely on your Tik Tok as your only.

10:08:24:05 - 10:08:24:23

Speaker 4

Mental health.

10:08:25:19 - 10:08:34:17

Lily

Information. Make sure it's written by a mental health professional. But that helps some people. And then some people. It's like too overwhelming. Or maybe it's not helpful.

10:08:35:00 - 10:08:46:04

Sarah

Yeah, I think that's a really important thing to mention at this time in our social media world where there's a lot of Tik Tok therapists out there that maybe aren't actually therapists.

10:08:47:05 - 10:09:10:04

Lily

Oh yeah, it's so true. And it might be helpful for people to see those folks because, you know, they can relate to someone. They don't feel alone. There could be benefit in that. But it's also good to have research back and data and information from people who are licensed clinicians. So that you're not misguided and there might not be harm done.

10:09:10:10 - 10:09:17:14

Heather

Are there other barriers that people have that could prevent them from seeking help when they've when they need mental health care?

10:09:17:16 - 10:09:22:07

Lily

Yeah, I think the barriers list is very long. You could probably do a whole episode.

10:09:22:14 - 10:09:22:19

Speaker 4

Just.

10:09:22:19 - 10:09:51:05

Lily

Talking about barriers than what we do. I think the first thing is stigma. There's still a lot of shame around talking about mental health, and then when you work up the courage to overcome that, then it's where do I go to look for someone and what do I look for? So the Psychology Today, for instance, that I reference, it's great because there's tons of therapists, but also but also the downfall is there are tons.

10:09:51:05 - 10:09:51:22

Speaker 4

Yeah, there.

10:09:53:16 - 10:10:15:18

Lily

So unless you're someone who's like a counseling veteran and you know what you like and what to look for the average person, they're not going to know what therapy therapeutic approach they're looking for and we don't expect them to know. So then people are spending this time kind of sifting through profiles and they get overwhelmed and they're not sure what's a good fit.

10:10:16:01 - 10:10:22:17

Lily

And then once they find someone, it's like, okay, does this person actually jive with me or are they actually.

10:10:22:17 - 10:10:23:11

Speaker 4

A good fit.

10:10:23:13 - 10:10:46:14

Lily

That the person on the phone, you kind of matched me up, kind of like Heather, what you were saying? Did they actually do a good job? And I want to keep seeing this person. Mm hmm. And then if it's a good fit and you decide to keep continuing the treatment, that's where we often run into costs as a barrier, because counseling, you know, to kind of get better, you need to keep working at it.

10:10:46:14 - 10:11:04:13

Lily

But a lot of folks get paid for it. And I dive through we often say we believe that mental health is a right, not a privilege. But unfortunately, we live in a world where mental health support is not covered. So some of the folks who are in the most need may not always be able to access the care.

10:11:04:13 - 10:11:27:07

Lily

And then just lastly, the barrier with that as well, refer folks out to free or low cost options. But unfortunately, these services have wait times like we talked about, or they offer a short term counseling model. MM You know, like 8 to 12 sessions or something like that because there's so many people they need to help. And that's not ideal either.

10:11:27:07 - 10:11:33:05

Lily

Because you've started this process, you're talking to someone and now you're kind of at the end and you need to be right.

10:11:33:06 - 10:11:34:16

Speaker 4

Yeah, yeah, I know.

10:11:34:16 - 10:11:52:14

Sarah

I've I was lucky is not the right word. I was fortunate. I don't know. I was able to use a service where it was free for those 8 to 12 sessions. But luckily the therapist I was assigned to or working with had her own private practice as well and offered me a sliding scale to continue to work with her.

10:11:52:19 - 10:11:53:13

Lily

Amazing.

10:11:53:20 - 10:12:03:23

Sarah

It was the best. And I. I worked with her for like ten years. Like she was amazing. So yeah, sometimes there's people out there that will help you out, which is really important. Yeah.

10:12:04:06 - 10:12:17:13

Heather

Exactly. And I think what's interesting is like when you go on Psychology Today, because I know when I went to my doctor and I said, Hey, I 100% have ADHD and I need to talk to someone about that specifically, they said, Great, go to Psychology Today.

10:12:17:16 - 10:12:20:07

Speaker 4

Find someone who thinks, but.

10:12:20:11 - 10:12:34:22

Heather

There's all these filters and stuff and you can look up, you know, people also if you want someone like if you're a person of color and want to speak to a person of color, like there is that filter as well. So you can really get a more refined approach to the people you're speaking to that you can feel.



10:12:34:22 - 10:12:46:18

Heather

I could have more similar lived experiences as you and I deliberately picked a younger psychologist and was even told by the centers like, Oh, don't you want this older, scary looking lady?

10:12:46:18 - 10:12:52:02

Speaker 4

Instead of, No, she might have been lovely. Heather That's a little scary to me.

10:12:52:02 - 10:12:56:04

Heather

And I was like, No, I want the really young person who will be thinking differently about.

10:12:56:11 - 10:12:57:10

Lily

ADHD.

10:12:58:09 - 10:13:12:08

Heather

Because to me I felt like it was so stigmatized in women for so long. And I feel like there's archaic thinking around it that I really wanted someone that I knew would have been in school more recently. And that was a choice that I made.

10:13:12:08 - 10:13:32:16

Lily

I love that you knew that for yourself, Heather, that you like reflected on what you wanted, and then you kind of went for it despite other people making that suggestion or call for you. Because ultimately, I think at the end of the day, we we kind of know ourselves. And if there's something that says, hey, this is important for me, then yeah, you go for the young, not scary looking therapist that helped.

10:13:32:16 - 10:13:55:09

Heather

So, okay, I know you work at Dive Through and one of the things that you have is access to technology. And I know there are all these apps now and there's all these different ways that people can find health care. So how has technology made the process of getting help easier, and what have you done in your practice to work to reduce these barriers?

10:13:55:16 - 10:14:23:16

Lily

Technology definitely has made getting mental health help way more accessible, and I think partly the positive thing that came out of COVID was tell a psychology or virtual sampling

became the norm. Yeah, like before, no one would really do it. We were all kind of scared, but COVID kind of forced everyone to explore and innovate and just become comfortable with doing psychology.

10:14:24:02 - 10:14:49:06

Lily

And so I think as a result of that, a lot of therapists shifted and pivoted. A lot of mental health care companies were developed, and now people are much more open to receiving care online or through texting or email or whatever than they were ten years ago. So you can get support in the comfort of your own home.

10:14:49:12 - 10:15:22:09

Lily

It's great for folks who are really anxious and they don't want to leave and they wouldn't try therapy otherwise. The research is showing that. Tell us more. College is just as effective as in-person counseling, so definitely made it more accessible. And then I think the second thing to that is that it provided more stepped care options. So Step carries this idea of, you know, you kind of prioritize people based on where they score or where they are presenting, if they're severe or if they're really needing help.

10:15:22:10 - 10:15:51:11

Lily

And maybe they should be seeing a mental health professional. But if they're just, you know, maybe not struggling as much, but could benefit from things like self-guided resources, journaling, peer support, there's that option too. So it's provided a lot more resources for people who are kind of maybe don't need therapy, but just want to work on themselves on their own to tackle the stigma piece, we try to make our brand as relatable as possible.

10:15:51:11 - 10:15:57:17

Lily

So what I hate is like when there is so much clinical speak.

10:15:58:19 - 10:15:59:12

Speaker 4

In, you know.

10:15:59:13 - 10:16:30:03

Lily

Websites and talking to people. Because when you are in front of a client and you're talking to them in clinical language, they're just like, what? Like they don't get it. So we try to reduce jargon as much as possible. We try to tackle stigma by you know, openly talking about mental health coming from lived experience. We try to tackle how difficult it is to find a therapist and match with a therapist by offering like a matching survey.

10:16:30:14 - 10:16:54:16

Lily

So kind of similar to what Heather was talking about with the filters, except we make it like a very easy form to you go. You fill up the questions five minute and then it gives you your top three matches. And then from there you can view bio, you can watch therapist videos and you can still choose by yourself, but it helps narrow that pool so you're not surfing the web.

10:16:55:04 - 10:17:24:12

Lily

And then to meet people where they're at, we offer a variety of options, like those self-guided resources, you know, one off workshops if they're to just to dip their toe in and see what this burnout workshop is like before committing, then they can do that. And then lastly, the financial barrier that is the most challenging one. I think when we first launched, we got a lot of people jamming up and emailing us, being like, I want to take this step, but I can't financially.

10:17:24:12 - 10:17:54:14

Lily

And that's really challenging. So we've recently launched our reduced rate program so that I guess based on the number of dependent you have and your income, you can qualify for this program and get a reduced rate for counseling. And it's tough because we recognize that even the reduced rate might be out of reach for some folks, but we kind of have to balance that and then compensating the clinicians for their time to.

10:17:54:20 - 10:18:11:02

Lily

MM So the financial piece is a big challenge that I think our way of trying to navigate it. And then if people can't afford it, then we make sure we refer them appropriately with a list of free or sliding scale services.

10:18:11:06 - 10:18:18:00

Sarah

What's the importance of having a support system and who can that be and how can those people in your life help you?

10:18:18:02 - 10:18:48:21

Lily

It's so important to have a support system. I think most people know that this is not rocket science, but having people in our life who are supportive of our goals or can keep us accountable can be helpful for outcomes. And support systems range for everyone. But I think anyone you can feel safe with. Yes, your family and friends, but then also people in your community like a teacher, a coach, colleagues, I mean your church groups or your gaming community.

10:18:49:07 - 10:19:10:11

Lily

There are no limits. I think as long as you feel safe, you can share with them, you can trust them and they got your back. And then how can they support you? I think if you're open to it, you can share your mental health goals with your support system and you might ask them to be involved with it or you might just share with them so they are aware of it.

10:19:10:11 - 10:19:24:02

Lily

So an example of this might be someone who's trying really hard to work on getting better boundaries and not overworking. They might let their I mean, I know I was like.

10:19:25:02 - 10:19:26:17

Speaker 4

What are you talking about? I love it.

10:19:27:05 - 10:19:29:13

Sarah

There's this exact conversation I had with my support system.

10:19:29:13 - 10:19:38:06

Speaker 4

What are you bugging our house? Maybe? Yeah, it's a common one.

10:19:38:06 - 10:20:00:20

Lily

I think we are all like we all experience it to some extent, right? Some of us. More than others. But I'm coming up with this example because I know people can identify with it. I think in all of us, apparently so. Yeah. It's like you're trying to work on better boundary and and not overwork. Then you might do something like and this, I've done this.

10:20:00:23 - 10:20:29:11

Lily

You tell your coworker, Hey, I'm going to start taking my full lunch break from now on. So you join me in that. You know, I had a colleague where we would call each other out where we'd be like, It is noon. You are still on computer. What's going on? Let's go for a coffee break. Or maybe you tell your partner and they can flag it for you when they notice that you're bringing work home again or you're, you know, obsessing about work at home or something like that.

10:20:29:11 - 10:20:38:11

Lily

So you can choose the level of which you want to invite your support system in to your goals.

And then they can kind of help you with it. Right?

10:20:38:20 - 10:20:54:12

Sarah

I have a group of friends I chat with about all sorts of things and this is one of my big goals was like trying to, you know, do a little less work. And then I would tell them every time I'd get a new opportunity at work. I mean, there's this project, they're coming and then they they'd always ask, Is your plate full already?

10:20:54:15 - 10:21:01:16

Sarah

Do you think you need to take another project like, Thank you for reminding me. So yeah, it's very helpful. Very, very helpful.

10:21:01:19 - 10:21:23:16

Heather

When I knew, when I knew in my heart and from like looking at other people's experiences that I truly had ADHD off the charts. I really wanted to get a diagnosis. And I know there's other reasons why you want to get a diagnosis. So, you know, when should you look at going to someone to ask specifically what they think is happening and to kind of put a name on it?

10:21:23:20 - 10:21:57:13

Lily

I think the process really varies from person to person. So some people might know, like you, like I have this thing and I need someone just to say what I already know. And then other people might not think about the diagnosis or even have an idea of what's going on for them. So it can really vary. Some folks might go see their psychiatrist or be at a counseling session with their psychologist, and then based on what the professionals observe and assess, they can give you a diagnosis.

10:21:58:04 - 10:22:21:15

Lily

And then I'll just give some general information on diagnostic process. So if you're seeing your psychologist and even though you're not there to be like, hey, I want a diagnosis, they might possibly provide you a diagnosis if it is fitting with your treatment. And for psychologists, we use something called the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders, or the DSM for short.

10:22:22:01 - 10:22:42:17

Lily

So it provides a bunch of criteria. Heather, I wonder if you might have Googled this when you were searching ADHD symptoms and being like, check, check, check, check, check. A lot of people will do that when they think they have a diagnosis. Oh, go online. They'll go and they'll

see the criteria. But with a psychologist, they won't just use that criteria.

10:22:43:01 - 10:23:20:11

Lily

They'll take that criteria, but then they'll also use it alongside their clinical judgment. So noticing what they notice about you, assessing, talking with you, and then using that to form a diagnosis, and then some people might receive diagnosis through a formal assessment, which I think. Heather That's probably what you had is yeah, yeah. I think especially for ADHD, usually people come in for a formal assessment, so a formal assessment that usually involves the client visiting an assessment psychologist with a question they're hoping to figure it out.

10:23:20:23 - 10:23:25:01

Lily

It could be like Heathers, it could be like, do I have ADHD.

10:23:25:17 - 10:23:28:15

Speaker 4

Or or it could just be.

10:23:28:15 - 10:23:52:14

Lily

Something like, Why am I having a hard time concentrating? And then it's the job of the assessor to figure out what the answer is. And it might lead to something like an ADHD diagnosis, or it could point to something totally different. So they'll kind of administer score, interpret the psychological test, and then based on that form, an opinion about a diagnosis.

10:23:52:15 - 10:24:04:00

Lily

Sometimes there is no diagnosis. It could just say they experience these symptoms. Yeah. And then they write a report, they review with the client, sometimes the family, and then provide next steps for treatment.

10:24:04:03 - 10:24:24:08

Heather

Sometimes it's important to get a diagnosis because if you want to get, for instance, a friend of mine got a late diagnosis of autism when she was 17 and then couldn't get the educational help because she didn't have a diagnosis earlier. She could have had help with school. I think there's work accommodations. There's other accommodations you can get, but only with an official diagnosis.

10:24:24:15 - 10:24:27:06

Heather

So I think sometimes that can be helpful.

10:24:27:12 - 10:24:46:09

Lily

Yeah, I think you're totally right. It can be really helpful for some people, especially what you were saying about like an early diagnosis, because the earlier you catch it, I mean, just I guess like you even equate it to like a physical diagnosis the earlier, you know, about something and have an answer for something, then the earlier you can start working on it.

10:24:46:12 - 10:25:15:18

Lily

So some people want that diagnosis and they want to know sooner and it can help them with, you know, accommodations, insurance companies, employment programs and that sort of thing. And then I think the benefit of getting a diagnosis for some folks is that validation. Like for you, it's like, yes, I have this thing that I hypothesized and knew all along and now someone is basically saying, you're right, but in clinical language.

10:25:16:00 - 10:25:35:08

Lily

And that can be really powerful to have that mirrored back and to have people be like, I see you, there's a reason why you're experiencing what you're experiencing, and now it's pointing you to the direction of treatment that you know what to do to help your experience. And then on the other hand, some people might not want a diagnosis.

10:25:35:17 - 10:26:03:18

Lily

Some people worry about that label being put in a box. Mm hmm. It's like, Oh, now I am this thing that can be kind of an identity shift for them. And then it can be especially hard if they don't feel like it fit. So someone might have a good experience where they're like, Yes, that's me. But if an assessor comes back and they're like, This is what you have, and they're like, I don't agree with that, then it can kind of feel a little bit off.

10:26:03:18 - 10:26:24:15

Lily

So yeah, usually when you get an assessment done, the job of the assessor is to provide you with feedback to talk about the results and the check in with you to be like, How does this fit for you? And if it doesn't, then you talk about it or they try to teach you about it, or if they're really off, then maybe you're like, I don't agree with that, or maybe you want a second chance.

10:26:24:15 - 10:26:32:16

Lily

So it can be helpful for some people, but not as helpful for others. I just think reflect for yourself. If it's important for you to go seek it out.

10:26:32:20 - 10:26:59:05

Heather

I think about myself. I've talked about this before, but I went through life being in some cases essentially kind of misdiagnosed because I didn't know what to tell people, because what I was experiencing was just how I lived life. And so when I realized I'm checking too many boxes for ADHD, I prepared for my appointment with a master list of everything that was going on and then even moving forward any time I talked to him.

10:26:59:05 - 10:27:16:03

Heather

So every time something happened, I wrote it down so that when I went to my psychiatrist, I could say these things are happening. And I also researched this. So I think I have this as in like before my period, I was having I think I needed more medication because my dopamine was dropping and then they're like 100%. That's the thing.

10:27:16:10 - 10:27:35:17

Heather

We will help you with that. But I felt like if I didn't advocate for myself or be prepared in this way, I wouldn't have gotten the assistance that really did help me. So how do I advocate for myself? Like, how do I get ready for my appointments so that I'm getting the full scale of the help that I need?

10:27:35:23 - 10:27:46:03

Sarah

And also, how do people do that who aren't great at researching the Internet or researching things like Heather has that, you know, she's expertise in researching. So for somebody who doesn't have that skill.

10:27:46:12 - 10:28:08:20

Lily

Yeah, I think you can be like that one person or like. Heather, you know, I'm the same way. Heather We are preparers and I think we are maybe anxious if we don't. So maybe, you know, if you fall into that category, then yes, go wild, look up all the things, be ready, have that agenda planned if that's what you feel like you need.

10:28:09:12 - 10:28:35:08

Lily

But you definitely don't have to do it on the psychologist's or the psychiatrist or the professional to guide you through that process. You don't have to have all the answers to figure it out. I think what I tell folks is just come ready to talk about yourself and to be open about that. If you want to take some time to reflect on what you're going through.

10:28:35:08 - 10:28:58:01



Lily

If you're someone who likes to write that down, you can but just come read, come ready to talk about yourself. Come with questions if you can come up with them beforehand. That time is so limited and we want you to be able to ask your questions and get them all in. I think we've all been there where we get really nervous, right?

10:28:58:01 - 10:29:09:00

Lily

You know, you've been waiting for a long time. You're there, you're terrified. You don't know what to expect. You're spilling out your deepest, darkest secrets to someone you haven't met.

10:29:09:00 - 10:29:11:00

Speaker 4

Some of them are very scary looking.

10:29:12:07 - 10:29:32:13

Lily

And we we kind of Blanco And then after you leave, I wish I would have asked them that. So your parents much as you need to but I would say come ready to talk about yourself. Come with questions. If you're not sure what to expect or how to prepare, you can ask them, like the administrative people, the office people.

10:29:32:13 - 10:29:57:00

Lily

They're there to help you. We want people to feel as supported as possible, and if they didn't share out this is what we need from you, then just say, Hey, what do you need me to do? Are there forms I can fill out? And don't be afraid to ask questions either. Like that's how you advocate for yourself is speak up for yourself like this is your life and you know the professional wants to help you.

10:29:57:00 - 10:30:05:14

Lily

And sometimes we don't know how to do that. If you like to keep stuff back or you're not asking questions or sharing. So.

10:30:05:16 - 10:30:29:02

Heather

MM Yeah. One thing that I remember my therapist said that was really helpful for me because she's like to not retraumatize you, is that there's sometimes that I'm like, I don't know if I want to talk about this event again because every time you're with someone, you re retelling your story. And I think it was helpful. She's like, You don't have to tell the event, but can you talk about the feelings that you had or how it impacted you?

10:30:29:09 - 10:30:59:13

Heather

And to me that was really helpful because I felt like instead of just not saying anything at all, I could say, Hey, I had this really bad event that made me feel scared or feel I couldn't trust anybody or like things like that. So I think in those moments where you might not want to disclose yet some things that may have happened in your past or happened even in your present, that diving into the feelings of it and like what it what it kind of brought up in you, I think can be just as helpful if you don't feel comfortable talking about it yet.

10:30:59:18 - 10:31:28:16

Lily

And I think that brings up a good point to Heather of like sometimes it's good to just say out loud, you know, the struggle you're having. So you're not sharing this story, but you're at least communicating with your therapist. Hey, I'm not sharing this story because of X, Y, or Z. And that's really powerful because that you sharing like that's you setting a boundary without knowing it and saying, hey, I'm not comfortable going here, but at least you're letting them know there's this thing here.

10:31:28:21 - 10:31:46:04

Lily

I don't want to show you it yet, but know that it's there. And then for us as clinicians, that's really helpful because now I'm noting in the back of my mind, okay, there's this thing here. We're not going to dive into it, but it's something that we could revisit or something that could play a role, and I'm going to keep it on the shelf if we ever go that route.

10:31:46:06 - 10:31:48:00

Lily

So yeah, that's great.

10:31:48:05 - 10:31:48:14

Speaker 4

Mm hmm.

10:31:48:20 - 10:32:01:04

Sarah

Well, since we talk about film and television, a lot on this here podcast, I'd love to hear if there is a film or TV show that you see best represents somebody going and getting help for their mental health.

10:32:01:08 - 10:32:24:05

Lily

Okay, I thought about this and it was really hard because I watch so much content that it is really hard to choose. But at the same time, I watch content, but it's not always related to mental

health. And if it is, sometimes I stay away from content that is mental health specific related, especially they're showing like therapy or getting help because sometimes not great.

10:32:24:18 - 10:32:26:19

Speaker 4

And I hear that I just.

10:32:27:05 - 10:32:28:12

Lily

You know, this right.

10:32:28:14 - 10:32:30:07

Speaker 4

Here, I'm like, I don't want to see.

10:32:30:07 - 10:32:38:20

Lily

Some kind of unethical practice or it's like a horror movie or like a thriller where it's always the psychologist that did it or they did something.

10:32:38:20 - 10:32:42:22

Speaker 4

So it is a lot of like, good point.

10:32:43:06 - 10:32:46:12

Heather

There is some people who really don't like their psychologist.

10:32:48:00 - 10:33:13:20

Lily

Yeah, there's just something apparently like mysterious about that, but they're always the one that's doing something. So anyways, the one thing that I just finished binge watching, like maybe a month ago, so it's been on my mind is never have I ever. And the process of getting mental health help on the show. So the show follows a South Asian teen, Davey.

10:33:14:08 - 10:33:38:18

Lily

It goes through her ups and downs of high school and it does show, but it's pretty realistic in terms of the mental health aspect of it and the therapy portion of it. I think there is this amazing therapeutic bond between Davey and her. I think she's a psychologist, but her name is Dr. Ryan on the show. And it's kind of funny because it's like a comedy and it's light right?

10:33:38:18 - 10:34:04:00

Lily

But it's it's also just very neat to kind of see what the mental health and therapeutic relationship can look like. And I knew I loved it because right off the hop, I think it demonstrates the stigma of mental health and therapy, especially in Asian families, because Davey's mom says something like, Oh, therapy for white people, but then like enrolled her to attend anyway after her dad dies.

10:34:04:19 - 10:34:30:12

Lily

So I'm like, Oh my God, that is so, so, so funny. I totally hear my mom saying that. And then what I really like about it is they have a really good relationship. The therapist, you know, she engages in Gen Z slang. She's pretty relatable. She challenge her, she validates her feelings. She provides a lot of psycho ed on her experience and helps her process the loss of her father.

10:34:30:18 - 10:34:47:15

Lily

She's funny. She called her out on her behalf, but she's still professional. And I think I like her because I like I like to think I practice very similarly where I'm like pretty laid back. But I will also call you out on your voice if I need to, in like a funny way that people would be.

10:34:47:15 - 10:34:48:16

Speaker 4

Like, I know.

10:34:50:06 - 10:35:15:02

Lily

And yeah, but I think it's really great because and Davey throughout the show, she's cracking jokes and it's really clear that she's herself and she's not on in therapy. And I think there's one episode where she's, she's crying, she's very vulnerable and it demonstrates the depth of this therapeutic relationship and that's just really beautiful because I think at the end of the day, it's like, doesn't matter what therapeutic approach.

10:35:15:02 - 10:35:44:01

Lily

You take that connection and feeling like you're comfortable with someone and you can just be your authentic self to share your most vulnerable self. That is really important. And we see up to 50% of outcomes is related to the therapeutic bond. And you see at the end of the season, I think the show is wrapped up now, but Davey leaks across the table and she hugs Dr. Ryan.

10:35:44:01 - 10:36:05:18

Lily

And I think it just goes to show like how strong their relationship is. And some therapist might be. Like I say, you know, they're really anti hugging clients. But I think, you know, based on the

show, it's very obvious that they had a strong bond and she helped her. That's the thing is, yeah, you feel safe with this person and are you progressing?

10:36:06:03 - 10:36:12:18

Lily

Think if the answers are yes, then you're in a good therapeutic relationship for the most part. Yeah.

10:36:12:20 - 10:36:13:08

Speaker 4

Oh, awesome.

10:36:13:09 - 10:36:17:20

Sarah

That's such a great example. I like forgot about Dr. Ryan. And then as you started talking, I was like.

10:36:18:04 - 10:36:19:19

Speaker 4

Dr. Ryan was one of my favorite characters.

10:36:19:19 - 10:36:23:01

Sarah

How could I forget about her? It's so funny. So, yeah.

10:36:23:02 - 10:36:24:20

Lily

Oh, she's so sassy.

10:36:24:22 - 10:36:25:17

Speaker 4

Yeah. Like.

10:36:26:05 - 10:36:49:09

Lily

And sometimes, like, that doesn't work with all clients, but I think some people know when they need to be pushed a little bit because if you're if you're comfortable all the time, like you're not really growing and when you're pushed a little bit out of your comfort zone, but in the direction of the goal that you want to work on, that's that's where growth happens and she challengers hurt quite a bit.

10:36:49:09 - 10:36:52:22

Lily

And we do see that growth throughout the trajectory of four seasons.

10:36:53:21 - 10:36:54:13

Sarah

I love that. I love.

10:36:54:13 - 10:37:07:11

Heather

It. There's the therapeutic relationship on Lucifer was probably one of my favorites because it was also really screwed up, but it was like a therapist who suddenly is literally doing therapy for Lucifer.

10:37:07:22 - 10:37:09:10

Sarah

Like I never watched the show, so.

10:37:09:17 - 10:37:13:01

Speaker 4

Oh, there's a show like, is it? Oh my God. It was on for six seasons.

10:37:13:01 - 10:37:14:15

Sarah

I've heard. I heard of it, but I just never saw it.

10:37:14:16 - 10:37:25:19

Heather

He's the actual Lucifer. And but people don't think he's really Lucifer. But a few people know and his therapist knows, and she's like, Yeah, you can't do like, he would do something. He's like, You can't do that.

10:37:26:13 - 10:37:27:08

Speaker 4

So the whole.

10:37:27:08 - 10:37:35:21

Heather

Episode was actually about him tackling issues that he had that he was addressing through therapy. That was literally every episode.

10:37:36:00 - 10:37:36:18

Sarah

I mean, it was like.

10:37:36:21 - 10:37:39:07

Heather

How does Lucifer, the King of Hell.

10:37:40:01 - 10:37:46:05

Speaker 4

Work through His father issues? It was amazing. Lucifer has a deformity.

10:37:46:08 - 10:37:49:01

Heather

Yeah, it's a procedural. So they do like he helps.

10:37:49:01 - 10:37:49:12

Speaker 4

This.

10:37:50:03 - 10:38:01:17

Heather

Cop solve crimes. And he, of course, can like, compel people, but he just like things. That's interesting. But it's really this man who is basically a man child who is just like having lots of sex and drinking and being wild.

10:38:02:00 - 10:38:04:12

Speaker 4

Learning how to get to.

10:38:04:12 - 10:38:16:02

Heather

Become a whole realized person and to find love and to get over his father issues and to reconnect with his family. And I'm like, so really six seasons of a man learning how to grow up.

10:38:16:19 - 10:38:22:10

Lily

What was the outcome like? Did he did he help Lucifer?

10:38:23:02 - 10:38:39:04

Heather

Yeah, it was it was a woman who ended up, like in the first episode. She's, you know, she sleeps with him because he's he compels her. He's like, What do you desire? And it's sleeping together. And she's like, I can't be your therapist now because we slept together. This is like breaking code. And he's like, But you're the only person I want to talk to, so.

10:38:39:09 - 10:38:40:14

Heather

And I'm the king of hell. So that's it.

10:38:40:14 - 10:38:44:18

Speaker 4

And she's like, Oh my God, this is like, very bad for everyone.

10:38:45:02 - 10:38:55:23

Heather

But it became this like, lovely relationship, but also somewhere where he always trusted her to talk about things that were really deeply bothering him. So like, yeah, and it did help him.

10:38:55:23 - 10:39:00:05

Lily

I didn't see the see, though. So many shows always have the therapist.

10:39:00:05 - 10:39:04:11

Speaker 4

Doing something wrong. Yes. Or breaking some type of ethical code.

10:39:04:11 - 10:39:05:21

Lily

Or they're the killer.

10:39:05:21 - 10:39:11:11

Heather

Right. But she did say, we can't do this anymore. And then he's like, But you're the only one I trust.

10:39:11:11 - 10:39:12:10

Sarah

He made her do it.

10:39:12:10 - 10:39:19:22

Heather

And then and then they're kind of like, Okay, then we're starting from square one. This is never and that never happened again. And then they just carry.

10:39:19:22 - 10:39:23:21

Sarah

Carried because she realized he was he was Lucifer. Well, I never want to sleep with you again.

10:39:24:12 - 10:39:24:23



Speaker 4

No, no.

10:39:24:23 - 10:39:27:01

Sarah

I like I'm sure he's an attractive man.

10:39:28:07 - 10:39:29:23

Speaker 4

He he basically like.

10:39:29:23 - 10:39:41:04

Heather

Shorter's devil eyes. And she's like, oh, because at first he's like, Oh, you're Lucifer, are you? And then like, having that conversation. And then he's like, No, no, I'm really Lucifer and then shows her his, like, Lucifer face. And she's like, Oh, you are a demon.

10:39:41:04 - 10:39:52:23

Speaker 4

So you're like, he basically blackmailed her for anyone listening. Yes. No, that you don't know. Yes and no. No. If you're having sexual relations and big ethical.

10:39:53:00 - 10:39:53:13

Lily

Boundary.

10:39:53:13 - 10:39:55:06

Speaker 4

Crossing. Yeah. Yes.

10:39:55:06 - 10:39:58:12

Heather

Okay. So I'm like, if you take out the first episode, all goes well.

10:39:58:20 - 10:40:09:18

Speaker 4

Yeah, I know that this is all TV, it's all fictional. It's literally Lucifer, like. Of course not. I don't know. I had to make that point.

10:40:10:10 - 10:40:15:18

Sarah

This is part of your being, making sure we don't draw those ethical lines. You got to keep us on just.

10:40:15:18 - 10:40:19:15

Speaker 4

To keep us on track. Lucifer, don't do that.

10:40:21:04 - 10:40:33:23

Sarah

Oh, my goodness. Okay, let's now, now that we have everybody in stitches, what kind of resources would you recommend our listeners to engage with if they are wanting to, you know, go through that journey to get diagnosis?

10:40:34:00 - 10:40:53:11

Lily

If they talk to your physician, look up a psychologist, you can do what Heather did. But you I've done talk to your your circle of people to get referrals. You can't see the same person because of conflict, but they can also point you to maybe a clinic that they really liked. And if you don't know, just give them a call.

10:40:53:18 - 10:41:17:05

Lily

The end of day, we just want to find a good fit for you. And if that means referring you out, then we'll do it. Some organizations have really helpful mental health info and resources, so I think this is mostly Canadians listening to this podcast, I'm assuming. So I'd say check something like CMA, J, Cam H, And then one really great resource is Canada Wide.

10:41:17:11 - 10:41:33:10

Lily

It's called Wellness Together Canada. They offer free virtual resources, peer support, counseling, and there are a host of different organizations across Canada that I think was born out of COVID. So check that out.

10:41:33:19 - 10:41:48:22

Heather

Yeah, and I think in the States there's also an a H, I think National Association of Mental Health, I believe, and there's a few others. So I think like and also if you are anywhere in the world, you can look at these Canadian resources and they'll still be helpful for you, except for the finding where.

10:41:48:22 - 10:41:49:21

Lily

People everywhere.

10:41:50:11 - 10:41:51:12

Heather

We are, people everywhere.

10:41:52:05 - 10:41:53:14

Lily

Canadians struggle screwed up.

10:41:53:14 - 10:41:57:06

Speaker 4

To any higher.

10:41:57:12 - 10:41:59:15

Sarah

Heather Stigma, Come on.

10:41:59:20 - 10:42:03:05

Heather

What I'm saying, the stigma is that Canadians are like, You guys are fine.

10:42:03:18 - 10:42:07:23

Lily

Yeah, the mental health is real. We all, we all experience some kind of struggle.

10:42:08:09 - 10:42:13:03

Speaker 4

Yes, that's what I mean. I'm not stigma. Just like we all screwed up. We all need help.

10:42:15:07 - 10:42:15:23

Sarah

Okay.

10:42:17:11 - 10:42:23:00

Heather

So to wrap everything up, where can people find out more about you and or follow you online?

10:42:23:04 - 10:42:43:14

Lily

Okay, so I have a lot of, like, social media anxiety, so I don't have any accounts, but you can find me on LinkedIn if you really want to add me, add Dr. Lily Lee. But otherwise you can learn about drive thru at drive thru dot com or follow our Instagram. Let's dive through or dive through. Why? E.g. if you're in Edmonton, that's our studio specific page.

10:42:43:19 - 10:42:56:08

Sarah

And I implore you all to implore you all to go look at the drive thru because the studio is beautiful. And if you're in Minton, it looks like a great place to go to therapy in my opinion. I've never been, but it's gorgeous.

10:42:56:08 - 10:43:15:12

Lily

And we're a free app, so you can download the app and check out the resources. We do have in-person therapy in Edmonton, but we're launching Virtual Alberta very shortly and then plans to expand across Canada virtually and in person at some point. So hopefully not too long.

10:43:15:16 - 10:43:17:06

Sarah

Amazing. Great. Well, that's.

10:43:17:11 - 10:43:17:19

Heather

Great.

10:43:18:00 - 10:43:21:02

Sarah

Thank you so much for taking the time to share all this great information with us.

10:43:21:02 - 10:43:22:19

Lily

And yeah, thanks for coming.

10:43:23:02 - 10:43:23:12

Heather

Thank you.

10:43:23:14 - 10:43:24:19

Lily

Thank you so much for having me.

10:43:28:01 - 10:43:36:00

Sarah

Thank you for listening to the second of our three-part special on navigating life with a mental illness. Please come back tomorrow for episode three on When and How to Disclose.

10:43:36:06 - 10:43:46:00

Heather

Brains is hosted and produced by Heather and Sara Taylor and mixed and mastered by Tony

Bowe. Our theme song is by our little brother Dipesh and our graphics were created by perpetual motion.

10:43:46:05 - 10:44:02:13

Sarah

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10:44:02:17 - 10:44:04:12

Heather

Until next time, I'm your host, Heather.

10:44:04:16 - 10:44:05:17

Sarah

And I'm your host, Sarah.

10:44:06:02 - 10:44:07:14

Bye!