



The Missing Link for SLPs Podcast Mental Health Talk for SLPs Series

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Episode 100: SLPs in Crisis: If You Are at Risk of Crisis or You Are in Crisis

In this episode, the first in the new “Mental Health Talk” series, Wilson Nice, SLP, shares her story of overcoming a crisis point in her life. We talk about how she has navigated different diagnoses and recovery, and also a number of very practical first steps you can take and/or explore that may help when you need to take care of you.

Discussion & Reflection Questions

1. What actions, big or small, can you take to help take care of your mental health?
2. What types of tools and resources can you utilize to get well, be well, and stay well? Do you think these may change over time?
3. If you have a diagnosis of a mental health condition, do you know what the indicated treatments are for that condition to manage symptoms, recover, and become well?
4. Do you have a trusted support system or “dream team” in your life to help with your wellbeing and self-care? Think colleagues, family, friends, and yes, your fur family count here too! Or maybe you are in a position to be able to provide support, or be part of someone else’s dream team?
5. Do you know where to go if/when you are in crisis? Explore options in your area in case you need emergency help.

Wilson Nice, MA, CCC-SLP



Wilson Nice is a speech pathologist who initially graduated from Oklahoma State University in 2000.

She has a resource website [Nice Speech Lady](#) — where she offers resources for

working with adults on the medical side of the field. She has handouts, home programs, testing assistance aides, logistical forms, nourishment resources for mental wellness, and more. The goal of the website is to have practical, useful tools for everyday speech pathology practice from an evidence-based standpoint. Wilson also has recently moved from a skilled nursing facility independent contractor role to an adult medical tele-practitioner role, all the while being a mother to her and her husband’s three adult sons and a dog-Mom to her shitzu.

Wilson wants to share her mental health recovery story with us, as we discuss the concept of the SLP in crisis (which she has experienced, in the past) and because of this, she is sometimes at-risk of becoming, again.

[Nice Speech Lady - Telepractice site](#)

[Nice Speech Lady - YouTube Channel](#)

[Nice Speech Lady - Self-Care Assessment Tool](#)

[Nice Speech Lady - Self-care blog posts](#)

Mattie Murrey Tegels,

MA, CCC-SLP, L, CPC, CLSC

Medical Speech-Language Pathologist and
Founder of Fresh SLP & Badass SLP



Mattie Murrey-Tegels is the founder and SLP behind Fresh SLP, Badass SLP, and The Missing Link for SLPs Podcast. She's been "in-the-trenches" as a medical SLP around the world for over 25 years and now an Assistant Professor for 3 years. She is thrilled to be adding this dream of a podcast

because paying her experiences forward is something she is very passionate about. If you ask her patients and students, one thing they will remember is how much she loves her job!

She may not look like it but she is a huge introvert and when she is not actively working as an SLP, she is almost always reading, writing (writing over 1,000,000 words a year), or listening to amazing Chicago Blues bands. She also loves being outdoors and definitely enjoys soaking up the sun at her home in Minnesota, where warm and sunny days can be limited. She's ridden motorcycles for many years, raced sled dogs, hiked huge mountains yet she cherishes the quiet moments of climbing into a hammock to nap or timeless conversations with friends and family.

The Missing Link for SLPs podcast and Fresh SLP is her legacy, giving back to a career that has so richly rewarded her.

More Thoughts from this Week's Guest

"When we feel overwhelmed, and feel such intense emotions we feel we cannot tolerate it, it is helpful to tell ourselves "It is 100 percent true that I feel this way, with this intensity, right now. And it is very likely that I will not always feel this way." That is the dialectic. That is what works for me. Also, "There is a skill I can try, even in this situation."

- Wilson Nice

Quote from the Conversation

"For the SLP in crisis, or the SLP "at-risk" for being in crisis — you are definitely not alone, and there are things you can do. There is always something you can do".

- Mattie Murrey-Tegels

Keep the Conversation Going

Thank you for listening to *The Missing Link for SLPs* podcast! **If you enjoyed the show, I'd love you to subscribe, rate it and leave a short review.** Also, please share an episode with a friend. Together we can raise awareness and help more SLPs find and connect those missing links to help them feel confident in their patient care every step of the way.

Follow me on [Instagram](#), join the Fresh SLP community on [Facebook](#) or learn more at [FreshSLP.com](#) or [badassslp.com](#).

Let's make those connections. You got this!

*Do you have a question you'd like answered on the show?
Interested in sharing your experience as an SLP with our audience?
Send a message to Mattie@FreshSLP.com!*

Not a substitute for a formal SLP education or medical advice for patients/caregivers

The Missing Link for SLPs Podcast Show Notes

In this episode, the first in the new “Mental Health Talk” series, Wilson Nice, SLP, shares her story of overcoming a crisis point in her life. We talk about how she has navigated different diagnoses and recovery, and also a number of very practical steps you can take and/or explore that may help when you need to to take care of you.

The Missing Link for SLPs Podcast Full Transcript

Mattie Murrey 00:03

There are SLPs, and then there are brave SLPs. Our next guest in this series, the very first series of Mental Health Talk for SLPs, is very brave, and this is the first time she has come forward publicly with her mental health challenges that she's had as an SLP. Why is she doing this? Because she's ready to share, for others to learn, and to be a guiding light for people, and SLPs who have mental health challenges as well. So, a very impactful story, a very brave guest.

Take a deep breath because we, in this series, are going to be talking about some taboo subjects. Subjects that are going to make you feel uncomfortable. Subjects that are going to make you cry. Subjects that you're really going to resonate with because we're going to be talking about mental health and SLPs, and this whole series is going to be pulling on SLPs who are going to be talking about some of the mental health challenges as it relates to their personal lives, and being a speech language pathologist. We're going to be talking about things such as anxiety, panic attacks, depression, bipolar and substance abuse. I want you to listen to the series and hear their inspirational, powerful and impactful stories from SLPs who are living, and struggling, and overcoming mental health challenges. We're also going to be listening to mental health leaders as they give us insights into mental health challenges, and discuss solutions addressing the mental health crises that sometimes SLPs face. This is going to be an impactful series. Please share with anybody who you know who can benefit from this.

Welcome to this episode of the Missing Link for SLPs podcast. I would love to introduce you to Wilson. Wilson and I have been working on this project for quite a while. Welcome, Wilson.

Wilson Nice 02:07

Good morning. So happy to be here. Thank you, Mattie.

Mattie Murrey 02:11

You have a couple of dedicated professionals on this episode, everyone, because Wilson got up – well, you usually get up at 4:00 a.m. your time ...

Wilson Nice 02:18

Yes.



Mattie Murrey 02:19

... and we are recording early this morning because we want to get this out of the ballpark before our days begin.

We are talking about a special topic today. Do you want to introduce the topic, because you named this podcast. And then give us a brief intro on who you are.

Wilson Nice 02:35

Absolutely. So, the name of this podcast is, "If You Are at Risk in Crisis or You Are in Crisis" to the SLPs.

So, my name is Wilson. I'm a speech pathologist, and a lot of people know me as the Nice Speech Lady. I make resources on a website called nicespeechlady.com. But my journey is about – not just about being a speech pathologist, it's also about all of the other things that make up who I am.

So, we spoke years ago about talking about my mental health journey. And I'm finally at a place now, we're ready to record and talk about it, and I really wanted to talk about something, with the speech pathologist in mind, that was in the place that I was at.

Mattie Murrey 03:30

Thank you for your bravery, and your honesty, coming on. So many conversations are filled with sparkling glitter, and you know, I'm – and I love sparkling glitter, don't get me wrong. And I also love real conversations, because one of the ways you and I came together was you and I have both been through some really challenging times. And, as we know, being a speech pathologist is not easy. So, we're going to talk about some of that today and mental wellness.

Wilson Nice 04:02

Yes. Yes, I'm excited about it, thank you.

Mattie Murrey 04:06

I just want to say one thing, when I first met you, your website was Nice Speech Lady. And I'm like, "Oh, that must be what she gets called at work. She's "The nice speech lady". No, Nice is your last name.

Wilson Nice 04:17

Yes. And I was – in the beginning, when the phrase came about, "Oh, it's the nice speech lady. Oh, it's that nice speech lady. It's the nice speech lady", and I have to use my name, of course. It is Nice!

Mattie Murrey 04:34

Yeah. So, it's a good way for our listeners to remember that your last name is Nice, and you're also The Nice Speech Lady. So, if you're just clicking on to this podcast at the very top of your day, or whenever it is, go check out Wilson's website. What is it?

Wilson Nice 04:53



Mattie Murrey 04:54

Okay. And then open it up while you listen to this podcast.

So, we're going to be jumping in today on this episode for the SLP in crisis, or the SLP at risk for being in crisis. And we want you to know that you're definitely not alone, and there are things that you can do, and there's always something you can do, and those are going to be some of the things that we're talking about today.

So, our very first question, Wilson, is let's discuss the subject of mindset, and what is helpful for an SLP to focus on in terms of mindset? What are your thoughts there?

Wilson Nice 05:32

So, if you've identified yourself as someone who's at risk as being in crisis, or you are in crisis right now, I want to let you know that everything that I'm going to be sharing about today is coming from my place of lived experience.

I'm not a psychologist. I'm not a counselor. I'm a peer patient. I'm someone who has lived this. So, I want to just give that disclosure, because all of this that I'm going to share with you are things that I've learned along my way as someone who's gone through receiving services, and sought out services on my own.

There are a lot of things that are important about mindset. If I had to encapsulate it all into one thing, if I had one word to describe it all, I would have to choose the word fight. You have to fight. You have to fight. If you're in crisis right now, you have to fight. And I'm not talking about arguing, or being – when people think about fighting. I'm talking about making a decision in your mindset that you are going to fight this.

That this is not something that you are going to let take its course. We have to fight it.

We have to wake up every day, and fight this. And sometimes fighting means taking a mental health day, and taking a break. Sometimes fighting means lots of different things. Whatever it means for you today to fight, that's – if I had to encapsulate it into one word, that's what it is.

Mattie Murrey 07:09

And fighting in your – if I'm understanding you correctly, fighting is the decision that you're actively making to not give up.

Wilson Nice 07:18

Yes. Yes, we can feel in the moment like how we're feeling is truth, and it's the only truth.

And how we're feeling can make us want to do certain things, and become in a place that's unsafe or dangerous. And I certainly have found myself in those places. And the version of me now, thanks myself for all of the times that I have fought. And a lot of it has to do with perspective, and taking a moment to



just breathe, but making the conscious decision today that I have a battle that I'm fighting today, and what tool am I going to use today in my fight.

And seeking out those resources, in every way possible that's healthy and effective, so that I can fight this fight today with the tools that I need for today's battle.

And if you find yourself in a place where you need help, that you're in crisis, then getting a support system. Getting someone to help you navigate the services that are out there is so important, to have someone on your side to assist you if you're in crisis.

Mattie Murrey 08:39

You and I both come from, like you mentioned, just some crisis times. I've been through a lot of trauma with the death of a husband, and some other things in my life that quite didn't go as planned.

And I love the fact that you're talking about tools, because tools remind me of a term where it's like, "Okay, I need to do this. So I'm going to take this tool". So, quite literally when we have tasks we have to do around the house, we go get a screwdriver, we get a wrench, right? When we work with our patients, we get our clipboard tools, or our flashlights, whatever it is to do what we need to do. And mental health is not – it's different, but it also can benefit from using a set of tools to help you get through what you need to get through.

Let's talk about what you recommend in terms of actual actions and tools that SLPs can take if you're in crisis, or at risk for being in crisis.

Wilson Nice 09:46

Sure, I want to talk about actions, but can I jump back to the topic of mindset because...

Mattie Murrey 9:51

Sure.

Wilson Nice 9:52

... I'll just share something that I've learned, even in just the last six months.

Sometimes there are things that are barriers in our journey to recovery, and we don't even realize that we have that barrier in our journey.

So, for example, it's important for us to identify what it is in terms of mindset that's preventing us from moving forward.

So, for me, the term self-care has always been a triggering word for me, ironically. Most people think that that's a great word. For me, that's a triggering word because of my past, and the things that I've experienced. I was called, sometimes, in my younger years of growing up, I was called selfish a lot. So, if someone tells me now as an adult, "Oh, remember self-care. Remember self-care". That's actually triggering for me because my mindset is you're calling me selfish.



Mattie Murrey 11:00

Ah.

Wilson Nice 11:00

So, it's really important to understand what our mindset barriers are.

Because for me to be able to do the self-care things I need, I need to be able to choose a different word. And I don't use the word self-care, I use the word nurturing because it's not a triggering word for me. And that's just one mindset example. And then committing to myself to nurture myself in every way. It has just been a big mindset thing for me.

And to the SLP in crisis, I think it's important to identify what barriers are there in your mind that you don't even know that you haven't identified yet that are preventing us from seeking out the help that we need, or fully benefiting from the services we're receiving.

So, to answer your question about the actions, I would say for – my background is that I really benefited from Dialectical Behavioral Therapy. That's what was my turning point. When I went to residential treatment six and a half years ago, when things got to a crisis point for myself. I had a wonderful decision made by my husband that we were going to go out of state, because there were not services here in New Mexico at that time available for someone like me. I had to go – I had to source out. So, we went to Illinois, and then I started my treatments there. And then my husband came back while I started my recovery. And so, sometimes it takes big actions. Sometimes it takes small actions. For us, it was a crisis point. And I had to fight for my life, and start out that, my treatment, in another state.

But I think having an openness, and a willingness to look at any kind of treatment that's out there that's effective and helpful and healthy is going to be really, really important. For some people, it may be Reiki or chiropractic work and acupuncture, medication therapy, EMDR. But studying and utilizing tools that we have at our disposal is going to be really, really important.

Mattie Murrey 13:14

What was it like when you were at the point where you were like, realizing that you needed to do something in addition to what you were doing?

Wilson Nice 13:26

Well, part of my story is that I was misdiagnosed for 20 years. I was given a label of depression (NOS), and anxiety and PTSD for 20 years. And I kept going in and out of the hospital, just crisis after crisis, and I wasn't getting what I needed.

The turning point for me was getting the indicated diagnosis. And the indicated diagnosis for me, at that time, was borderline – borderline personality disorder. That was December of 2015. And now, six and a half years later, I don't qualify for that diagnosis anymore...

... but it was the diagnosis that led to the indicated treatment that led to the recovery. And if I hadn't have been – I didn't want the label. I wasn't excited about the label. And then I found out, 'Oh, there's a



treatment. There's this gold standard treatment'. So then, 'Okay, great. Give me access', and then there was no access.

So, the stop and start of my recovery was a challenge, but I think realizing that, oh, I have a condition that I didn't realize that I had, and there's hope because there's this treatment, and it's research based, a lot of people recover from it, and then I wanted it. And so, I think realizing there was an answer, but then not having access, then made me really appreciate it when I had access when I went to Illinois because then I was just hungry.

And that comes back to the fight. I mean, I appreciated this treatment because I was not allowed access here. There were just too many waiting lists, and things were coming to a crisis point.

Mattie Murrey 15:13

So, it was almost a relief for you. I know you said you wanted – you didn't want the diagnosis, yet you were happy to have the diagnosis because then you could learn and take action in a focused manner that was actually going to give you the results that you needed. Yes?

Wilson Nice 15:28

Yes. Yes. I didn't know that there was treatment for any kind of personality disorder because back in the 90s, when I was in college, they didn't teach that in my psychology 101 class. I was misinformed. And so, that just goes to show you that sometimes we don't know what we don't know, and not knowing what's – not knowing what we don't know can be a barrier to us moving forward.

And I had to have that, getting that diagnosis was key for me to get the indicated treatment. And in the end, it was a relief. Of course, there's a lot of stigma about that diagnosis, and I think it's important for people who have recovered from the diagnosis to say it.

I mean, it's important for people to know that there is hope, and that having a diagnosis doesn't always necessarily mean you're going to always have that diagnosis, and our recovery is fluid. And to embrace that, even if we don't feel like it. We just go with it and receive the help.

Mattie Murrey 16:43

Mhm. That gives me goosebumps because it's – you're standing –. With my challenges, I just remember standing at the beginning of a journey, at the beginning of the trail, and it's like, 'Do I really have to go down this trail? Is this a trail that I have to go down?' And it's my choices are either stand at the head and not take the journey that I need to take. Or take the journey, enjoy, learn, not enjoy, come out on the other end, possibly recovered, possibly still challenged, going through everything, but definitely having made a difference in my life for the positive.

Wilson Nice 17:25

I'm so thankful. I'm so thankful for all the services that I received. And I'm also – I can't believe I'm saying this, but I'm thankful for the treatments that I received that maybe didn't go as planned ...

... and aren't "perfect". You know, perfect in quotes here. The mental health treatment system we have is made up of people, and not all people are kind of – always do what I needed, all of the given times, and



there can still be some lemonade out of those lemons. And there can still be things that I can learn even in a situation that may not be ideal, and so, yeah. So, those actions.

And one thing that has really also helped me, is identifying my need for validation, and how it's important for me to give myself that and I never really learned how to do that. So, I sought it out in other people. And I'm still on that journey of learning how to validate myself, and how to find validation in ways that aren't dependent upon other people because – and I'm getting stronger and stronger in that, and I'm really, really, really thankful.

Mattie Murrey 18:46

That is so key, that internal validation versus external validation.

Wilson Nice 18:51

Yes.

Mattie Murrey 18:53

So key.

Wilson Nice 18:54

It really is because if we didn't get what we needed to growing up, and to learn how to do that, it's really hard to learn it as an adult. And so, I'm learning. I'm just continuing to learn.

And just having that openness to the possibility of learning new things is really going to serve someone well when they're in crisis. Because, like I said, we don't really know all things about what's going to be the answer to our challenges and our struggles, and if we have an openness to that.

And always – and realizing also that more doesn't always mean better, it's about finding that effective fit in things, that effective fit.

Mattie Murrey 19:43

Tell me more about that.

Wilson Nice 19:47

So, borderline is not a condition that the number one go to place is to look at medication. So, the indicator treatment for borderline is Dialectical Behavioral Therapy, which is a skill set treatment approach based in mindfulness that is – we talk about tools. It's about this tool, that tool, this tool...

.. and it's all based in mindfulness.

And so, I was treated with medication for so many years that I even had a point where a doctor said, "Are you even taking your medication?" This was before I was diagnosed with BPD. And I'm like, "Yes, I'm taking my medication!". So, the answer of more medication was not my answer, because what I needed



was a treatment that looked at how I was thinking, and medication can't change that. But for an SLP in crisis, it may mean medication. It may mean other things.

So, like if – I used to think that, 'Oh, I need therapy, X amount of times a week, and if I get one time more than that, then that'll be more recovery', but that's not always the case.

More doesn't always equal better. It's about the effective right fit. If two sessions a week, or one session a week – for some people, it may be going to a day program for a while and then scaling back to outpatient.

So, it's important for people to know all the different types of services that are in the mental health system, and all the untraditional, non-traditional approaches. And you find the right fit for you and your brain, because no one has your brain. Your brain is unique. And what's going to work for me may not work for you, it may not work for another person. But it's about finding that effective right fit. And I think that changes over time. What I need now, six and a half years post diagnosis and no longer meeting the criteria, I need different things than I needed six and a half years ago in terms of my treatment.

Mattie Murrey 22:02

Mhm. And that goes back to that giving up. My disorder, my diagnosis would be complex PTSD, and it's – what we go through evolves.

Wilson Nice 22:13

Yes, yes.

Mattie Murrey 12:14

So, where we are in one point in time may be very different from where we are in another point in time. And I know with my challenges, I had like a mental fog. And now, I'm clear. My clarity is clear. My thinking is clear. And now, when I do my mental health work, I am there. I'm working with a counselor that is just – we connect. And it's not more, it's effective, and connecting, and engaging.

Wilson Nice 22:48

And that – right. That effective fit provider that you can find.

That person is part of your dream team. Everyone has to identify their dream team. And even my dog is on my dream team! I mean, it's about tying in all those things.

And I think one of the things in terms of actions that really, really helped me, was making the decision to work on "project me". I had reached a point that I was avoiding myself so much because I was in such a place of turmoil. I was working so much to avoid having to deal with project me.

Mattie Murrey 23:35

Yeah.

Wilson Nice 23: 36



And so, that that was really an important decision for me too, is that it's okay to invest in myself. It's important to invest in myself. And the "me", years from now, will thank me for not acting on my emotions, but instead using my wise mind – we talk about wise mind and DBT – using my wise mind, which is the convergence of emotions and logic. It's the blending of both to come to a place of knowing what I'm going to need, and then going after it. And then every day asking myself what is my most effective step today? What does my body and my mind need today to take care of myself and nurture me?

Mattie Murrey 24:32

So, for those listening who need that permission to go and get that help to validate yourself, this is it. If you need that external validation, we are giving it to you right now. Go get that help and do what you need to do.

Other actions, Wilson?

Wilson Nice 24:50

I made a list out. I actually wanted to just read this list. Is that okay if I do that, Mattie?

Mattie Murrey 24:55

Sure. And these will be listed in the show notes.

Wilson Nice 24:55

Okay, great.

Mattie Murrey 24:59

So, if you're listening, go get the show notes on freshslp.com. Find Wilson Nice's podcast episode on – we're going to call it "SLPs in Crisis", I believe, and these will be listed.

Wilson Nice 25:13

So, identify exactly what you need to feel better, and do whatever it takes to get it. Make a decision to "project you". Choose to fight every day. Study and utilize tools and skills that work for you, and ask yourself each day, what's your next effective step. Commit to the journey of making yourself your best friend, and taking care of yourself in every way. And, typically, that's from a multifactorial approach, from different approaches, the biological versus the nurturing, versus the environment, versus the perspective. Having an openness and a curiosity and a willingness. And pursue – pursue in your life what you were called to do. If you're called to be a writer, write. If you're called to dance, be a dancer and dance. If you're called to be a singer, sing. Pursue what we were – what you were designed to be. Because when we don't do what we're called to do, we get stuck. And then, like I said earlier, focus on the next effective step each day.

Mattie Murrey 26:20

There you go. So, anything else on actions the SLP can take before I move on to our next question?



Wilson Nice 26:29

I would just say exploring, exploring all the possibilities that are out there in terms of treatment because there are many more choices now than there were even 20 years ago.

And finding someone who understands all the different levels of care. What is PHP? What is IOP? What is – you know, what do all those terms mean? And what is the fit for me?

And then, also, speaking up when you are in an emergency place. When you get to an emergency place, there is – if you're in an emergency place, you need to go get help now, and there's nothing wrong with an emergency room in terms of asking for help. It may not be the most validating place to be, and at the same time, when you come to an emergency place, you need to go to an emergency room.

Mattie Murrey 27:22

And that is a decision that is important to make.

So, let's talk about some other decisions that SLPs can take if you're in crisis or at risk of being in crisis. Can you talk about the decisions you had to go through and the decision making processes?

Wilson Nice 27:38

Sure. So, I identified pretty early on when I was in Illinois – at a place called Timberline Knolls, it was a residential center – I realized really quickly that I was making decisions that were placing myself at odds with myself, where I was almost being my own worst enemy. And I'm not saying everyone is in this place when they're in crisis. And for me, that's the case. I was making decisions where I was like sabotaging myself. And so, I had to identify that. And I had to make the decision to stop doing that. And I realized also that it was important for me to set up routines in my life. That if I knew – I realized if I exercise in the morning, it's more likely to get done. That exercise is important, an important part of my routine and my recovery. And in terms of an eating plan, it was important for me. So, setting up routines wisely, and then following through with them was really important for me as a decision.

In my story, I not only have had a diagnosis of BPD, but I also have struggled with some eating issues. So, that's something that I had to seek out specific help for, and just kind of identifying this is an area I need assistance with. And then having the willingness to do it, even though it may be scary, and even though it may be not something that's going to make us feel comfortable. It's important to do that.

Another thing that I kind of did, I kind of had to triage the different kinds of therapy that I wanted to do. And there may be “now” kind of things to address, and then there'll be final frontier areas to address later in terms of different things you want to tackle. Because we can't tackle everything all at once in treatment, and sometimes we have to take things in bite sized pieces. So, that was important for me.

Mattie Murrey 29:55

Mhm All important decisions. And when I first – I used to believe in luck, and I still kind of do. And I more strongly now believe in making good decisions. So, when I have a child, or a student, or somebody, instead of saying, “Good luck”, I'll say, “Go make some good decisions”. And making good mental health decisions is key in your recovery.



Wilson Nice 30:20

Absolutely. And we never know what seed we're planting now in our journey can benefit us later. And it's important to know that when you're first starting out in treatment, or if you've been in treatment a while and you're not seeing the fruit, it doesn't mean that it's not working. There are things churning inside of us, and we go through things in stages. And so, if we're doing all the work, and we're going to all the sessions, and we're doing all of the things in terms of maybe medication, or other interventions that have been set up for us, we're doing all those things, and we're not seeing the fruit yet, it's okay. We just keep plugging away. We keep moving forward.

We see about any – we check in to see if there's anything we need to do differently, but sometimes things just have to cook.

When I first came back from residential, I was doing outpatient Dialectical Behavioral Therapy. The first year, I remember at one point thinking, man, I need a cheerleader. I need someone to say, you know, "You're not seeing the fruit yet, and I see you doing the work, and I'm proud of you. Like you're doing it, and you may not see the fruit right now, and it's coming. You're doing everything you can possibly do, and I'm proud of you". I felt like I needed someone outside of myself to tell me that because I didn't have that capacity in myself yet.

And so, find that friend. Find that family member who's your bosom person. Who can say, "I see you, and you're doing it, and I'm proud of you, good for you. Good for you for investing in yourself when you're not yet seeing the return".

Mattie Murrey 32:23

Wow. That is so important.

I'm tearing up, because mental wellness can be a very lonely journey. It can be a very lonely journey. And being able to find that bosom friend is a gift, and sometimes you don't have that bosom friend. And sometimes that bosom friend is you.

Wilson Nice 32:44

Yes.

Mattie Murrey 42:45

It goes back to that.

Wilson Nice 32:48

Absolutely.

Mattie Murrey 32:49

So, what has helped you the most in your recovery journey, Wilson?

Wilson Nice 32:55



I have to say that the powers that be, higher power, God, whatever you want to call it in your life. My faith brought me to a place of needing a certain kind of treatment, and that treatment for me was DBT, the Dialectical Behavioral Therapy. It saved my life. It really did. It saved my life, and there are family members of mine that could stand here today, and say, "It absolutely saved her life", because I was not in a good place. It was a very, very, very dangerous place. And what really helped me the most was getting the indicated treatment...

... which meant the indicated diagnosis. And that was the turning point for me.

Mattie Murrey 33:42

What was it like working through your work day in the jobs – your job, work demands, and everything else like that as an SLP, while working through your mental wellness, your mental health challenges?

Wilson Nice 33:58

Do you mean like when I first came back from Illinois? Or within the last six years?

Mattie Murrey 34:05

Either one. I know I've had a lot of SLPs reach out, not a lot, but a few, who like, "Wow, I deal with anxiety. I deal with depression. I don't know how to get up and continue on in my career".

Mattie Murrey 34:18

I have a lot of people looking forward to this episode. They're like, "How do I do what I need to do as an SLP? How do I move forward?" Maybe these are the stages they're at before they get the treatment. Maybe they're at the start of their journey.

Wilson Nice 34:31

Right.

Mattie Murrey 34:32

Or they're realizing they need the help, and they've been on the journey for a while, and they just haven't taken that first step.

What's it like being an SLP, and you bring in that element of this for us?

Wilson Nice 34:44

Sure. So, I would say, first of all, first things first. First things first. When – as an SLP, I have to put my medical, mental health, other appointments, first in my schedule, and then let the rest of my day fall in around that. So, it's kind of like filling up a glass, I have to fill up – it's the big pieces of ice are first in the glass, and then fill in the rest.

So, as an SLP, it's challenging, but I have had to put first things first in terms of my appointments for myself. So that's one. That's the first thing that comes to mind. It's hard to function if we're not functioning. So, the times that I've not functioned, I've had to take medical leave. Now, that's been a



number of years ago. And I have to do things preventatively to fortify myself to be my most effective self as an SLP, and as a human being. So, it's about using skills and reaction to how I feel, but also it's using skills preventatively before the day begins to fortify myself. And if I don't do those things, then I find myself really working in reaction mode.

And so, setting up those things that I need in my life. Navigating all those chess pieces in terms of what skill am I going to use here. It is just really, really important. It is a full time job having a diagnosis.

That in and of itself, it takes 100 percent of your time.

So, how do you care for others? Well, I use my job as one of my skills. So, one of the jobs in DBT is contributing. Contributing is a skill. Contributing may look like, if you're really down, and you're really sad, you're really anxious, and you want to try to make an impact on how you're feeling, going to the store and buying four dozen socks and going down to the homeless area and giving out socks to the homeless folks. And that gives you a lift to make it through to your next effective skill that you're going to use, your next effective tool you're going to use.

And so, for me, if I'm feeling 100 percent intense in my emotions, I use one skill to get to 90, and then another. I may go for a walk, and that takes me down to 80 percent. And then I use another skill to take me down to 75. And so, I chip away at how I'm feeling based on my skills.

But contributing is one of my major skills because it makes me feel good to impact other people. It makes me feel good to do what I'm called here to do in terms of my occupation. So, I used to use my work as an escape, right? Remember, I was talking about before I went away to residential. I was working four jobs. I was doing everything I could to escape looking at myself and taking care of myself.

And then after I started doing DBT, now it's about how can I use my job as a skill?

Working at my job is actually working on my recovery and my program because I'm contributing. But finding that balance, it's about finding that balance between contributing – contributing to others and contributing to myself. So, that balance, it's not an easy thing to do, and having a team behind you that can help me. That can help me when I get off kilter, or I need to add something to my program is really important because I can't see outside of myself. It's important to have people say ...

"I noticed you're working a lot, or I noticed you're not sleeping", to get myself a course correction in whatever area that I'm getting out of whack on.

And another thing I was going to say about the workplace, is that it's really important that we find an effective fit in terms of setting and location, and the actual place we're working.

Because we have to feel – if we have a diagnosis, it's important that we receive the support that we need. For some people, it may mean accommodation. It may mean going to HR and saying, "I have ADD, or I have bipolarism, or I have anxiety, and I need these things. I'd like to request accommodation, and my doctor can provide that note for you, what things will help me be successful". Just like someone who's in a wheelchair requests accommodation. We can request accommodation too at our work. For some people, it may be just about having that good connection with our boss, but environment is really important in the workplace when it comes to mental health. If we're in an invalidating environment, it is



a million times more challenging to recover and be our most effective self as a therapist, if we're not in a support environment.

Mattie Murrey 40:14

Mhm. And advocating for our needs.

Wilson Nice 40:16

Well, advocating for our needs, and it being in an environment where advocating is accepted.

Mattie Murrey 40:22

Mhm. And advocating for our needs.

Wilson Nice 40:23

It's not always the case to do that.

And so, we may need to find a different place if it's not safe for us even to advocate for what we need. Because some places – not all employment settings are equal. And that's why I wanted to create my own environment of what I would desire, because there's a need for a supportive, accepting, non-judgmental environment. It's really, really important.

Mattie Murrey 40:52

So, that brings us to our very last question, and you just alluded to what I want to ask about.

Where are you working on –. What are you working on next in your path of healing, and what are you doing?

Wilson Nice 41:04

Well, on a personal note, I'm really working on nurturing my body, and finding what my body needs right now in this season of my life. What does my body need in terms of my food plan, in terms of my recovery, in terms of exercise and rest? How much sleep do I need? I'm going on a quest. I have a curiosity about what does my body need? And my brain is part of my body. So, what does my brain need right now? So, I'm kind of going on a body nurturing quest.

And I think what I'm also doing right now as my part of healing is sharing my story. We have to share the story of when recovery happens. We have to.

We have to because there's so many people out there that are hurting, and are struggling, and they need to know that there is hope, and that if no one tells them today that there's hope, I want them to know from us that there's hope, because there's absolutely hope.

And I – one phrase that I use that really helps me is “100 percent”. You know, I 100 percent feel this way with this intensity right now, and it is very likely that I won't always feel this way. You may be in crisis



right now, but you may not always be in crisis. And the you in the future that's not in crisis will thank you for doing what you can to survive this moment. And sometimes surviving this moment means not acting.

Sometimes surviving in this moment means taking a break. So, sharing my story.

I've also applied to be a peer support worker in New Mexico. I want to do some volunteering as a peer support worker. I don't know if you know much about that program.

Mattie Murrey 43:03

No.

Wilson Nice 43:04

There's a movement all across the country for peer support workers, for people who have had three years of recovery, who want to be a peer support to other people who are new to a diagnosis or need support. So, it's a program. I think it's a 40 hour program that a person goes through, but then they can go and work as a peer support worker in facilities, and be there for other people who are in their recovery journey that need some encouragement because who else can say "I get it" than someone who's been there?

Mattie Murrey 43:42

Right.

Wilson Nice 43:43

I'm also pursuing writing my story. Right now, I'm just putting down thoughts of what I want to include in a book, but I'm writing down my story. And then I'm also building my own business. I have a tele practice that I'm growing, and someday hope to bring on other people to the team. And my hope is that it be the most supportive environment, and it be for people that really desire validation, and support, and encouragement, and mentoring, and going to where you want to go with your own practice.

Mattie Murrey 44:19

Well, thank you for your time. Thank you for your transparency, and for your story. I'm happy to be a part of it, and I am sure it's going to make a difference in some of the listeners that are listening to this episode today. Thank you, Wilson.

Wilson Nice 44:37

Thank you.

Mattie Murrey 44:47

I hope today's conversation has created some aha moments for you, and motivated you to become a better SLP, continuing to connect some of those missing links between what you know and how to use that knowledge. Thank you for downloading The Missing Link for SLPs Podcast, and if you enjoyed the show, I'd love you to subscribe, rate it, and leave a short review. Also, please share an episode with a



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