

## Therapy Chat Episode 325



**Disclaimer:** This is a verbatim transcript which may contain spelling errors.

[00:00:00] **Laura Reagan:** Therapy Chat Podcast, episode 325.

[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.

[00:00:18] **Announcer:** And now here's your host.

[00:00:20] **Announcer:** Laura Reagan LCSW-C.

[00:00:37] **Laura Reagan:** Today's episode is sponsored by Trauma Therapists Network. Trauma Therapist Network is a platform for finding a trauma therapist, learning about trauma and understanding about how trauma shows up in our lives and what the healing process can look like. Go to [www.traumatherapistnetwork.com](http://www.traumatherapistnetwork.com) to learn more.

[00:00:59] **Laura Reagan:** This week's episode is sponsored by Therapy Notes. The number one rated electronic health record system available today with live telephone support seven days a week. It's clear why Therapy Notes is rated 4.9 out of five stars on Trustpilot and has a five-star rating on Google. Therapy Notes makes billing, scheduling note-taking and tele-health incredibly easy.

[00:01:18] **Laura Reagan:** And now for all you prescribers out there, Therapy Notes is proudly introducing e-prescribe. Use coupon code chat, or click the link in the show notes to get two free months at [therapynotes.com](http://therapynotes.com).

[00:01:31] **Laura Reagan:** Hi, welcome back to Therapy Chat. I'm your host, Laura Reagan. Today, I am bringing you a conversation I recently had.

[00:01:40] **Laura Reagan:** That is definitely about a sensitive topic as so many of these episodes are. I definitely want to give everyone listening a heads up that if you have a history of domestic violence or a history of witnessing domestic violence, when you were a child, if that's a sensitive topic for you, please take care of yourself when listening today, because we're talking about domestic violence, stalking, protective orders, and it could be very sensitive.

[00:02:14] **Laura Reagan:** If that's, uh, something that you have personal experience with. My guest today is Kaytee Gillis, LCSW. Katie Gillis is a psychotherapist, advocate and author with a passion for working with survivors of family trauma and the LGBTQ+ community. She received her Bachelor's in Psychology from Clark University and her Master's in Social Work from Tulane where she focused on sexuality and promoting effective and accurate sex education in Louisiana schools.

[00:02:44] **Laura Reagan:** Kaytee's work focuses on assisting survivors of psychological abuse, stalking and other non-physical forms of domestic violence and family trauma and assisting survivors with navigating the legal system to receive protection. Her recent book, *Invisible Bruises: How A Better Understanding Of The Patterns Of Domestic Violence Can Help Survivors Navigate The Legal System*, sheds light on the ways that the legal system can perpetuate the cycle of domestic violence by failing to recognize patterns that would otherwise hold perpetrators accountable and protect survivors.

[00:03:16] **Laura Reagan:** Gillis provides training on recognizing patterns of domestic violence and family dysfunction, treating the aftermath of abuse and trauma and helping survivors move forward. Now, please keep in mind that neither Kaytee nor myself are attorneys and anything we say about the legal system, is through the lens of our experience as advocates and lived experience working in the courts with survivors, but every state is different.

[00:03:46] **Laura Reagan:** And. What we say may be common in some places may not be common where you are. The good news is there are domestic violence programs in every state that you can learn about through your state coalition against domestic violence. Sometimes they're together with state coalitions against sexual violence.

[00:04:12] **Laura Reagan:** So Katie gives some great resources in this conversation. She has a blog on Psychology Today called Invisible Bruises. She offers training support, online resources. She has a Facebook group. So you'll hear all about that in, in our conversation. But for now, let's just dive right in to my conversation with Kaytee Gillis.

[00:04:38] **Laura Reagan:** Hi, welcome back to Therapy Chat. I'm your host, Laura Reagan. And today I'm so excited to be talking with Kaytee Gillis, LCSW. Kaytee thank you so much for being my guests on Therapy Chat today.

[00:04:50] **Kaytee Gillis:** Thank you for having me. I'm really excited to be talking to you today.

[00:04:53] **Laura Reagan:** Me too. And we're going to talk about a subject that is sensitive, but extremely important to get out in the open.

[00:05:02] **Laura Reagan:** And I think for listeners, whether you're a therapist or not, this is a subject that you're going to encounter and you need to know what we're going to share. Especially Kaytee. And that subject is talking about intimate partner violence and stalking. So before we get into that, let's just start off by you telling our audience a little bit more about who you are and what you do.

[00:05:28] **Kaytee Gillis:** All right. So hi everyone. I'm Kaytee. I'm a licensed clinical social worker. I work a lot with people who are survivors of family trauma and domestic violence, whether that be intimate partner violence or dysfunctional family, family trauma, things like that. And so I work a lot with helping survivors move forward and especially navigating the legal system to find support and find protection.

[00:05:53] **Kaytee Gillis:** Couldn't remember if you wanted me to say anything else? I'm sorry.

[00:05:56] **Laura Reagan:** Oh, yeah, no. I mean, let them know about your recent book. I think that that is very important.

[00:06:02] **Kaytee Gillis:** Um, I just published a book last year called Invisible Bruises for helping survivors navigate the legal system to find protection specifically for protection orders, from intimate partner violence and things like that.

[00:06:14] **Kaytee Gillis:** I focus on non-physical forms of domestic violence, particular stuff, particularly stalking harassment and things like that that are really harder to prove in the legal system. And so survivors find that they almost need kind of like a roadmap to help them navigate the legal system. And so I started, you know, it was just kind of making, you know, sticky notes and kind of coming up with techniques that I would share with people.

[00:06:39] **Kaytee Gillis:** And then it turned into, you know, kind of like a manuscript. And then I published it. So it had, it has helped a lot of people really navigate, you know, how to feel comfortable in the courtroom or the opposing counsel, things like that. Um, techniques for communication when you have to communicate with them and, and things like that for helping them.

[00:06:57] **Laura Reagan:** Wonderful. So I think your book is wonderful and I think it's sorely needed because I will admit, I have background in knowing about domestic violence from, you know, Past work and training. But even with that, if people are in abusive relationships, a lot of times, the only way I know to guide them like of what to do next with wherever they are is to call a domestic violence hotline or, you know, reach out to a domestic violence services agency.

[00:07:32] **Laura Reagan:** And the fact that you're covering this in your book is like, I mean, it's a no brainer. And I don't, I haven't heard of other books like this, but the process of navigating the legal system as a survivor of domestic violence, family violence is so overwhelming. And it's also not like it's not what people think.

[00:07:54] **Laura Reagan:** It's not how they expect it to be. You know, like I'll tell the wrong that was done to me and justice will be served and that's it, you know?

[00:08:02] **Kaytee Gillis:** No, I mean the, the burden of proof is really on the survivor. Really on the victim and our legal system is set up to protect perpetrators. Our S our legal system is set up to protect criminals.

[00:08:14] **Kaytee Gillis:** I mean, criminal justice. And that is the basis of our legal system, is that we would rather put it, we'd rather a guilty person go free, then lock up an innocent person. And I understand that, you know, the premise of that is set up to protect all of us. However, when it's happening is the burden of proof is really on the victim.

[00:08:31] **Kaytee Gillis:** And the permanence is the burden of proof and the burden of proving beyond a reasonable doubt too. And, you know, and they, they always have, the perpetrators always have a lot of, you know, excuses and a lot of benefits of the doubt and things like that. And so, you know, everything from filing paperwork to dealing with counsel, opposing counsel, to dealing with the amount of times, you have to go back and forth to court, just to get a protection order that almost becomes that the perpetrator is almost irrelevant at that point because the court system almost becomes the new perpetrator, but you were abused through the court system because, you know, it becomes almost a part-time job or a full-time job just to get protection.

[00:09:10] **Laura Reagan:** Yeah.

[00:09:11] **Laura Reagan:** It should not be that way, but that is kind of the way it's set up right now. Then I think it's impossible to overlook the part that the patriarchal system plays that, you know, I think we don't like to think that this really happens as much as it does, you know, just like all other forms of abuse.

[00:09:32] **Laura Reagan:** We just want to, in our culture kind of like

[00:09:35] **Kaytee Gillis:** Sweep it away

[00:09:36] **Kaytee Gillis:** and we're raised in our culture to almost ignore it. You know, especially if you grew up in any kind of, you know, conservative area, you know, some faiths or you're raised to really ignore that, especially when a women growing up in certain faiths.

[00:09:52] **Kaytee Gillis:** And so a lot of times in a lot of my clients and our son, you know, they say. You know, kind of, you know, this is what I, my burden to bear. This is something I have to kind of put up with. You know, my family will never support me. And so outing the perpetrator means going against their family going and going against their church.

[00:10:07] **Kaytee Gillis:** And that's, you know, the main character in my book is a Christian woman and she has to go against her church in order to get protection. And she talks about that, being something that's a huge problem for her because, you know, she was raised for, to practice forgiveness and things like that. And she was raised that divorce is a sin.

[00:10:28] **Kaytee Gillis:** And that is a huge thing that a lot of my clients, especially living here in Louisiana, that's a huge thing that, that comes up. And especially in the legal system, you know, the New Orleans has a very different legal system than any other. We have the pollyannic codes and stuff like that. And I know what she means, like nothing to anyone outside Louisiana, but, um,

[00:10:44] **Laura Reagan:** I just picture like a man and a white wig with a long like, coat tails.

[00:10:51] **Kaytee Gillis:** Anything you picture Probably scroll what's going on. Yes. A lot of stuff that just kind of doesn't necessarily make kind of sense to a lot of people who I know I'm not from here, I'm from Maine. And so, uh, you know, a lot of the stuff that, to me, I'm kind of turning my head and like what, you know, The, the faith that that Louisiana was founded on is represented in a lot of our legal codes and stuff like that.

[00:11:16] **Kaytee Gillis:** And so, you know, and the patriarchal society is really represented, you know, when victims go, going to get a protection order, a lot of times, I mean, you know, that not all the time it is getting better, but the judge is a man, the opposing counsel's a man, you know, and you know, and, and a lot of times, and of course, you know, many of my clients who are victims are men themselves, if they're not always women, but a lot of times you are fighting against that.

[00:11:38] **Kaytee Gillis:** Like, you know, that idea in society of, you know, having to kind of prove yourself and having to prove beyond a reasonable doubt that this happened to you and then prove that you need protection on top of that. Because society that they're like, well, okay, well, it's over now. This is normal relationship stuff.

[00:11:52] **Kaytee Gillis:** This is normal breakup stuff. Why can't you just let it go? Why can't you just move on.

[00:11:57] **Laura Reagan:** Right. Yes. So I think, you're making me think about so many different things. I don't want to get ahead of myself, but one thing that I think would be a good idea as we start talking about this topic is to

kind of define what are we talking about when we're talking about, you know, family violence and domestic violence.

[00:12:18] **Kaytee Gillis:** Okay. So, uh, I like to say, I like to talk about family violence and domestic violence. A lot of times what happens is people use the terms that interchangeably and in art aren't always interchangeable. Family violence, it could be, you know, a child growing up and seeing, you know, mom hit dad, or dad hit Aunt Sally or anything like that.

[00:12:38] **Kaytee Gillis:** Dad hitting brother John, and anything like that. And it's also even things that aren't hitting, you know, neglect in a family, emotional abuse is huge. I see a lot of damaged on to, to people who are children of emotional neglect and children of physical neglect and things like that. That's lasting damage, domestic violence and things like stalking you know, things, of course there's the physical violence, but what happens is you know, do do like a quick Google search and you'll come up with hundreds of thousands of pictures across I'm Scrupik and have a physical violence because we live in a society that assumes that most domestic violence is physical. And, but unfortunately it's not, I mean, there's psychological, there's stalking, you know, things like that.

[00:13:19] **Kaytee Gillis:** Harassment, financial of course, verbal, all of that stuff. And so, you know, I always like to talk about, you know, I really focus on the nonphysical aspects and I I've quoted so many times that I can almost remember the dictionary definition of stalking. And it's a pattern of unwanted behavior that would make a reasonable person feel unsafe or feel in fear for their life and their safety. I'm sure that's probably pretty close to the definition that's used on a protection order. I've seen so many of them. So I always like to say, you know, let's start by that, but I always like to follow up by saying, you know, that that's something that's very vague very, very much so because you know, what does that mean?

[00:14:01] **Kaytee Gillis:** You know what I mean? Like to it, yeah. That's the definition, but to a victim that's going in and saying to a judge, you know, they're stalking me. Okay. A reasonable person would feel unsafe if someone's driving by their house all hours of the night, but the burden of proof is on the victim to prove A, that that's their car, B that they're in the car, C, that they, what are the, is their intention for stopping the car? You know, D, were they on the street for any other reason, I mean, it, it becomes the burden of proof is so burdensome, so cumbersome that it almost becomes that the perpetrators irrelevant. So the gray area that stalking the gray area is just so immense.

[00:14:39] **Kaytee Gillis:** You know, the protection order will say that you can't come with it. And usually it's like 150 yards depending on the state. And usually they give 'em six months, 18 months, something like that. And usually is what they give for a protection order. And, but again, within that protection order, you know, what does, what does that mean?

[00:14:56] **Kaytee Gillis:** 150 yards. Does that mean they can't drive by you in traffic? Does that mean that can't drive by your house? And if they do, what do you do? The police will say, call us, okay. You call the police by the time the police get there, they're gone. Does that mean that you know, that they can't call and make false allegations to DCFS or DFS or whatever, you know, the child abuse hotline, whatever you call it in your state, it doesn't mean that they can't make false complaints to your licensing board doesn't mean that they can't, you know, vandalize your home.

[00:15:24] **Kaytee Gillis:** I mean, all, all of those things, you know, that we think of stalking as just being like. You know, the stereotype of like the guy following you home from work and leaving flowers on your car. And that's really the stereotype of stalking and it's not, it is it's monitoring people on social media. It's, you know, trying to interfere with their livelihood, trying to affect their employment, trying, you know, making false complaints to their employer, trying to get their shoulder taken away, you know, just for retaliation and that kind of stuff.

[00:15:50] **Laura Reagan:** What about would, would revenge porn fit in there?

[00:15:53] **Kaytee Gillis:** Yes. Revenge porn and revenge posting. And what I mean by revenge posting are things like, like let's, you know, let's say John Smith breaks up with Sally Q and, and you know, and Sally Q was so upset that she writes, you know, John, you know, this is really his relationship with his mother.

[00:16:09] **Kaytee Gillis:** This is his mental health diagnosis. This is, you know, insert all of the personal things that he doesn't want everyone to know. You were in a relationship with someone you're going to know they're their secrets. You're, you're going to know their intimate things in their life that they don't want other people to know.

[00:16:25] **Kaytee Gillis:** I mean, that's part of an intimate relationship and that stuff that it's abusive to go and then like slander, no, not necessarily slander. I mean, cause a lot of it's true, but I mean going and telling the world all of their

intimate secrets and intimate things, it's almost like, you know, putting their diary on the, on Facebook or Instagram for the world to see.

[00:16:46] **Kaytee Gillis:** I mean, so yeah, reverse

[00:16:47] **Laura Reagan:** Like weaponizing their personal information to hurt them.

[00:16:51] **Kaytee Gillis:** That's a perfect way to put it. It's perfectly weaponizing weaponizing. Their personal information is, you know, the revenge posting is it's just like the revenge porn. I mean, that's an intimate part of a person that they, that was meant for your eyes only.

[00:17:04] **Kaytee Gillis:** And that's abusive to go and reveal that to everyone. But what ends up happening is revenge porn only in our lifetime has been able to be,

[00:17:12] **Laura Reagan:** We found a name for it, and it's made illegal.

[00:17:15] **Kaytee Gillis:** Like, what's the word? That means like

[00:17:17] **Laura Reagan:** Criminalized.

[00:17:17] **Kaytee Gillis:** Thank you. Well, it is only recently become criminalized. However, revenge posting is not.

[00:17:25] **Kaytee Gillis:** So you can legally go on Facebook and say, Laura did, you know, this and that, and this was her diagnosis and this is her relationship with her mother. And this is what happened with her mentally ill sister. And I mean, and this is a picture of her when she was released from the hospital. I mean, horrible things like that are allowed to be broadcast on social media because they are seen by our judicial system as just being normal relationship stuff, you know, all that. That's just a normal part of a breakup, you know? And the police always say, when I try to help clients to these situations, the police will say, look, just delete your Facebook. Don't look at it, block them. You know, there's so much victim blaming. Just delete your Instagram.

[00:18:05] **Kaytee Gillis:** Just don't look at it. Are you kidding me? I mean, would you say that to someone, you know, they used to say that for revenge porn, you know, and they'd go in and say, look, he's posting all these naked pictures of me or naked videos and they'd say, okay, just don't look at it. I mean, there's my naked videos all over the internet for the world to see it.

[00:18:22] **Kaytee Gillis:** It's the same thing. That's my, you know, my intimate,

[00:18:24] **Laura Reagan:** And it's an intentional to humiliate you or to hurt you in terms of sharing. Oh wow. I'm so proud of my ex partners. Fantastic body. It's not. It's to humiliate and degrade them.

[00:18:40] **Kaytee Gillis:** It's intentionally humiliate, knowingly, humiliate, and degrade them. Absolutely.

[00:18:44] **Kaytee Gillis:** This is the perfect way, the perfect way to put it because it's apps. It's absolutely true. And that's what makes it abusive. That's the difference between posting? Oh, I'm so upset. I just had my heart broken. This was the person who I loved and I'm so upset. Yada, yada, yada, that's different than saying here's a naked picture of her for everyone to see.

[00:19:03] **Kaytee Gillis:** Here's all of her intimate secrets for everyone to see. That's what makes it abusive.

[00:19:07] **Laura Reagan:** Yeah. It's like that idea of wanting other people to pile on.

[00:19:12] **Kaytee Gillis:** And then that's a lot of times what people do too is, you know, unfortunately we live in a society where a lot of people like the drama and they they'll go on and, oh, let me look at this one.

[00:19:23] **Kaytee Gillis:** And let me, let me go to her Facebook and see if she's saying anything back. And that's why the number one thing I tell my clients is don't react. Don't say anything. Don't post anything back. Don't try to refute all the claims, don't react. And I, I know that that's sometimes sounds, you know, victim blaming.

[00:19:40] **Kaytee Gillis:** But, I mean, it's the number one thing that people say, people who specialize in narcissistic abuse, people who specialize in stopping this number, one thing that they say is you cannot react because it will fuel it.

[00:19:51] **Laura Reagan:** Yeah. But, and I would say too, you know, it's not victim blaming. If you're saying don't react because that just feeds it. Document it.

[00:19:59] **Kaytee Gillis:** Document that takes screenshots, screenshots.

[00:20:03] **Kaytee Gillis:** Take video recordings, document it, you know, any emails that are sent, print them out, print the screenshots out with the date and time and keep it, even if you're like, oh, they're probably going to calm down. No. And even if, you know, if you blocked them and other people send them to you, you know, keep the screenshot don't react, but just keep the screenshots.

[00:20:22] **Kaytee Gillis:** And I always recommend blocking people. Not because it prevents them from seeing your stuff, because we know what the internet, that your stuff's never really a hundred percent private, but it keeps you from being triggered by seeing them .

[00:20:34] **Laura Reagan:** Yes. And inadvertently doing something that might potentially, and this isn't, I think this is a warning for the right reasons.

[00:20:44] **Laura Reagan:** Like, because it's so emotional that you might, you know, feel the urge to cuss them out online or do something like that. If you get triggered and then they go, well, look what she did to me. Or he, they did to me and you know, it, it, it happens and it's part of how we react to trauma at times. So if that happens, it's something that like shame yourself about, but you know, the person thrives on, you know, the power dynamic that they have more power and they can force, they can like get you to react a certain way is it's kind of like the whole driving force behind the behavior that they're doing.

[00:21:21] **Kaytee Gillis:** Yeah, absolutely. Everything is done to try to get you to react. So that way they can prove, because the M.O of many abusive people, the M.O of most perpetrators is to claim that they were the one who's been victimized almost to excuse their behavior saying, no, you know, they were abusive. That's why I did this because you know, to them, all of their behaviors excused. You know, every false allegation, every lie, everything that they post about you, everything that they do to you is, is excusable because of blank because of you were abusive because you did this, or you did that.

[00:21:55] **Kaytee Gillis:** So keeping in mind that that's their M.O is to go and say that they were abused. So that's why I always tell people, don't give them any fuel. Don't give them anything to kind of prove that or anything to put in their corner. You want to, you want you have to be clean, especially if you're have to go to court for protection order, you want your hands clean, which I know is really hard, I know, I know, I know it's really hard.

[00:22:15] **Kaytee Gillis:** I know because who the heck can sit there and watch all these horrible allegations come up about them just coming out of left field and left and right. And every day you wake up and there's been, you know,

complaints to your boss and complaints about your children to DCFS and you know, things like that. I mean, it's constant.

[00:22:35] **Kaytee Gillis:** So I mean, who the heck can sit there and, and, put up with that again, again, and again, You know, it's extremely humiliating and extremely difficult.

[00:22:44] **Laura Reagan:** Yeah, it's like psychological warfare.

[00:22:46] **Kaytee Gillis:** For sure.

[00:22:47] **Kaytee Gillis:** Psychological warfare.

[00:22:49] **Laura Reagan:** Yeah. So I want to, I want to include the point that you specifically also focus in working with LGBTQ+ survivors of this form of stalking.

[00:23:04] **Laura Reagan:** And can you say something about or of stalking and these types of violence. Can you say a little bit about the particular issues that are common for LGBTQ survivors +?,

[00:23:17] **Kaytee Gillis:** So, uh, a lot of times what happens is I find that people who don't fit the stereotypical gender, who we think is going to be the gender of a perpetrator or the gender of a victim are people who aren't as believed.

[00:23:32] **Kaytee Gillis:** And what I mean by that is, you know, men who go in and say that they're being stalked by a woman or men who say that they're being abused by a woman. I mean, especially here in Louisiana, that's, I've, I've seen men almost get laughed at, by the police. You know, judges are like, "Huh?" You know, and not all the time.

[00:23:51] **Kaytee Gillis:** I mean, it is changing it's 2022. I like to think that we're going in a better direction with this, but it does happen a lot. It is extremely hard to prove, you know, for regardless of the gender of the victim is extremely hard to prove almost that the perpetrator, a female, a perpetrator is a female, just because our society does not want to view females as being dangerous.

[00:24:12] **Kaytee Gillis:** Our society likes to assign men the role of perpetrator and female, the role of victim. However, what ends up happening is a lot of times, it's just the way that gender is that we're conditioned in our gender. But

females tend to do a lot of the, like the non-physical forms of domestic violence, which are harder to prove anyway.

[00:24:30] **Kaytee Gillis:** So females tend to do more of like the stocking and the psychological abuse, psychological warfare, and that kind of stuff, which are already harder to prove. So then that's harder. And so, and then a lot of clients, a lot of my clients, they, you know, a lot of my LGBTQ clients say, you know, I, I don't want to out myself, you know, if I go in and because when you fill out a protection order, you have to check how you know the person, and you have to check out like why this person would be, why you'd meet criteria for protection order, because you can't just go get a protection order, I don't know about every state, but in this state, you can just go get a protection order against like, you know, a friend or something like that.

[00:25:08] **Kaytee Gillis:** It would have to be like, if a family member, former cohabitating partner roommates, something like that. So, you know, a lot of times that would mean out of yourself, you know, by saying, this is a former dating partner, you have to put, you know, your gender, their gender. And a lot of times this, you know, is something that you have to hide yourself against your family.

[00:25:26] **Kaytee Gillis:** You have to out yourself, you know, to, to your faith. If your face means a lot to you, you have to out yourself to your community, to your employer. And. And things like that. So it's really hard for a lot of my clients to really, you know, kind of weigh that decision of what, how do I want to navigate this?

[00:25:40] **Laura Reagan:** Yeah. To, to go into seeking protection from the legal system, those barriers are even, that's very difficult for survivors across the board and those particular barriers. Just add another layer of what a perpetrator can use against you. Like you were saying, like revenge posting to, you know, outing someone.

[00:26:08] **Kaytee Gillis:** Like if you, if you report me for this.

[00:26:10] **Kaytee Gillis:** Well, I mean, the, the threats, like, you know, kind of going back to stalking you know, threats, like are a part of the stalking you know, we think of stalking as just being like the following you around. No, it's the threats is the harassment. It's the actions that are put to intimidate you to remind you who's in control.

[00:26:29] **Kaytee Gillis:** And a lot of times, a lot of the, the threats that people say are things like, you know, if you leave I'll out, you, if you leave, I'll ruin your career. If you leave, I'll, I'll keep the children and you'll never see them again, those are common things that people say. And so, you know, if you're being threatened that you're going to be outed.

[00:26:50] **Kaytee Gillis:** I mean in Louisiana, you could, you could lose your children if you're outed. You could lose your appointment if you're outed. You know, we don't have the same level of protection for both parents, for LGBTQ clients. So, you know, LGBTQ people, it's not the same, you know? And so a lot of times that is a real fear that people have, you know, I don't have the same legal rights to my kids as they did.

[00:27:12] **Kaytee Gillis:** So I can't, you know, take my kids or I can't be with my kids. That's a common thing. I hear people say.

[00:27:19] **Laura Reagan:** So like if maybe one parent is biologically related to the children and the other parent isn't, then they don't have legal rights. The same. Yeah.

[00:27:28] **Kaytee Gillis:** Which is like, I mean, if you think of it, like, let's say that you take like, you know, assistant or a couple of straight couple where, I mean, we don't, we don't know if we meet a couple, we don't know if, if she had the baby biologically.

[00:27:41] **Kaytee Gillis:** Wasn't his by law. We just don't know because it's none of our business, but what ends up happening is, you know, with a gay couple, it there's, you know, always like we feel, yeah, like, well, whose kid is it biologically? And did they use a sperm donor and dah, dah, dah. And so a lot of times, you know, especially, you know, maybe more so with women, but there is one, who's like the biological carrier of the child sometimes. And you know, and a lot of times that is used against them in court, you know, "Oh, I carried the child biologically" and, and that is so new for, you know, for some court systems that they're just like, oh, okay, well we'll just assign guardianship then to the mother and you know, and then the partner, you know, or the father or whatever the other guardian is then saying, okay, well now, so now what, I can't see my kids just because I dared to leave this relationship.

[00:28:33] **Kaytee Gillis:** So it's the retaliation.

[00:28:35] **Laura Reagan:** Yeah. Yeah. It's like really using the court system and the legal system to

[00:28:40] **Kaytee Gillis:** Further the abuse.

[00:28:41] **Laura Reagan:** Further it. Yeah, exactly. So it's like in one way, the system can have its own traumatic impact on someone, but then there's the way that the perpetrator can use the system to abuse the other partner too.

[00:28:55] **Kaytee Gillis:** Yeah the perpetrator almost becomes irrelevant because they use the legal system and the court system.

[00:29:00] **Kaytee Gillis:** And, and not just, you know, the court system, but like. In other forms of power. So like DCFS, you know, licensing boards, regular regulatory boards and things like that, that, you know, the perpetrator is almost irrelevant. The court system does their dirty work for them. And so much of it is legal because it's blurring the lines because you legally have a right to, to make false allegations Allegheny.

[00:29:23] **Kaytee Gillis:** I mean, okay, no, you don't have a right to make false allegations, but you have a right to, and, um, you know, I know the audience can see when I'm putting my fingers in quotations, you have a right to make like a reasonable suspicion of a complaint. And so a lot of times that's used to people's advantage like, oh, well I think he's abusing the children.

[00:29:42] **Kaytee Gillis:** So I'm going to put in a complaint and then go. For pure retaliation.

[00:29:49] **Laura Reagan:** Yeah. Which then hurts, you know, other victims down the line because they're not believed because, oh, it's our custody case, you know? So it's tangled.

[00:30:00] **Laura Reagan:** It's so tangled.

[00:30:03] **Kaytee Gillis:** So tangled, you know, and, and it's so hard because the, you know, the police, a lot of times, you know, I w I work with a law enforcement of good friends in law enforcement.

[00:30:12] **Kaytee Gillis:** And they'll say to me, like, Kaytee, our hands are tied, you know, unless there's, unless we go out there and we see it, I'm going to be graphic because I'm speaking, you know, like a law enforcement person, but they'll say, let's me go out there. And there's, you know, there's a weapon and then there's blood and there's bruises.

[00:30:27] **Kaytee Gillis:** You know, we don't know what to do. We're not trained in that, which is true. Just like I'm not trained to make an arrest or a drug bust. It's not in my area, it's not their area unless they come out and they see bruises and broken bones, they don't know what to do. And, and so a lot of times, I mean, the police are like, our hands are tied.

[00:30:43] **Kaytee Gillis:** If we don't know what to do. And you know, even the limitations of the protection orders, the police that they're in, these kind of scratch their heads like, well, you know, I mean, technically she has a right to drive by the house and then the other cop was standing right next to him, you know? Cause they usually work in pairs.

[00:30:57] **Kaytee Gillis:** We'll we'll then. Well, no, she doesn't have a right to buy a drive by the house because she can't be within 150 yards. Then the other one says, but it's a public road and the other one says, but she could take another. I mean, it's like, you'll sit there. The two of them go back and forth and it's like, if law enforcement is debating it among themselves, then how are, how is the public supposed to know what to do?

[00:31:19] **Laura Reagan:** Yeah, it reminds me because we saw a video of the young couple.

[00:31:24] **Kaytee Gillis:** Gabby, Gabby Petito?

[00:31:27] **Laura Reagan:** Yeah.

[00:31:27] **Kaytee Gillis:** And so many survivors and so many, you know, in the domestic violence community, in the survivor community. So many when I saw that video of Gabby, so many were saying, no, there's something going on because she was just so upset and he was so calm and, you know, and he kept saying, oh, I don't know.

[00:31:46] **Kaytee Gillis:** She doesn't have her medicine. And she's got OCD. And she's got, anytime you see someone like pointing at someone's mental health concerns, I always kind of questioned that. Like why, why are you pointing the finger at an, you know, another person what's going on here? Why are you trying to point the finger away from yourself?

[00:32:03] **Kaytee Gillis:** You know what what's going on? Um, you know, by lot, a lot of people were questioning that.

[00:32:07] **Laura Reagan:** Yeah. Yeah. Well, and, and that dynamic is common that the perpetrator is usually calm. The victim is usually hysterical. And if the cops, because they don't have the training to really like, they're a forensic expert in domestic violence, right?

[00:32:28] **Laura Reagan:** So they show up and they're like, see one person acting out of control, one person acting calm. They naturally think the out of control one is a problem.

[00:32:36] **Kaytee Gillis:** And that makes sense. It's kind of human instinct almost too. If you show up to a scene and there's one person who's calm, it's almost instinctual to kind of gravitate towards kind of talking and speaking and conversing more with that person.

[00:32:50] **Kaytee Gillis:** Who's calm because you know that you think that they're going to give you, you know, a more rational part of the story.

[00:32:57] **Laura Reagan:** Running a group private practice has been a challenging and rewarding experience. And one thing that has made it so much easier is Therapy Notes. Therapy Notes makes billing, scheduling note-taking and tele-health incredibly easy.

[00:33:10] **Laura Reagan:** If you're coming from another EHR, like I did, Therapy Notes makes the transition incredibly easy, importing your demographic data free of charge so you can get going right away. My team has found Therapy Notes, very easy to learn. It's intuitive. The customer support is second to none, and that's one of the things that has kept me a Therapy Notes customer for several years now. Anytime I've needed to contact Therapy Notes for help with an issue, I couldn't figure out on my own. I've been able to get through to someone and resolve the issue within 15 minutes, 99% of the time. Find out what more than a hundred thousand mental health professionals already know.

[00:33:50] **Laura Reagan:** Try Therapy Notes for two months. Absolutely free. Just click on the link in the show notes or enter the promo code chat at [therapynotes.com](https://therapynotes.com).

[00:33:59] **Laura Reagan:** Yeah. Even it's probably more comfortable really. I mean, just go like, oh man, this person seems, whoa. Yeah. That's how it was with that video with Gabby Petito and the John.

[00:34:14] **Laura Reagan:** I can't remember the person,

[00:34:15] **Kaytee Gillis:** I can't remember his name (Brian Laundrie),

[00:34:17] **Laura Reagan:** But yeah, it was like, you can see how the cops actually weren't they weren't saying, oh yeah, like women are crazy. Give her a smack. You know, they're not like supporting intentionally supporting domestic violence, but by their own bias that they don't realize they see and they, they just don't have the discernment because they don't have the training.

[00:34:39] **Laura Reagan:** It's not. But then there's the other piece, which is like our cultural conditioning. Patriarchal

[00:34:46] **Kaytee Gillis:** Which is bias in and of itself. We're conditioned, we're conditioned for bias or we're conditioned, but you know, it kind of goes back to when, you know, in like our great, great grandmother's days when they used to hospitalize women for being hysterical and things like that and hospitalized.

[00:35:02] **Kaytee Gillis:** And not just For days, I mean, hospitalized for years. And it was completely fine for her husband to just put her away. Now, I mean, that was 1800s and of course we've changed a lot, but you know, it happened a lot.

[00:35:13] **Laura Reagan:** Through the 50's and 60's in the 1900's, you know?

[00:35:17] **Kaytee Gillis:** Yeah. I mean, like we have, but we haven't, you know, those are still the people who live back then where the people who made the laws that are still on the books today and, and things like that. So it takes a long time to, to change minds and to change. And there are so many biases, like with the police and with law enforcement and, you know, it's the good old boys club and, you know, and unfortunately there was a lot of domestic violence in law enforcement and, you know, and then they are, you know, they, they, they want to protect their themselves and they want to protect their, their brothers in blue and stuff like that.

[00:35:48] **Kaytee Gillis:** And, you know, and then, okay. You know, and, but a lot of times it is just hard because there are so many biases and you're fighting against that. And it's, it's so much of like, you know, that. Assumption that, you know, this, this should really stay in the home type. You know, you kind of get that reaction from the police of like, you know, especially the older ones.

[00:36:10] **Kaytee Gillis:** And I know, you know, I hate to kind of say

[00:36:12] **Laura Reagan:** What happens behind closed doors is other people's business and it's not my business.

[00:36:17] **Kaytee Gillis:** That's a lot of times that's what happens, you know? And they'll say, you know, comments like that, like, okay, isn't this a normal part of breaking up? Can't you just move on? And I think that's one of the most frustrating things.

[00:36:31] **Kaytee Gillis:** Because then what do I do?

[00:36:32] **Laura Reagan:** Exactly.

[00:36:33] **Laura Reagan:** And that's one of the parts it's frustrating, but it's scary too, because there's so many, to me it's scary. There's so many barriers preventing people from receiving legal protection in these situations, but you know, people are at high risk of physical danger, even if the abuse had been more non-physical I don't know if I'm wrong on that.

[00:36:57] **Laura Reagan:** Please feel free to correct me. I didn't write a book and you did, but I know when people leave, they're at high risk.

[00:37:04] **Kaytee Gillis:** They are. When, when they leave, they, they are, that's the worst time. It's the most dangerous time for victims when they leave a relationship. And, and there is a pattern of domestic violence. It does escalate.

[00:37:15] **Kaytee Gillis:** It does follow a pattern, you know, and there is, you know, if someone's stalking you, the chances of them assaulting you are, are higher, the much higher. And if they've already assaulted you, that's your chances, chances of them harming you again. You know, if they've, if they vandalized your poem or your property, you know, the chances go up.

[00:37:33] **Kaytee Gillis:** If they there, you know, and there are certain criteria, like if they've made threats and there's like escalation points, you know, and like each, um, I can't remember the thing that it's called, but there's, um, it's clean. It's called like a severity scale. I'm trying to remember what it's called and the legality assessment, I think maybe I think maybe that's.

[00:37:52] **Kaytee Gillis:** Yeah. And like each one is a, is a certain point. And, and, you know, in a lot of times, you know, things like that, I mean, I, I don't usually see that used a lot in court. Unfortunately. It's really only when I was doing research for my book. I found it, but unfortunately, P you know, people don't really use that, but yeah, everything is given a point.

[00:38:13] **Kaytee Gillis:** So have they vandalized your home? Have they made friends? Have they assaulted you and have they stopped you? I mean, those, those things right there, your chances of being killed, you know, quite frankly go up.

[00:38:24] **Laura Reagan:** Right. And if, if they've ever like, Strangled you there's, there's a high risk of death from being strangled and people, you know, don't think of it as being that serious.

[00:38:36] **Laura Reagan:** Like, you know, if he had his hands around my throat, it was very, it was very quick, you know, I could catch my breath. I was able to catch my breath. I was okay. You know, but I mean,

[00:38:46] **Kaytee Gillis:** He was kind of caught up in the moment and there's so much of that. Yeah. And that's the thing is that people don't realize is that it, there is a pattern of behavior and there's a pattern of escalation.

[00:38:54] **Kaytee Gillis:** This is not. And what happens is each time someone does something like that, like if, if they strangle someone, if they vandalized their home, if they stalk them, each thing is viewed in isolation. So the police will view that as one, one thing of assault, you know, and then if they do something else, that's, that's another charge of assault.

[00:39:12] **Kaytee Gillis:** Vandalism is something else. So, so instead we're looking at, you know, several pieces to a puzzle that are all spread out instead of looking at it. No, this is a puzzle. These pieces fit together and they sh really law enforcement and our judicial system should look at it like that. We should be looking at it like.

[00:39:29] **Kaytee Gillis:** No, no. At least these pieces all fit together in a very specific way. There are pattern of behavior. When we look at them as isolated incidents, it's, it's easy to kind of discount. Oh, well they were angry and they vandalized her home, you know, or they were just, he was just angry and he choked her. She was just angry and she, whatever.

[00:39:46] **Laura Reagan:** Crimes of passion.

[00:39:47] **Kaytee Gillis:** Yes. We need to look at it. It's a pattern of behavior. This is not a one time. And then one time at one time, this is a pattern. How many boxes have they checked on this scale and on this list?

[00:39:58] **Laura Reagan:** Yeah, that's a great point. And I think that's why documenting is so important. Like I've told so many people, like just jot down every time they call you what they said and every, you know, if they called you 56 times today, Just jot down November 2nd, 56, missed calls, you know?

[00:40:15] **Kaytee Gillis:** And take screenshots take a screenshot of the missed call and take a screenshot of the phone number.

[00:40:21] **Kaytee Gillis:** And a lot of times what will happen is people will just have the, like the name, John Smith. 52 missed calls. Do some, I don't know what kind of phone you have, but if you can like click on it and open it up. So where it says the phone number, you know, like nine, nine, nine, nine, nine, whatever, open it up and take a screenshot of that.

[00:40:39] **Kaytee Gillis:** Because in court, John Smith, it won't matter because you can change any phone number to John Smith. So any opposing counsel will challenge that. So you want to see the actual phone number. You want to take a screenshot of that. And then I always tell people, keep a diary because I've seen diary entries, get people protection orders more often than you'd think, because something that happened June 2nd, you know, a year ago, the judge says, yeah, I'll I'll honor it because it's in your diary.

[00:41:07] **Kaytee Gillis:** You know?

[00:41:08] **Laura Reagan:** Isn't that funny? It's like, if he's saying it happened on June 2nd, they're like, well, how do I know? That's true. And then you go, it's in my diary and they're okay. And you're like, well, why didn't my words have as much weight as what they show you in my diary, but okay.

[00:41:23] **Kaytee Gillis:** That's what I. Yeah. Say, okay.

[00:41:26] **Kaytee Gillis:** I'll I'll I'll honor it. So I always tell people, keep a diary, you know, take screenshots and document it other ways, but also keep a diary if you can. And there's also something called victim's voice and you can go on and you can document that way. And it's like an online way of documenting incidences and things like that.

[00:41:45] **Laura Reagan:** So is it public? Like it's like a forum or it's just like something that you can, it's like you can log in and it's your way that you track what's gone on

[00:41:55] **Kaytee Gillis:** it's actually, you can create like a website and you can create here. I'm trying to pull up the app so I can kind of describe it a little bit more, but there's ways for you to go in and like, it'll tell you what information to document.

[00:42:09] **Kaytee Gillis:** So. Yeah. And it'll tell you like, cause a lot of times what happens is people don't know how to document. And so they over or they under document. And, and I know you're probably saying like, why does it matter if you over document, if you over document, then it can look petty to court and you know, the judge I've seen judges throw it out.

[00:42:31] **Kaytee Gillis:** Cause it looks like you're being petty. You know, it looks like you're just trying to find fault. So it'll tell you what to document. I'll tell you like, you know, timestamps, like how to document bruises, how to document, you know, if you have things that you have a nest camera ring camera, how to save the videos and that kind of stuff.

[00:42:47] **Kaytee Gillis:** It's called victims voice. And I always recommend that to people.

[00:42:51] **Laura Reagan:** Is that a free app?

[00:42:53] **Kaytee Gillis:** So it's actually an app. Yeah. And it's a victim's voice. Like all one victim's voice. And then you can go to, you know, like play store apple or anything like that. So it's like victim's voice app.

[00:43:04] **Laura Reagan:** Okay.

[00:43:04] **Laura Reagan:** Thank you. You know, it's like, as I'm hearing you say about them saying it's petty, it's like this overarching.

[00:43:11] **Laura Reagan:** I just have to say it out loud. There's just like this overarching dismissiveness. About victim's experiences and, you know, it's like, oh, you're making such a big deal out of nothing and can't you just let it go. And, you know, it's all frustrating. So frustrating to hear that!

[00:43:30] **Kaytee Gillis:** It really is dismissed anything domestic.

[00:43:32] **Kaytee Gillis:** Like the second you hear domestic. I mean, I have a really good friend who works for law enforcement and I've, you know, I've been with him before and they'll, you know, there are certain codes for domestic, you know, and, and I'll see people just kind of roll her off domestic. I don't want to

go to this domestic and, you know, and it's just so interesting, you know, it's like, look like, you know, like the stigma around it and how much it's dismissed as just being like oh.

[00:43:56] **Kaytee Gillis:** Household stuff. I was just, just another couple arguing now.

[00:44:00] **Laura Reagan:** Yeah. When really like, if you look at crime, this type of crime is probably more prevalent than gun violence and all of that. And it's happening in people's homes, whether it's domestic violence, sexual violence, they're so prevalent.

[00:44:15] **Kaytee Gillis:** Yeah. It's actually, I mean, I, you know, I quoted someone in my, in my book as this famous quote, you know, I don't know if it's famous, it's famous for me.

[00:44:23] **Kaytee Gillis:** It stuck with me, you know, the domestic violence homicide shouldn't be called preventable homicides, you know, because you know, they're perfect because if you follow the pattern of behavior and the escalation, the person is leaving you a verbal and physical roadmap of what they're doing. Rarely is it just kind of a one-off and it does happen.

[00:44:44] **Kaytee Gillis:** I don't want to dismiss that. It does happen that there are, you know, random acts of violence in. You know, murder and things like that, but usually there's escalation. You know what, usually what ends up happening is that when a victim is murdered by their partner, usually they have gone to the police multiple times.

[00:45:00] **Kaytee Gillis:** They've tried to seek a protection order multiple times. That's usually what ends up happening. And then they, sometimes the protection order is denied and sometimes not. I mean, the piece of paper doesn't stop someone from coming and harming you. So, you know, many people are killed every day with a protection order in place.

[00:45:17] **Laura Reagan:** Well, so as you say that, and I I'm very aware of that too. It's just a piece of paper, but why is a protective order worth? What's the reason that it would be worthwhile for people to go ahead and pursue it anyway?

[00:45:28] **Kaytee Gillis:** So that thing I'm really glad you said that because I do want to tell people that I always recommend you get one anyway, you know, of course I, you know, I'll say things like, you know, that it's just a piece of

paper or, you know, and I know it does sound like I'm saying that this is kind of tedious and burdensome and it, is.

[00:45:44] **Kaytee Gillis:** But I, I always recommend doing it anyway because it does create a paper trail. In the least it does create a paper trail, you know, even if it is denied, there's a record with the court and, um, you know, and you can go in and you can ask for, you know, amendments and you can ask for. You know, it extensions and stuff like that.

[00:46:03] **Kaytee Gillis:** And if you do have a protection order, then it is easier. You know, if you call the police, the police respond faster and you know, and it is nationwide. You know, if I have a protection order in California, it's legal in New Hampshire, you know? And so it, you know, it's not like the person can really kind of, you know, jump out and jump away from that.

[00:46:23] **Kaytee Gillis:** So I always recommend to survivors to get, to get one, to get a protection order and to still go to the police, even though it's tedious. And even though I'm gonna, you know, I'm sit there and kind of gripe about it and all that. I still recommend doing it because...

[00:46:36] **Laura Reagan:** Yeah, me too, because I, in my experience, I've only lived in two states, Virginia and Maryland.

[00:46:42] **Laura Reagan:** But in those both states, if you have a protective order, If Johnny calls Susie a hundred times, she can call the police and say, he's harassing me over the phone. And they're like, oh, well, you can go down here. They'll say you can go to the commissioner and try to press charges if you want. They're not even going to come to you for that.

[00:47:02] **Laura Reagan:** But, yeah, but if you say I have a protective order and he's calling me a hundred times, then he's actually breaking a law by violating the protective order.

[00:47:11] **Kaytee Gillis:** And that that's criminal, that's criminal. It's a cri they're violating a criminal law versus civil.

[00:47:17] **Laura Reagan:** Right. So it's like, it's almost easier to prove violation of a protective order than it is to prove like an assault where the court sees it, as he said, she said, not that you, you know, if you feel like you want to report that it's totally valid to do so, but if you get the protective order and then the person is still doing the behavior and you can report that and it's documented, then that's what they will be.

[00:47:42] **Laura Reagan:** That's where they get the, you know, diversionary intervention.

[00:47:47] **Kaytee Gillis:** Sometimes that does, that does work a lot of times. You know, it's, you know, phone calls or one of those things like I've, I've seen cases get thrown out because people say, oh, you know, it was a butt dial and that kind of stuff. That's, that's pretty common unless they leave a voicemail, that's pretty threatening.

[00:48:03] **Kaytee Gillis:** But, and again, it it's so hard, you know, the burden, there's so many burdens and on the, on the victim to prove, then you have to prove it. How do I know what's their voice? How do I know? I mean, but I say all that to say. Do it anyway, you know, make the police report anyway, apply for the protection order.

[00:48:20] **Kaytee Gillis:** Anyway, you know, a lot of tips in my book that we'll go over, like how to do that, how to make sure that you can document things correctly, how to be like, when you know that you're going to start preparing to leave, how to, how to start doing that, how to react, you know, when you have the protection order and then that kind of stuff, really to help navigate that.

[00:48:40] **Laura Reagan:** Awesome. And yeah, and I mean, it's, I don't think it's, it's not like, uh, the strategy to subvert the process of recording, you know, but when someone is using verbal, emotional abuse course of control, you know, threats, it's a lot harder to prove those things as crimes in them of themselves. It's almost like the protective order says this person's not allowed to bother me anymore. And then when they, if they keep doing it, that's where you have some teeth in the legal system.

[00:49:16] **Kaytee Gillis:** Yeah, yeah. You're right. And I said, tell people get really specific with the protection order. Like, you know, like list, list, your work address, and your home address, you know, don't, don't think that it's going to be implied.

[00:49:27] **Kaytee Gillis:** There's nothing as implied in the law. You know, always be very specific, you know, write down that they can not call your employer, write down that they can not show up at the restaurant that you, you know, bartend out on Saturday mornings or whatever.

[00:49:40] **Laura Reagan:** Yeah.

[00:49:41] **Laura Reagan:** So can we go over a little bit, a couple of the things that stand out to me around this topic are that people, you know, when we go back to that idea of a reasonable person would feel unsafe or in fear for their life.

[00:49:55] **Laura Reagan:** I think that's where people get hung up as like, oh, well not life-threatening because he drove by my house 52 times in an hour. It's not really life-threatening so I don't know.

[00:50:08] **Kaytee Gillis:** Yeah. I mean, making, you know, multiple, you know, allegations to DCFS, isn't really life-threatening. I know. And that's why we say that there is so much of a gray area with stalking

[00:50:20] **Kaytee Gillis:** and, but I always want to tell people that we cannot, you, I always want to tell, you know, therapists, clients, law enforcement, mental health, professional, mental, um, you know, a medical professional that there is a pattern of behavior, so, okay. Maybe you're right. Maybe the driving by your house 52 times is not life-threatening, but there, you know, the there's a chain of, uh, And it's escalating and then, then the next thing.

[00:50:45] **Kaytee Gillis:** Okay. So the next thing is vandalism, you know, and then after they've done that, the next thing is assault, you know, and it doesn't always necessarily follow that pattern, but it does follow a pattern of escalation. And so if we ignore the driving by the house, 52 times a week, ignore the, you know, calling someone's boss or showing up at someone's job, you know, seven times in one week.

[00:51:06] **Kaytee Gillis:** If we ignore all that, then it tells them that the behavior is acceptable and then it'll continue to escalate.

[00:51:11] **Laura Reagan:** Right, right. So it's, it's sort of like, I think maybe a better gauge for the person individually. It's just like, do I feel unsafe? And what do I really feel about this? And, but it's hard. I too think sometimes people don't feel, they say they don't feel unsafe.

[00:51:29] **Laura Reagan:** And I think because of how they're coping with how terrorized they are within the relationship, you know?

[00:51:35] **Kaytee Gillis:** I see it go either way. I hear some people say, oh, no, Screw him, let him come up to me and you know, I'm going to, I mean, I live in full disclaimer. I live in Louisiana, it's open carry, you know, yada, yada, but I, you know, I have a lot of clients now.

[00:51:48] **Kaytee Gillis:** I don't care, um, meet them in the parking lot. And then I see the opposite. I see a lot of people that are so terrorized and so scared to the point of, they don't want to leave their home. You know, every time a phone rings have a number that they don't know, they're scared to answer the phone. Every time they, you know, have an email from someone they don't know, they're scared to, it can go either way.

[00:52:11] **Kaytee Gillis:** So I always tell people don't necessarily like gauge it by how you feel, gauge it by the behavior that they're doing. Like, you know, get a protection order because things like this escalate don't, if they're showing up at your work, you know, seven, 10 times in one week. That's type of stuff escalates, you know, put a stop to that.

[00:52:29] **Kaytee Gillis:** Doesn't matter that they're not bothering you or that you're not scared or anything like that. Maybe your coworkers are scared for you. You know, maybe your children are scared.

[00:52:38] **Laura Reagan:** That's an important point. And I tell people this a lot, most shootings that happen at workplaces are domestic violence, in their way that they're started.

[00:52:48] **Kaytee Gillis:** And anyone at that point is fair game. I mean, I've heard of situations where the, you know, a coworkers is affected or a friend or family member or mother-in-law things like that. And just, just keep in mind, like, you know, your roommates in your home, your, uh, this is a huge thing right now for people who have, you know, paying attention to celebrities and social media, but you know, the new partner.

[00:53:09] **Kaytee Gillis:** When you start dating, you know, if you start dating again, you know, and you know, there's Kanye West, just put out the video about the, you know, threatening his new, his girl, his ex-wife's new partner, that is so common with, with stalking is that the perpetrator will put out, you know, threats or try to find information about the new partner.

[00:53:29] **Kaytee Gillis:** And I always say to people, don't take that lightly. Like that is, that is following the behavior pattern. You know, that, that right there, and again, leaving you that, that physical roadmap and, you know, if they're threatening the new partner, don't take that lightly. You know, don't say, oh, well, my partner doesn't care and I don't really care.

[00:53:46] **Kaytee Gillis:** They're not really gonna do anything.

[00:53:48] **Laura Reagan:** Yeah. What about that whole, like one, sorry.

[00:53:51] **Kaytee Gillis:** Yeah, I was just gonna say like, you know, it's not necessarily even about you at that point. It's about all the other innocent people who are brought into it.

[00:53:57] **Laura Reagan:** Right. And I think like another way that our culture, like gaslights us about this is that so many people would see that kind of, I don't actually know what Kanye West released recently, I didn't actually hear about that, but I heard before about how his new girlfriend was talking about how he's showered her with gifts and you know, how, and, and it was portrayed. And I hope for her sake that it is, but it was portrayed as a very romantic kind of thing. And I think are Kanye West aside, I think our culture tells us like leaving roses on your car.

[00:54:33] **Laura Reagan:** Oh, he just wants me back. Or, you know, showing up at your work. She's so in love with me, she just can't stand to be apart, you know? And. It's like somehow.

[00:54:43] **Kaytee Gillis:** Yeah, no, that's a red flag being showered. And again, you know, celebrities are kind of like their own like breed. I mean, you know what, I'm..

[00:54:50] **Laura Reagan:** Kind of characatures in a way.

[00:54:52] **Kaytee Gillis:** Yeah. They really are. So it's like, it's hard to judge, you know, but you know what I mean? Cause like someone who's a multimillionaire truck full of roses is like nothing, you know, for us that that'd be, you know, a big, a big expense, but you know, but it isn't necessarily about the money. It's about the gesture of like, okay, this is a little over the top, you know?

[00:55:11] **Laura Reagan:** Extravagant, grandiose gestures.

[00:55:13] **Kaytee Gillis:** Yeah. Someone showing up at your work multiple times and it's intrusive and it's a boundary issue, you know, maybe I don't want you to meet all my coworkers when we've only been dating for three days.

[00:55:22] **Kaytee Gillis:** That kind of stuff is, I always tell people, like be wary of those. No worry of any kind of boundary violation in the, you know, in any kind of dating situations.

[00:55:31] **Laura Reagan:** Yeah. Yeah. And then like the idea of threatening the new partner is like, oh, you know, chivalry, like, they're going to have a dual, you know, it's like this old like romance story.

[00:55:43] **Kaytee Gillis:** Yeah.

[00:55:43] **Kaytee Gillis:** We like we teach. So, you know, like little girls, like, oh, like, you know, when you watch Disney movies and all they're going to fight for you at no, no, no, no. That's not. It's not funny. Yeah. He allegedly put out a video, you know, saying that, you know, calling for a hit on her new partner, allegedly. And, and that's the kind of stuff that is so, so, so common that I want to tell people, don't take that lightly.

[00:56:05] **Kaytee Gillis:** You know, they threatened the new partner and it's not just, it's not just talk a lot of times, you know, I mean, of course, are there people who do it. And they're just talking and then they get over it. Of course. However, don't take it lightly, you know, I mean the new partner, they haven't done anything to them.

[00:56:21] **Kaytee Gillis:** If they're threatening your partner, you know, they're threatening your coworker, threatening your family members, your sisters, your mom, you know, there's an innocent people. Not that, not that you as the victim or survivor, not an innocent person, but these are people who aren't even relevant to the situation.

[00:56:36] **Laura Reagan:** Yeah. And I think it's not about like saying, Hey survivor, it's your responsibility to protect other people from your abusive ex, but it's like, it's kind of like take the romance, take off the rose colored glasses and just like, look at this for what it is. Threats being made to do violence to another person.

[00:56:56] **Laura Reagan:** Is that okay? Is that really normal? No, it's not. And again, like, culturally, it'll be like, I was thinking about this with the idea of the police saying rolling their eyes when they hear it's a domestic incident. It's like, I think I know police know that they're most at risk in those situations of them being harmed.

[00:57:17] **Laura Reagan:** So that's just another example of a collateral violence that can happen, but also like this whole like murder suicide, oh there's no threat to the community, you know, it's like, it's like, we're always like separating ourselves from the truth of how awful these things are. And we, you know, we want to like minimize it.

[00:57:38] **Laura Reagan:** And so like, oh, there's a love triangle. It's just, it's makes it sound frivolous. But you know, I guess that's just a way of coping with. Something that feels like impossible to fix.

[00:57:51] **Kaytee Gillis:** Yeah. And it makes like domestic violence victims feel really othered. It's like, if you're a victim of a drive-by shooting, or if you're a victim of a car accident, you know, you're a victim, you're in a situation that was not something horrible happened to you.

[00:58:06] **Kaytee Gillis:** Yeah. But if you're a victim in domestic violence situation, okay. What'd you do to make them angry. What did you say? Can't you guys just keep this at home?

[00:58:14] **Laura Reagan:** Sure you're not blowing it out of proportion?

[00:58:16] **Kaytee Gillis:** Or you're not blowing it out of proportion. What happened?

[00:58:19] **Laura Reagan:** Yeah. Well, this information is super valuable and I hope that the therapists who are listening and people who are not therapists are getting the picture that, you know, there's a pattern of behavior.

[00:58:36] **Laura Reagan:** There are legal options that you can use, but you have to understand how to. How to work within that system in order, unfortunately, in order to be able to get the protection that you should be entitled to, but that's, that's what we've got right now. So, one last question I want to ask you before we wrap up for today, is therapists oftentimes I think kind of jumped the gun or misunderstand what their roles should be in working with survivors of abusive relationships, family violence, and intimate partner violence.

[00:59:12] **Laura Reagan:** What should. What are therapists like need to know about how to do their work, you know, in terms of like, should therapists call the police when their client says, you know, my partner hit me last night and things like that?

[00:59:26] **Kaytee Gillis:** So I always, first and foremost, I always want to say to therapists, please, especially if you're working with people who are 18 and older, I know we're talking about adults here.

[00:59:34] **Kaytee Gillis:** Please do not call the police. We need to first and foremost, you know, support a client's autonomy. We need to support them to

make this decisions for themselves. And also you can make it a lot worse for them by calling the police. The police, you know, don't, you know, first of all, you're breaking confidentiality by doing that.

[00:59:51] **Kaytee Gillis:** But the police also don't like that when the, you know, a third party calls the police, you know, the calls them, they, they, it can make that a lot worse for them. And also, you know, keep in mind these people, they, they go, okay, so you go and you make a police report, but then they, they go home to these people.

[01:00:05] **Kaytee Gillis:** You know, and it, you know, so then they're going home and they're living with the person and they're sleeping next to them in bed. And the retaliation, you know, that they're going to experience from that is worse than the abuse that led to the phone call. It led to the, you know, report to begin with. So please don't call the police, you know, support a client in creating a safety plan.

[01:00:24] **Kaytee Gillis:** I talk about a safety plan in my book. I talk about ways to, to start making a safety plan, ways to like, you know, to start, you know, keeping, you know, money at a friend's house to start getting moving important documents. I go through all of that. That's the most important thing that you can talk about with the client and, and helping them, you know, empower them to, to do that.

[01:00:43] **Kaytee Gillis:** If that's a decision that they want to make and, you know, safety plan really is the biggest thing of like having, having a phone call, uh, a code word that they can call and say to someone, okay, is the meeting on, you know, at work tomorrow at nine and you know, and that's a code for, are you okay? And if the person says yes or no, like that kind of thing I talk about in my book of how to make sure that you know, that there are codes and there are ways for them to stay safe.

[01:01:06] **Kaytee Gillis:** Because if you, if you blur that boundary and you, and you call the police, a lot of times it can get worse for them. So stay, stay in that role of assisting them and empowering them and helping them create a safety plan, you know, validating them, believing them, helping them document, that kind of stuff.

[01:01:24] **Laura Reagan:** Yeah. Thank you. And I mean, I think another temptation that therapists can have is try to force the client to leave the relationship right away, because we get so concerned for their safety, but as you said.

[01:01:39] **Kaytee Gillis:** Yeah, that can backfire because it really has to be when the person is ready. I mean, a victim will leave an average of seven times before they'll leave for good.

[01:01:49] **Kaytee Gillis:** And so a lot of times they'll go back and then, you know, and I've seen it where they, they do blame the therapist, you know, and they say, oh, know, my therapist made me leave. My therapist wanted me to leave. It needs to be their decision. And I understand that you're sitting there and you're saying, wow, I can't believe this is happening.

[01:02:05] **Kaytee Gillis:** I can't believe they're not seeing these red flags. I can't believe they think that they're going to change. I understand that, you know, but do your own work give some consultation really, you know, you've got to support them.

[01:02:15] **Laura Reagan:** Yeah. Because domestic violence is about power and control. And so what happens when we take away our client's power and control by, you know, trying to force them to do something they're not ready to do, whether it's calling the police to report the incident or leave the relationship before they have safety plan in place and before, you know, so that basically then what, you know, you, can't just, it's not in a vacuum.

[01:02:41] **Laura Reagan:** Right? What about, my pets? What about the kids school?

[01:02:45] **Kaytee Gillis:** Yeah. Yeah. What about the kids? And, yeah, there's so much involved in that that making a safety plan is really, you know, where you need to start.

[01:02:52] **Laura Reagan:** Yeah. Yeah. Well, Kaytee, this has been a really interesting and important conversation, and I know that you offer a lot of resources for people in this situation.

[01:03:05] **Laura Reagan:** Can you share where people can find what you have to offer? And I know your book is part of it, but that's not all.

[01:03:11] **Kaytee Gillis:** So I have a website. It is, it is my full name [www.kaytlyngillislcsw.com](http://www.kaytlyngillislcsw.com). Kaitlyn with a K A Y T L Y N. Gillis, G I L L I S. L C S w.com. And I have consultation and supervision. I provide training on domestic violence.

[01:03:31] **Kaytee Gillis:** I also offer online support resources for therapists and for clients, for victims, survivors, people who love them on. Um, my, I have a Facebook group called Clara's voice and it's C L A R A. Clara. And I have an Instagram under the same name. Clara's voice since two underscores between Clara's and voice.

[01:03:52] **Kaytee Gillis:** And they just kind of. Grounding tips like support, tips, and empowerment, that kind of stuff. Just for people to have daily encouragement and stuff, free Facebook group. It's a free Facebook group, Instagram, you know, free, open. And, um, I just, you know, kind of post like some videos and stuff like that.

[01:04:10] **Kaytee Gillis:** Um, I have a blog on Psychology Today called Invisible Bruises. It's the same name as my book. And I talk about ways to heal from family trauma ways to work through. Uh, your own trauma and like do your own work. Talk about, you know, ways to, you know, recognize boundaries and recognize red flags, also identifying brain flags and relationships and stuff too.

[01:04:31] **Laura Reagan:** Wonderful. Excellent. So I will be sure to list all of these resources in the show notes, including the link to your website. And you also mentioned to me before, and I'll bring it up now. Then you do a lot of giveaways of your book too. So for people who haven't been able to afford it.

[01:04:51] **Kaytee Gillis:** I have a lot of people to reach out to me and say, look, you know, I I'm a, you know, a single parent, I just, you know, I just moved here.

[01:04:57] **Kaytee Gillis:** I don't really have a full-time job. I can't afford to buy your book. So I have, you know, I've lowered the price for the book on, I have a Kindle version for people who can't have a hard copy if, you know, for obvious reasons. So I, you know, I recommend grabbing the Kindle version, reach out, you know, reach out to me.

[01:05:14] **Kaytee Gillis:** You know, I do a lot of kind of book giveaways and stuff like that for people, if you know anyone who needs it, a lot of people will email me and say, Hey, you know, my aunt could really use this book. You know, my brother could really use this book. Can you send it to me? And I'll give it to them, that kind of stuff.

[01:05:29] **Kaytee Gillis:** So please reach out and let me know.

[01:05:31] **Laura Reagan:** Well, thank you again for generously sharing your time with us today and for all of the helpful information that you shared. I really enjoyed talking with you.

[01:05:40] **Kaytee Gillis:** All right. Thank you so much for having me.

[01:05:44] **Laura Reagan:** Thank you to Therapy Notes for sponsoring this week's episode. I do love Therapy Notes.

[01:05:49] **Laura Reagan:** It's such an asset to my business and makes my job as a practice owner and a therapist, much easier. Try today with no strings attached and see why everyone is switching to Therapy Notes now featuring e-prescribe use coupon code chat, or click the link in the show notes to get two free months at [therapynotes.com](https://therapynotes.com).

[01:06:06] **Announcer:** Thank you for listening to Therapy Chat with your host, Laura Reagan LCSW-C.

[01:06:12] **Announcer:** For more information, please visit [therapychatpodcast.com](https://therapychatpodcast.com).