



Chrissie Henson Interview Transcript

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Rory Lees-Oakes: Diversity in therapy is really, really important, which is why it's my great pleasure to speak with Chrissie Henson, an author, a therapist, and someone who's just published a book on, on inside the therapy room.

And just as a form of introduction, Chrissie has cerebral palsy, which does affect her speech. So for those of you who can, who will be able to hear it, that's, that's fine. For those of you who may want this little help with that we're going to pop a transcript into the web page on counsellingtutor.com to get that transcript, go to counsellingtutor.com, go to the podcast tab. Click Podcast 275 and on the show notes page, you'll see the transcript and you can listen and read along if you like. So first of all, Chrissie, thank you so much for joining us. No, thank you.

Chrissie Henson: It's a pleasure to meet you in person after years of you helping me be honest in your work on your podcast.

Rory Lees-Oakes: Well, it's always a pleasure to interview a listener and a watcher of our work and you know, you're very welcome if it's helped you along your journey. That's brilliant and, and I guess that brings me neatly to your book called *A Look Inside the Therapy Room*.

It's available on Amazon now. You can download it on Kindle or buy a, buy a physical copy of the book. And this book really, I think, is not only a reflection of your practice, but also will be very helpful maybe in times of a cost-of-living crisis to clients who may be looking for help. So just tell me a little bit about, about who may read this book and what help it can give.

Chrissie Henson: Okay, I'm kind of looking at this from two different groups of people. The first group of people I think it will really benefit are students and those training to become counsellors, psychotherapists, psychodynamic, because it, like you say, It gives a fly on the wall look at what happens and you might not have started your placements yet, you might just be in level two, level three and think what is it like to be in the room and that, that's what my book gives at the beginning and it answers common questions that I've been asked by clients over the last seven years., .These are the people that I hope it's going to help, or those that are needing professional counselling or therapy. Not necessarily for everyone to come to me, but again, to get rid of the taboos and fear of what's the therapist going to say or what do I need to do. There's a lot of people that are worried that you are going tell them what to do. You are gonna, know all the answers, they're gonna be inferior, and I wanna get rid of that, that feeling when they come in the room, it's an equal partnership. We're going to work together to find answers to help them.

Rory Lees-Oakes: Yes, and I think, I think that's a, that's a wonderful summary. The idea on at least one level is that, is that clients or even students of counselling and psychotherapy, well, let's have a look at the client, a potential client, someone needs help can buy this book. And it kind of demystifies what goes on really behind closed doors and in confidence.

You know, what, what does happen when someone goes in the therapist's room? So you're talking about that from your experience. You've been practicing for seven years and also there's, there's a help there. [00:04:00] for student therapists who are maybe wondering you know, what real life experiences a therapist has, what kind of things goes on, how, how are certain issues dealt with.

So, so really there's, there's two, I guess, important groups, if you like, or cohorts that could really benefit from, from downloading your book or, or buying it to Chrissie.

Chrissie Henson: Yeah, hopefully. I mean, I've already had some really brilliant feedback on the book and I'm just trying to get it out to a bigger audience, because I feel it's important. At the back of the book there are different areas, so there's one about rejection, there's one about disability and therapy, men in therapy, young adults in

therapy, because they're the areas that I work with a lot. But I also feel that one of them, my reading, is both a student and my passion of CPD going forward. There are also the areas that I feel that are not being speaking about that much. Like, for example, the young adults. When I say young adults, I'm talking like people University age, or just leaving home for the first time, or going from university to work, and it's a shocker, oh my god, this is not what I expected.

Rory Lees-Oakes: You've taken the time to write about and you know, things like exploring death, disability and therapy, young adults and therapy, which kind of picks up on your point about, you know, young people coming back from university and maybe, you know, being away from home for the first time and struggling. One of the things that I thought was, was really interesting was rejection and therapy.

That's not something that's often talked about, I don't think.

Chrissie Henson: No, it isn't. I don't think I can ever remember reading about it in any of the books that I've read as a, well, I've read from student age up till now. And I don't think it, rejection can happen in a number of ways. It can be rejection from a parent, rejection from a partner, or even being rejected from a job.

I was, I was personally made redundant before I started my training as a therapist. And I think I worked really hard in that industry and then you realise you're no longer fit with what they need. And it's kind that, that is a form of reject and.

It does impact you. For me personally, I've never come back and worked for another company since because of the impact, and it's why. I've been self-employed.

Rory Lees-Oakes: I just feel impact on you chose to be a self-employed person rather than take the risk of being rejected again. Yeah. Yeah, I mean, I think it's something that isn't often discussed in therapy and also men and therapy.

I thought that was quite interesting because again, not something that's talked about very much because in my experience, and my experience isn't the be all and end all by any stretch of the imagination, but my experience in talking to colleagues, men presenting therapy may be quite differently from women.

Chrissie Henson: Yeah, I mean, years gone by, and men wouldn't even ask for help. I think we've come a very, very long way, which is really good to see. But I still think it's a lot hard for a man to ask for help, though, then a woman or somebody that doesn't identify as either. But particularly in that, the chapter that I've written in my book, it not

only introduces men therapy, it also some male rape, and that again, is something that you don't hear about it a lot, you don't read about it a lot. And I just thought, again, it was important to, to acknowledge that it does happen.

Rory Lees-Oakes: Absolutely, and yes, it's something, yeah, it's one of those things, certainly male, male rape is something that is, is something that obviously happens. It's obviously something that happens and probably happens.

More frequently than we would like to think sadly, but it's not often it's not often discussed in terms of How you work with that therapeutically. So I think that's a very that sounds to me like a really interesting chapter, as is disability and therapy. I mean, obviously we're speaking to you today We've talked about how your voice is affected by cerebral palsy or cerebral palsy and I think that again, it's something that isn't widely discussed or widely engaged with.

And we're having a, hopefully having a respectful conversation about the challenges that you have. But I think that sometimes that's quite a difficult conversation for therapists to have, isn't it?

Chrissie Henson: Yeah, it's particularly difficult for client disabilities as it's not always visible as well. Yes. For me particularly,

I can't hide my disability. You hear it? The minute, minute speaks when you see me, you, you see, by the way that I move. And there's kind of pros and cons for both sides, a pro for that, is that everyone sees it so they can choose to adapt, but then, those that don't want to adapt, I can't hide, I can't hide it, it's there, it's visible.

That's the same for people with non-visible disabilities. It's almost like they've got to tell everyone what the situation is because it's not.

Rory Lees-Oakes: And then it's not always believed because it's not visible. And I guess the, the organisation or the situation that person finds themselves in hasn't adapted itself to working with disabled people.

Usually it comes, it comes up in my experience where there's a gap in support for a disabled person, be it use of stairs or, or, or use of toilets in facilities or, I mean, the list, the list goes on, doesn't it? Of, of what could be missing in a therapy room. That, that would, would kind of prompt someone to say well I, I can't do that because I've got a disability.

Even, even I guess the choice of seating isn't it as well?

Chrissie Henson: Yeah, yeah because you've got to be comfortable while they're speaking to you. And it's even like acknowledging that. Not everyone can sit down for 50 minutes either. I worked with a young lad what we learned that had autism and again visibly you wouldn't have known that, but the minute the session started his anxiety would go up and then he would find it really difficult to sit down.

So we had to find ways around that.

Rory Lees-Oakes: Absolutely. Absolutely. And it's this, I guess, speaks to the part of the book that would be really useful for students. You know, even qualified practitioners, you're sharing your experience and saying, you know, you know, look, you know, have you, have you thought of this?

And one of the things that I'm really struck, I'm just kind of reading, reading the book here online you, you put in pause for thoughts. So they're like little, little kind of thinking and assessing full stops at the end of the chapter. And what I'm looking for, which is about. You know, what is therapy?

It starts off a pause for thought. Have you been in therapy before? What did you find helpful and what didn't work and why? And it is literally a pause for thought, isn't it? Helps people to you know, crystallise their thinking. And generally, you know, gets them to prompt more questions.

Chrissie Henson: Yeah. That, that, The Pause for Thought is probably one of my favourite parts of the book.

Because I just feel like it involves the reader, doesn't it? So you've read the chapter, and you might, you might not relate to it, or you might feel you don't relate to it, and you get those questions at the end of it and you, you kind of go, oh yeah. Oh yeah that could be me, I come to think about it in that way.

I just thought that'd be good the reader. Feeling like it's for them. It's not just read about me, it's about my clients. It's for them to, to look at their thought that are feeding their emotions and that's not the potential client that could be. Like you say, practising therapists, training therapists. When they read it, how do they relate to it?

What do they work with the clientele spoken about?

Rory Lees-Oakes: Absolutely, and I think that having, having put in those punctuations is so useful. I'm looking at the book now, there's so much in it and we could talk for so much longer about it. A look inside the therapy room by Chrissie Henson is available on Amazon.

We will put a link to both the transcript and also the book in episode two, seven, five of the Counselling Tutor podcasts. If you go to Counselling Tutor, click the podcast tab. Go to episode 275, you'll see it, you'll see it all there. And you know, maybe, maybe something that may be helpful for you in your practice or something you can give to someone who may be thinking about entering therapy.

And we've heard you loud and clear today, Chrissie, I want to say that. We've heard you loud and clear about what this book is about. So Chrissie Henson, thank you so much for joining us.

Chrissie Henson: My pleasure, thank you.