

Therapy Chat Episode 319



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[00:00:00] **Laura Reagan:** Therapy chat podcast, episode 319.

[00:00:04] **Announcer:** This is the Therapy Chat podcast with Laura Reagan LCSW-C. The information shared in this podcast is not a substitute for seeking help from a licensed mental health professional. And now here's your host, Laura Reagan LCSW.

[00:00:34] **Laura Reagan:** Today's episode is sponsored by Trauma Therapist Network. Trauma Therapist Network is a platform for finding a trauma therapist, learning about trauma and understanding about how trauma shows up

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[00:00:57] **Laura Reagan:** Hi, welcome back to Therapy Chat. I'm your host, Laura Reagan. And today I'm bringing you a conversation that if you're a therapist, I think you're going to find very interesting. My guest today is Dr. Deborah Korn. You know, even if you're not a therapist, you might find this interesting. Deborah Korn is a Psy. D.

[00:01:18] **Laura Reagan:** Who maintains a private practice in Cambridge, Massachusetts. And she's a faculty member at the Trauma Resource Foundation and the EMDR Institute. She's also the former clinical director of the Women's Trauma Programs at Charter Brookside and Charles River Hospitals, and a past board member of the New England Society for the Treatment of Trauma and Dissociation.

[00:01:36] **Laura Reagan:** Dr. Korn has authored or co-authored numerous articles and chapters focused on EMDR therapy, including comprehensive reviews of EMDR applications with complex PTSD. She's an EMDR International Association Approved Consultant, and also on the editorial board of the Journal of EMDR Practice and Research. She presents and consults internationally on the treatment of adult survivors of childhood abuse and neglect and complex traumatic stress disorders.

[00:02:04] **Laura Reagan:** And she's the co-author of the new book Every Memory Deserves Respect, which came out in 2021. And it's about trauma, recovery and EMDR therapy. It's written for the lay person. This is a fascinating conversation between two trauma therapists that covers the importance of assessing for dissociation and preparation for EMDR work with clients, or really any Phase two or Three work that you would do with survivors of trauma or anyone who's looking for healing.

[00:02:33] **Laura Reagan:** How Dr. Korn assesses for dissociation she explains with examples and it's very helpful. So what that means and what instruments and clinical skills she uses, and she even gave us a list of resources for this episode that you will find. On the website, traumatotherapistnetwork.com when the episode is published.

[00:02:56] **Laura Reagan:** So go to either therapy.chat, podcast.com or traumatotherapistnetwork.com and click on therapy chat. And there, you will find the episode with a transcript and the resources that she so kindly prepared for us. So

I'm super excited for you to hear this interview and I'd love to know what you think of it.

[00:03:17] **Laura Reagan:** Please feel free to get in touch with me using the SpeakPipe app. You can find that on my Instagram page, which is at therapy chat pod, the link to the SpeakPipe button is there and it's going to be on trauma therapist network soon. I just haven't figured out how to put it there yet. So thank you for your patience.

[00:03:40] **Laura Reagan:** Enjoy my conversation with Dr. Deborah Korn.

[00:03:47] **Laura Reagan:** Hi, welcome back to therapy chat. I'm your host, Laura Reagan. And today I'm so excited to be interviewing Dr. Deborah Korn. Debbie, thank you so much for being my guest on Therapy Chat today.

[00:03:58] **Deborah Korn:** Oh, thank you, Laura. It's a pleasure to be here.

[00:04:00] **Laura Reagan:** Yes, I'm very honored. I saw you on a training that I did through the, I think it was the IFS Inner Circle that was with Frank Anderson.

[00:04:11] **Laura Reagan:** And you were talking about EMDR and parts work. And I was like, oh, if I could talk to her on Therapy Chat, and then someone put us in connection separately from that. So it was like, So I'm really excited to talk to you and talk about your book. Every Memory Deserves Respect, EMDR, the Proven Trauma Therapy With The Power to Heal.

[00:04:31] **Laura Reagan:** So before we get into that, though, will you just start off by telling our audience a little bit about who you are and what you do?

[00:04:38] **Deborah Korn:** Sure.

[00:04:39] **Deborah Korn:** So I'm coming to you right now from Cambridge, Massachusetts. Where I am in private practice and I'm on the adjunctive training faculty of the Trauma Research Foundation with Bessel van der Kolk.

[00:04:54] **Deborah Korn:** I have specialized my entire career in the treatment of trauma related disorders. I work with the whole range of trauma related disorders. PTSD complex PTSD dissociative disorders, and have a particular interest in working with adults who have survived childhood trauma, abuse, and neglect. I have been an EMDR therapist since the early nineties, 1992.

[00:05:23] **Deborah Korn:** I think I was trained by Francine Shapiro. And my work with EMDR is a huge part of my professional life. I, I teach I've done research. I do consultation and therapy related to EMDR, and I, you know, released this book with Michael Baldwin in the last year, uh, May of 2021, all about trauma, trauma, recovery.

[00:05:48] **Deborah Korn:** And EMDR therapy written for the lay person.

[00:05:51] **Laura Reagan:** That's so wonderful. And you know, I have your book right here. I love many things about it. I love that it's written for the lay person. I love the approachable way it's worded. And I feel like it's almost like this is going to sound weird, but it's almost like the internet in a book in a way.

[00:06:09] **Laura Reagan:** It's like, there's a lot of images. It feels very interactive. You know, there's images. Texts there's, you know, stories. It just feels different from a typical book. And I love that. I feel it makes it more, you know, kind of accessible somehow.

[00:06:25] **Deborah Korn:** Thank you for getting us. Um, that was really our intention in creating this book.

[00:06:30] **Deborah Korn:** We wanted to create a book unlike anything that had been created before. We wanted it to be intensely accessible user-friendly we wanted it to call to people. So, you know, it's got these billboards throughout these, uh, two page spreads with an image, a photograph on one side and a little bit of texts on the other.

[00:06:50] **Deborah Korn:** So it's almost like two books in one where you've got the, you know, the images. Capturing the concepts of trauma, recovery and EMDR therapy. And then you've got Michael's narrative and Michael is a trauma survivor who, uh, got tremendous relief from EMDR therapy, got Michael's narrative and my didactic explanatory narrative

[00:07:11] **Deborah Korn:** in the book.

[00:07:12] **Laura Reagan:** Oh, that's so beautiful. Now that makes sense because I've not read the whole book yet, but I have looked through it and. I'm like, oh yeah, I see the way that, you know, it's his narrative and your description from the clinical kind of perspectives. Um, and then it just made me think too, you probably thought of this, but it's like right brain and left brain.

[00:07:33] **Deborah Korn:** Exactly. Exactly. Because people learn in different ways and. I was, I'm tired of sitting in my office with my clients and reaching for books off my shelf and handing it to a client and they'd look at me like I had two heads, right? Like I'm not going to read that. Like I can't even, you know, I can't even keep my eyes open.

[00:07:54] **Deborah Korn:** I can't think straight, I there's too many words. So I, the, the idea of creating a book that people would actually be drawn to they'd actually look at and say, oh, I can read this and I want to read, this is really what we were aiming for.

[00:08:10] **Laura Reagan:** I love it. It's meeting people right where they are. Exactly. Yeah. So we were just talking before we started recording about how even now.

[00:08:20] **Laura Reagan:** You know, you learned EMDR in 1992, you mentioned. And I started in the field. I don't, I'm not trained in EMDR, but I started my work in this field in 2002. And here it is 2022. And there are a lot of therapists and people in the general public who don't really realize. How trauma is so prevalent, you know, in our society and in the bodies and minds of people who come into therapy and ourselves as therapists.

[00:08:51] **Deborah Korn:** Yeah. Yes. You know, Michael Baldwin, my co-author had seen eight different therapists. Before he landed with Dr. Jeffrey Magnum Bita, who is his EMDR therapist and where he finally, after 22 years of seeking treatment, like never giving up, still looking, trying to put the pieces together, trying to understand, you know, why he had phobias and why he had nightmares and why he had anxiety.

[00:09:20] **Deborah Korn:** And never, you know, just feeling like this is just who I am. Never, never, never being able to make sense out of it. Finally, he landed with a trauma informed therapist who from the get-go said, wow, the connector here is trauma from your childhood. And no one had ever talked to Michael about trauma as kind of the concept.

[00:09:42] **Deborah Korn:** The experience that United this, you know, this millange(?) Of symptoms that he was experiencing. And once he had that greater framework, everything started to click, everything fell into place and he started to make progress. And, you know, that's what I see in therapy all the time. That once you start educating people about the vast effects of childhood trauma, chronic trauma, people start to feel heard and validated and understood, and able to start putting words on their experience toward the goal of healing.

[00:10:20] **Laura Reagan:** Oh my gosh. That is so true. And so powerful. What you said. I can't believe, and I can believe 22 years of working in therapy and I don't have to say this about, we all know that people are getting a message, whether it's coming from the therapist or just their own understanding of what's going on.

[00:10:42] **Laura Reagan:** If they're not getting better and they're in therapy for that long, they're assuming what is wrong with me? Why can't I get better? My therapist is telling me what to do, and I still feel the same or worse.

[00:10:56] **Deborah Korn:** That's the heartbreak part is people show up at our door and they're, they're crawling, you know, they're exhausted.

[00:11:04] **Deborah Korn:** They, you know, so often people say, this is my last hope, you know, I'm going to try EMDR therapy. I'm gonna, you know, I sought you out as a trauma therapist in the hopes that, you know, maybe finally I can get some relief, but people feel so hopeless and demoralized often when no one has really helped them to organize kind of huge range of symptoms that they've been struggling with make meaning out of it.

[00:11:32] **Laura Reagan:** Right. So when, like you said, when they get into trauma therapy and it clicks, it's like, you can put together, I have this. Oh, I do this because of this. Oh, this is because of this. And it's like, you feel so much more empowered because you understand that, you know, instead of this confusing, like cyclone of emotions inside, it's it all really makes sense.

[00:11:57] **Laura Reagan:** If you just need, there's some information that you need about what trauma is and how it works. And then you need to, you know, be able to do that deeper healing work from that perspective. So.

[00:12:07] **Deborah Korn:** Yeah. Right. And the message is, you know, it's not simply you, it's not your character, it's not your weaknesses. It's what happened to you.

[00:12:16] **Deborah Korn:** It's what happened within you when certain things happen. Or certain things didn't happen, right? When there wasn't protection when there was neglect or deprivation. So it's both what happened to you and what didn't happen that can, can leave its mark.

[00:12:30] **Laura Reagan:** Very much so. And I've, I've like you, I work with mainly childhood trauma survivors, mostly with sexual abuse or physical abuse, emotional neglect.

[00:12:41] **Laura Reagan:** You know, abandonment, loss and that kind of stuff. And I've heard the same thing that Michael experienced from, you know, so many clients over the years, but it really, it does break my heart and, you know, and I too have had a lot of fits and starts with therapy before I got connected with the right kind.

[00:12:59] **Laura Reagan:** And there were some ways where they may not have talked about trauma and neuroscience, but they still got it. Enough to help me understand more about my experience, but really doing trauma work is so different and so powerfully healing, you know, it's just really transformative.

[00:13:16] **Deborah Korn:** Yeah.

[00:13:16] **Deborah Korn:** And you know, even though I'm an EMDR therapist through and through, that's my first language, that's the water I drink.

[00:13:23] **Deborah Korn:** I, you know, I'm, I'm an integrationist and I've trained in many models over the years and I love many models. I've found many different trauma informed models to be incredibly helpful. And you know, what's important is that therapists know that there are many different ways of working with trauma.

[00:13:43] **Deborah Korn:** There's many different models out there to choose from, and it's just important that they get educated and they find the models that work for them. I teach a course every summer at the Cape Cod Institute on the Optimal Integration of Trauma Treatment Models. And it's a, it's a course for folks that are interested in trauma treatment.

[00:14:05] **Deborah Korn:** They may have trained in some models, but not in others, but I really try to pull together all of the concepts and strategies that are most valuable from all of these different models and kind of stitch them together for people. Uh, so they can, they have many different lenses to use in understanding what's going on with their clients.

[00:14:26] **Deborah Korn:** And then, you know, a plethora of strategies and interventions to use and helping people because trauma is complex and it's messy. And the more you have in your toolbox, the more able you're going to, the better able you're going to be to be of help of service to people.

[00:14:44] **Laura Reagan:** Yeah. That's really wonderful. And I didn't know about that, so I'll be sure to ask you for the link.

[00:14:49] **Laura Reagan:** So I can include it in the show notes for this episode, because you know, that's, you know, I have like you, I mean, you're EMDR woman with many other skills and trainings. That's right. Like a super hero. I, mine is sensory motor psycho therapy. Um, and then, you know, expressive arts and there's so many different things. But I think it's one thing that's very important.

[00:15:13] **Laura Reagan:** And I think this is missing from even a lot of trauma trainings is to talk about how dissociation can show up in our clients and ourselves in ways that we may not really, I don't think it's, I think it's uncommon to be trained in trauma in grad school, very uncommon, but even when people have had training in trauma, I think it's pretty uncommon to get training in dissociation.

[00:15:36] **Deborah Korn:** I would agree. I would agree. You know, understanding the association is going to help you in every dimension of the work with trauma survivors. It's, it's relatively impossible by definition to treat somebody who has been significantly traumatized without encountering dissociation at one level or another, right?

[00:15:58] **Laura Reagan:** Yeah. Can you talk about that a little bit? The kind of spectrum of dissociation?

[00:16:03] **Deborah Korn:** Yeah, sure. Well, you know, first of all, it's, um, it's really critical in the early stage of any trauma informed therapy, EMDR therapy included. That we evaluate the range of dissociative symptoms that a client is experiencing.

[00:16:18] **Deborah Korn:** And with a dis, a client who struggles with dissociation, moving into trauma processing, moving into trauma-focused work prematurely could make things worse. So you want to be sure that you've assessed and addressed someone's level of dissociation prior to, to beginning the work. You know, we can think about dissociation on a continuum from kind of non-pathological dissociation and, you know, we can all relate to that.

[00:16:46] **Deborah Korn:** Right? What we call absorption, uh, highway hypnosis, right? Zoning out it's exit one. And then before you know, it it's exit four and you don't remember what has happened between point a and point B even peak performance being in the zone. Right. Uh, meditation. Those are all forms of non-pathological dissociation, kind of when we get absorbed and the rest of the world falls away.

[00:17:12] **Deborah Korn:** But then as we move down that continuum, you know, we move into PTSD. We move into certain personality disorders like borderline personality disorder, complex PTSD, um, OSDD used to be called DDNOS dissociated with disorder, not otherwise specified. Um, and then eventually at the far end of the continuum, um, we've got dissociative identity disorder.

[00:17:37] **Deborah Korn:** Right. So it's dissociation is non-pathological when it's minor or mild and it's considered more, you know, quote pathological when it's more extreme or debilitating in the present. And, you know, there's a theory called the theory of structural dissociation. That is really, really critical that people treating trauma survivors, people doing psychotherapy learn about.

[00:18:02] **Deborah Korn:** And that model doesn't think about dissociation on a continuum, but it thinks instead of association, in terms of degrees of structural dissociation and the personality, right? The degree of kind of division in the personality where trauma leaves someone to disconnect from parts of their personality, from parts of their experience.

[00:18:26] **Deborah Korn:** And you start seeing these divisions, you know, a division between the parts of self that operate in day-to-day life and adult functional life and the parts of the personality that are connected to, to the trauma, to the responses, the defensive responses to trauma, like fight or flight or submit. So there's different ways to think about that continuum or different ways to think about the different levels of dissociation, but it's clearly, there's clearly a range of presentations that come with dissociation.

[00:18:59] **Laura Reagan:** Yes.

[00:19:00] **Laura Reagan:** Thank you. So what I, what I want to go to next is what you said, how to assess, but with that idea that it doesn't always, someone can come in and look very high functioning. And that doesn't mean they have no dissociation.

[00:19:12] **Deborah Korn:** Absolutely. Absolutely. You know, dissociation can be very subtle and it really takes a skilled eye, an educated mind to pick up little hints that dissociation is at play.

[00:19:28] **Deborah Korn:** And in fact, dissociation is all about keeping things hidden. So most folks that come in who have a significant, a more complex dissociative disorder. It's not apparent and they're going to do everything in their power to try to keep you from knowing, you know, and there's parts, parts of the

person that might keep themselves from knowing that they have dissociative disorder or they're experiencing dissociation.

[00:19:55] **Deborah Korn:** Absolutely. And you know, I hear therapists all the time say, oh, I'm sure she doesn't have a dissociative disorder. I've never seen anything that looks like switching, or that looks like an alter personality. And it really is not that obvious most of the time, it really requires deliberate questioning the use of certain perhaps inventories to look more methodically at the range of symptoms and presentations.

[00:20:21] **Deborah Korn:** So, you know, I'd be happy to talk more about that if that could help therapist, uh, to know what they don't know and to know what they should be looking for.

[00:20:34] **Laura Reagan:** Hey everybody. This is Laura Reagan. Just wanted to take a second to break into our discussion, to welcome some additional therapists who have recently joined Trauma Therapist Network. So in the last two episodes, you've heard me thanking a whole bunch of people and I'm adding a few more today. First we have Christine Nystrom.

[00:20:54] **Laura Reagan:** Who's an LMH C and LPC in Bellingham, Washington, a place. One of my dear friends grew up and we have Dora Eaton LPC who's in Flower Town, Pennsylvania. I was super excited to meet Dora and the community call we had in January. And I'm excited to see what she's going to contribute to our group. Liz Reynolds, LCSW C in Lombard, Illinois.

[00:21:19] **Laura Reagan:** She is. Uh, somebody who's been one of my consultation group members and I'm excited that she has joined. Another consultation group member who's currently part of the consultation groups is Holly Marie St. Pierre, who is an LMH CC. And I don't know how you pronounce it. Kalama Washington. I know that Holly Marie's practice is located close to Portland, Oregon, but it's in Washington state and she is a very interesting therapist. She loves working with people who have biracial identities as she is biracial as well. She identifies as half native American, half white. Eileen Catherine Griffin Psy. D, in Gwen Oak, Maryland. She's another new member and I'm so grateful that she joined and let's see.

[00:22:13] **Laura Reagan:** Nicole Gutierrez, Psy. D, LMFT, in Fountain Valley, California. Terry Jo Shimpff LMSW. Who's in Jackson, Mississippi. I'm very excited to have someone in Mississippi on our list because you know this is all about helping people find a therapist. And I know that it's probably pretty

hard to find a trauma therapist in Jackson, Mississippi, like it is all over the country.

[00:22:39] **Laura Reagan:** So I'm glad that Terry Jo. Surely my Kaylee, McKaley sorry, Darlie, that I don't know how to pronounce your last name. I know who you are. She is someone who does a lot to inform social workers about and other mental health professionals about all of the resources that are available. She is an MBA as well as an LCSW.

[00:23:04] **Laura Reagan:** Ashley Nicole Waddell LCSW in Virginia Beach, Virginia, very happy that Ashley joined. She's an African centered, licensed clinical social worker and certified trauma specialist in Virginia. That is where I'm from not Virginia Beach, but Norfolk, which is right next to Virginia Beach. I grew up going to Virginia Beach all the time.

[00:23:24] **Laura Reagan:** And I know there's a great need for trauma therapists in that area. So thank you, Ashley. Sarah Boon, LCPC in Bethesda, Maryland. Thank you for joining. She is a therapist who works with individuals 16 and up and groups. And the next person is someone who you heard recently on therapy chat, Jana Glass LPC.

[00:23:46] **Laura Reagan:** Who's in Sandy Springs, Georgia, and she is a certified in brainspotting addiction, perinatal mental health and telemental health. And she recently was approved to teach a brainspotting training level one with a focus in perinatal, which is really cool. Courtney Ann Jones, LCSW-C. CCTP, she's a new member of our consultation groups.

[00:24:12] **Laura Reagan:** So I recently met her, but she's nearby to where I practice and a fellow redhead, which is, uh, just a, something about her hair and nothing to do with how good of a therapist she is. But she's a very interesting person and I'm excited that she joined. Another person who is a frequent guest on therapy chat.

[00:24:32] **Laura Reagan:** Probably my most returning guests most often returning is Sharon Martin LCSW. You've heard Sharon talking about imperfection or perfectionism co-dependency family dynamics and boundaries. She recently released her book. The Better Boundaries Workbook. And she's also the author of the CBT Workbook For Perfectionism.

[00:24:55] **Laura Reagan:** She is someone who does so much to educate people about the trauma of growing up in a home with an alcoholic parent or other dysfunctional or abusive dynamic. So glad Sharon joined. I know we're all

gonna learn a ton from her. Alaina Kyrgios LMFT, FNTP is a licensed marriage and family therapist in Tyson's Corner, Virginia.

[00:25:20] **Laura Reagan:** That's in Northern Virginia and a functional nutrition therapy practitioner, which I think is a really cool, I like using a holistic approach in my practice. So I like that. Okay. The last person I'm gonna mention for today. Definitely last but not least is Dr. Geneva Reynaga Abeco, I hope I pronounce your last name, right, Dr. Geneva. And she is a Latin X clinical psychologist providing empowerment based psychotherapy, focused on black indigenous people of color BIPOC, LGPTQ plus, and gender nonconforming clients, trauma informed race, courageous decolonial anti-sexist Pauline kink friendly. I love it. So welcome Dr. Geneva and everyone else I mentioned. I will welcome in some new members next time, certainly didn't get to everyone on our directory. But I just wanted to give everybody a little taste of the diversity of therapists who are on trauma therapists network. It's so exciting to know that there are so many different ways people can specialize in trauma and different areas of focus.

[00:26:28] **Laura Reagan:** You can find out who they are and what they do on trauma therapist network.com. So if you're looking for a trauma therapist, that's a great place to go to find one. And if you don't find anyone in your area, feel free to send me an email or use actually the little gray like message symbol. That's at the bottom, right.

[00:26:50] **Laura Reagan:** Of the. All the pages of the website, just send us a message through that, and we will be happy to try to help you find a therapist who might be the right fit for you, even if they're not listed in our directory. So once again, thank you so much for listening to therapy chat, and let's get back to the fascinating conversation that I had with Dr. Deborah Korn.

[00:27:17] **Laura Reagan:** That would be wonderful because I think, you know, there's, like you said, towards the pathologizing and of that continuum, it could be maybe more obvious that there's something happening that you, you might not be sure what it is, but something feels different, but then, you know, there's a lot of variation. So please, if you would talk about that, that would be fabulous.

[00:27:41] **Deborah Korn:** Um, so there are many, you know, there's many different ways to assess the association, taking a good trauma and bio-psychosocial history and observing the client in session, you know, just listening and looking for signs and symptoms and as. It's not necessarily obvious. It can be

quite subtle. And you may not learn about those symptoms unless you ask the client directly about it.

[00:28:06] **Deborah Korn:** I pay attention when someone has a chronic trauma history, when there's a discrepancy between their history, the history that they're presenting and their presentation. So they're looking a little more dissociative or, you know, they've got lots of self-injurious behaviors. They've got addiction, they've got a complex clinical picture and they're saying they had a wonderful childhood or they're denying that there was any trauma.

[00:28:30] **Deborah Korn:** I'm going to look very carefully at that because folks may have amnesia for their early trauma history. They may be reluctant to share it. There may be a voice in their head. Very punishing and threatening. Like don't, you dare mention this or that. So, but I'm going to pay close attention whether they report that history or if they don't and it feels like there's something missing.

[00:28:53] **Deborah Korn:** I ask client, I gently ask clients whether they hear any voices. Inside their head. I always reassure them that I'm not, I'm not asking this question because I think they're crazy. Or because they have a major mental illness. I share that it's not uncommon that when you have a significant trauma history, it's not uncommon to hear voices often, you know, being critical often urging action, urging you to do something bearing, bearing down on you.

[00:29:22] **Deborah Korn:** I always ask about time loss. Blank spells, you know, I ask people whether they're told by other people about things that they've said or done, and they might not remember. I always asked from week to week, whether clients remember what happened in the last session, you know, do you remember that we talked about this or that.

[00:29:41] **Deborah Korn:** Do you remember that we did this or that? I ask about depersonalization and derealization have they had experiences of feeling foggy, feeling like they're in a dream, feeling like there are robotic just going through the motions, feeling like they're out of their body. Looking down on themselves. I ask about whether they have, you know, in the, in the dissociative literature it's talked about as quote made feelings or behaviors made, meaning like the devil made me do it.

[00:30:12] **Deborah Korn:** You know, some part of me is bearing down on me, bearing influence. I said this, or I did this, or I felt this, but it didn't feel like me. It felt like it was coming out of me or it felt like it was happening to me. Right. There was some kind of passive influence. So I'm listening for that. I'm listening

for, or looking for significant shifts, discrepancies in affect their behavior or voice or appearance within a session or between sessions.

[00:30:43] **Deborah Korn:** I really take a more careful, closer look when the client appears to be engaging in treatment, but there's little progress, right? There's somehow unable to use what's learned in therapy, you know, they're unable to, it seems like they're getting it. It seems like they're doing the work of therapy, but you don't see progress outside of therapy.

[00:31:07] **Deborah Korn:** I of course, you know, I listened for whether people are referring to themselves as "we" were talking about themselves in third person that might be suggestive of a more complex dissociative disorder. I ask if they've ever discovered anything in their possession, they objects are writing that they don't know where it came from.

[00:31:26] **Deborah Korn:** Any dismembered behavior to things that they've done, again, that there's evidence of or people tell them about, but they don't recall doing. And I always, I always pay attention when there's a series of treatment failures over the course of time. Right? Many therapists, many years of therapy, many prior diagnoses, right.

[00:31:49] **Deborah Korn:** They're diagnosed with anxiety and with depression and with bipolar and with Schizoaffective disorder and with. And with eating disorders, you know, again, when you see all of these different presentations with nothing that unifies the picture, I start to question whether we're dealing with a dissociative disorder.

[00:32:07] **Deborah Korn:** So there's also, you know, so those are the things that I look for as I'm talking with the client, as I'm interviewing the client. But there's also a structured interviews that you can do with the client. For example, there's the dissociation mental status exam by Richard Lowenstein or the mental status exam for dissociation?

[00:32:27] **Deborah Korn:** I think he calls it. There's also, you know, available inventories designed to screen for dissociation or even actually to diagnose. Uh, dissociative disorder. So there's prescreening. There's the DES the Dissociative Experiences Scale too. There was a DES1 and now DES2 by Carlson Putnam. There's the DDIS, the Dissociative Disorders Interview Schedule by Colin Ross.

[00:32:55] **Deborah Korn:** There's the MID and that's what I use most regularly in my practice by Paul Dell, that stands for the multi dimensional inventory of dissociation. There's something called the SDQ, the summative

form dissociation questionnaire. There's a longer version, 20 questions, and a shorter version, five that looks more specifically at what we call somatoform dissociation.

[00:33:19] **Deborah Korn:** The way dissociation shows up through the body through somatic experience rather than kind of more psychologically oriented dissociation. And then there's something called the SCID D. Structured, I think it's a, what is it, Structured Clinical Interview for Diagnoses and for this is for Dissociation that's Marlene Steinberg.

[00:33:39] **Deborah Korn:** So there's, there's a number of other inventories, but those are the inventories that are mostly being used out in the field. When you've screened for dissociation through your clinical interview, you've screened with something like the DES and you've got feedback that suggests that someone has a higher level of noticeable level of dissociation and may have a dissociative disorder.

[00:34:02] **Deborah Korn:** So these other inventories can be used to more specifically determine where on that dissociative continuum, someone lies, you know, diagnostically, what are we looking at here?

[00:34:14] **Laura Reagan:** Thank you. That is so helpful. I mean, that's really a nice list that you just provided and I'm super grateful. I know that therapists are listening are like writing as fast as they can.

[00:34:26] **Deborah Korn:** We can certainly, we can certainly get resources to people for where to find these inventories. And how to, how to get trained in them. If you need training.

[00:34:34] **Laura Reagan:** Wonderful. Anything you want to share that I can include or any links you want to give me, I will pass them to our audience.

[00:34:41] **Deborah Korn:** Fabulous.

[00:34:43] **Laura Reagan:** Thank you very much.

[00:34:44] **Laura Reagan:** And so one of the things that I have so many questions for you, but we don't have unlimited time. So. Stay focused. But one of the things that you talk about in the book that Michael talks about his experience is how during an EMDR session, I know one thing I specifically did read in the book was that he had like a very, very early pre-verbal trauma experience come to his conscious awareness during EMDR that, with what he

described, there's just no way that you would ever get to that in talk therapy that he would get to it.

[00:35:19] **Laura Reagan:** But the therapist would know it was there. Because it would be something that there would just be no way. So can you talk a little bit about how EMDR can really, I guess sort of like along that same line of how it can tap into dissociative or dissociated experiences and memories?

[00:35:37] **Deborah Korn:** Well, you know, so many of the memories that people have that are related to symptoms or difficulties that they're having, or what we would call implicit memories, memories, where there's not yet a narrative.

[00:35:50] **Deborah Korn:** They might not have the person may not have words. They might not even have consciousness that something bad happened, or they might have a felt sense that something bad happened. They may have a sense that certain situations trigger a reaction of fear inside or the urge to flee, but they D they don't know what's been activated that can put words on it.

[00:36:11] **Deborah Korn:** And in EMDR, when we, when the client can identify a memory with some specificity, Then we go right to that memory. When we know they're having nightmares as related to a specific event or flashbacks related to a specific event, or they're getting triggered because of what happened to them. Then we float back from that specific experience in the present to when they first experienced something similar.

[00:36:40] **Deborah Korn:** And then that becomes the focus of our work. But often, as I said, clients have these symptoms and they don't know why, and they attempt to float back to things and they can't get clarity on what it's related to. And so we have a couple of choices in EMDR. We can either target the trigger situation, have them think about the situation, you know, person, place thing, feeling.

[00:37:05] **Deborah Korn:** That triggers the distress. That seems to be activating, accessing something, even if they don't know what it is. And we begin there and we see what comes and we let the brain bring whatever needs to be brought to process. Or we might start with, they might be talking about their early experiences. And even though they can't pinpoint an actual memory, They might start feeling nauseous as they talk about something or might they might get a feeling in the pit of their stomach, or they might become aware that that suddenly they feel really frightened.

[00:37:41] **Deborah Korn:** And we can simply target that. You know, we would understand that as implicit memory, as memory, that doesn't necessarily have language attached to it or meaning attached to it yet, it doesn't have that to give it structure, but it's memory just the same. And so by just trusting. The brain and the body are going to offer up what needs to get addressed.

[00:38:04] **Deborah Korn:** We begin there and over the course of EMDR processing sessions, often the pieces of the puzzle, right? The components of the experience, the feelings, the sensations, the cognitions, the sensory. Components like the imagery or the smells or the sounds, all of that comes together. It gets stitched together in the course of the processing work.

[00:38:28] **Deborah Korn:** And somehow the client comes to a greater understanding of what may have happened, what might have happened. There's no such thing as absolute truth, right? Memory is messy slippery, but each and every client, somehow through this process and with, you know, a collaborative effort with their therapist, they're able to arrive at their own personal truth, their own emotional.

[00:38:55] **Deborah Korn:** And, you know, and then it's up to the client to go and ask questions and gather other information and try to substantiate the, the picture that they've created for themselves of what might've happened during those early years. And that was the case for Michael, you know, he, he did not have clear cut memories of some of the things that happened early in his life, but over the course of processing, it became clearer and clearer.

[00:39:21] **Deborah Korn:** He, he came closer and closer to that. Personal truth. And then he started to speak to other people in his family, particularly his brother who was when he was a child Michael's brother was a huge bully, you know, just horribly bullied him. But now actually over the course of writing this book, Michael has, has reconnected.

[00:39:44] **Deborah Korn:** And reconciled with his brother and, you know, really sees his brother as someone who grew up side by side with him in a traumatizing environment and invalidating environment. And he's been able to, to use his conversations with his brother as a way to continue to kind of validate his sense of his childhood experiences and to continue putting those pieces together.

[00:40:09] **Laura Reagan:** Wow. What a beautiful thing for him to be, you know, to go from being more isolated from his brother because of the others'

reactions to the trauma, traumatic environment, they both were in to finding connection. And being less alone. I think that's really beautiful.

[00:40:28] **Laura Reagan:** I mean, tearing up. Yeah.

[00:40:30] **Deborah Korn:** It's an incredibly touching story with a very, very happy ending. Yeah.

[00:40:35] **Laura Reagan:** That's, that's beautiful. Knowing that, that happy ending. Can you talk about why the book is titled Every Memory Deserves Respect?

[00:40:45] **Deborah Korn:** Thanks for that question. Well, first of all, Every Memory Deserves Respect stands for E M D R, which is Eye Movement, Desensitization and Reprocessing, which is a complete mouthful, a complete earful.

[00:41:01] **Deborah Korn:** And it's hard for people to remember. So we wanted to come up with a title for the book that captured the, you know, the, the, the words of eye movement, desensitization and reprocessing, and the letters EMDR. But beyond that, we really wanted to deliver the message that, that there's no such thing as good memories or bad memories or memories that, you know, need to be pushed off to the side memories that you should be ashamed of, you know, all memories.

[00:41:36] **Deborah Korn:** All parts of the person are welcome are invited into therapy because the memories hold the story and the memories hold the meaning. And by bringing attention, bringing skilled attention to the memories in therapy, there's the potential for healing for tremendous healing. And it's, you know, rather than just treating the symptoms rather than a top down approach, where we treat the symptoms, we manage the symptoms.

[00:42:05] **Deborah Korn:** EMDR therapy is about getting at the roots, pulling the weeds up from the roots, changing those roots, transforming those roots. So those symptoms are not going to grow back. Those symptoms are not going to come back.

[00:42:18] **Deborah Korn:** Yeah, that,

[00:42:19] **Laura Reagan:** and that is so hopeful because I think, you know, I still think because of how prevalent top-down approaches are, people don't really think of therapy as something that can heal.

[00:42:32] **Deborah Korn:** Curative.

[00:42:33] **Laura Reagan:** Yes.

[00:42:34] **Deborah Korn:** Not just learning to manage or to control symptoms. Not just gaining insight, but really changing, transforming the way people feel and think and behave.

[00:42:48] **Laura Reagan:** Yeah. It really feels like wholeness, like coming into wholeness.

[00:42:52] **Deborah Korn:** Yeah, It's about changing self-concept. Changing the sense of who you are and how you see yourself in the world and the relationship you have to your life story.

[00:43:02] **Laura Reagan:** Yeah. And that is very hopeful. And I think that's for me, you know, as a trauma therapist and I'm sure you've heard this a million times too. Oh, you're a trauma therapist. Oh, that sounds depressing. How do you do that work? And it's like, no, this is hopeful because yeah. Healing is real and it can happen.

[00:43:21] **Deborah Korn:** Yeah. I, you know, for me, the gift of EMDR and the gift of so many of these trauma informed therapies is that I really feel like I can say to a client in our first session, you know, bad things have happened to you and you have been suffering significantly for a long time. Be it, sexual, physical, or emotional abuse, or traumatic loss, or whatever the case may be, but you can heal, right?

[00:43:48] **Deborah Korn:** You do not, you were not born with this. You do not have to live with this for the rest of your life. You can heal and you can reclaim something for yourself that perhaps you didn't think was possible. And that. That's incredibly hopeful.

[00:44:03] **Laura Reagan:** Oh, so true. So true. And thank you. Thank you so much for what you're doing and for this book and for the way that you're spreading this message and teaching about this so important.

[00:44:15] **Deborah Korn:** Yeah. Yeah. It's my, you know, it's my honor, it's my privilege. And you know, it's been incredibly rewarding to hear from people who are reading our book and understanding things in a new way for the first time and feeling hopeful in a new way, that's been really gratifying.

[00:44:37] **Laura Reagan:** Well, tell people where can they find all of the stuff you're doing.

[00:44:42] **Laura Reagan:** I mean, I'll, I'll include any specific links, but where is your book? Where is training and all that stuff?

[00:44:49] **Deborah Korn:** So you can purchase our book everywhere. You can get it on Amazon. You can get it through a publisher, Workman publishing, you know, It's being sold by Barnes and noble and target. And, you know, you can get the book everywhere.

[00:45:04] **Deborah Korn:** It's, uh, it's on sale at Amazon right now. And if you happen to be an EMDR therapist and you want to order the book in bulk, because you'd like to give it to your clients. Which is what I'm doing with every one of my clients. Now I give it out at the first session and I'm finding that it's really helping people prepare for the work of therapy.

[00:45:26] **Deborah Korn:** It's, it's helping people to feel courageous, you know, to feel more ready to do the work. So if, if folks are interested in purchasing larger numbers of the books, we can also include a link to the person at Workman publishing that will talk with folks about bulk ordering. Um, so you can get the book everywhere.

[00:45:48] **Deborah Korn:** We have a website, it's the name of the book, www.everymemorydeservesrespect.com and there are many, many different links to podcasts and articles and interviews. On the website, as I said, I'm teaching this summer at the Cape Cod Institute. And I teach as part of the certificate program, the trauma certificate program at the trauma research foundation with Bessel van der Kolk.

[00:46:15] **Deborah Korn:** And I teach, uh, with the EMDR Institute, I've been on the faculty of the EMDR Institute for 28 years. And we, we offer basic training, the first level of training that allows you to take EMDR to your practice through the EMDR Institute.

[00:46:33] **Laura Reagan:** Excellent. I'll include all of that in the show notes. And again, I just want to thank you Debbie, for being my guests on Therapy Chat today.

[00:46:41] **Deborah Korn:** You're so welcome. Thanks for having me.

[00:46:47] **Laura Reagan:** Therapist. I just wanted to take a minute to talk to you about why I created Trauma Therapist Network and how I hope that it will benefit your clients and you. Pretty simple. There has not been one place to find information about trauma, find a trauma therapist and for trauma therapists to find networking training, connection, support, practice building, all in one place. So for example, as a trauma therapist, you can have a Psychology Today profile and they are definitely then the biggest broadest therapy directory that exists they've been around the longest. But what they don't do is they are not specific in what to you do that makes you a trauma therapist.

[00:47:32] **Laura Reagan:** So if a therapist on Psychology Today, I specialize in trauma and PTSD, but when you look down their listing, it also says that they specialize in like every other mental health disorder that exists. And how do you know that they have the knowledge and experience and that they are the person that can help you with your trauma?

[00:47:54] **Laura Reagan:** There's no way to know. So that's why I made Trauma Therapist Network. And initially I felt that it would be useful to create a site for people wanting to learn about trauma and find a trauma therapist all in one place. But what I didn't account for is that therapists are missing out on connection and community even more during this pandemic.

[00:48:15] **Laura Reagan:** So once I realized that this was something that could be added into trauma therapists network to make it a true community for therapists, I decided to go ahead and add in some content. So starting in March, Trauma Therapist Network Community for Therapists includes your listing that lets people know how you work with trauma.

[00:48:35] **Laura Reagan:** It includes once a month, an hour long training workshop on a topic related to trauma. And once a month, an hour long Q and a workshop about various topics related to our work, including practice building. And I'm going to bring in some outside practice building experts to help with that. One time per month, we will have a call focused on therapists self-care. An experiential practice of self care for one hour per month. And once a month, we will also have case consultation calls. So I'm working on putting all that together in the membership community. The new content starts in March, so you can sign up in February and in March. You'll have access to that.

[00:49:17] **Laura Reagan:** Registration closes on February 28th for any new members. So, if you are thinking of joining, this is the time. Just go on over to www.traumatherapistnetwork.com. And you can take a look around the site, look at the listings, check out some of the amazing therapists that are going to

be in community with you and who will be learning with you and learning from you.

[00:49:42] **Laura Reagan:** And you will be learning from them. I'm so excited about this, and I'm so grateful to all of you who have already joined. So if you thinking about becoming a member of trauma therapist community, don't wait, just head on over there to www.traumatherapistnetwork.com and sign up.

[00:49:59] **Announcer:** Thank you for listening to Therapy Chat with your host, Laura Reagan, LCSW-C. For more information, please visit therapychatpodcast.com.