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Maggie Holland is a Licensed Mental Health Counselor in the state of Washington. She has been practicing since 2018 and currently works in her own private practice. She specializes in working with women that struggle with anxiety, burnout, people-pleasing, perfectionism and perinatal concerns. She also has extensive experience working with survivors of narcissistic abuse and dysfunctional family dynamics. When she's not working you can find her cuddled up with a book and her two large dogs, Dipstick and Doodle. Welcome, Maggie.

Allison Puryear (she/her): Welcome back to Not Boring CEs. I'm here today with Maggie Holland, and we're going to be talking about humor and its place in a clinical relationship, its place in the therapy room which I'm super psyched about. So thanks for being here. Yeah, thanks for having me. So.

tell me a little bit about like why, humor just isn't a given in our clinical relationships, like, what are some of the myths about? What will happen if we have any humor in our lives in our clinical lives. Yeah. And you know, I think the first one, the biggest one, is a lot of times. I think humor is very much viewed as unprofessional, especially as therapists. We are wonderful understanding supporting of our clients, but we're not always understanding and supporting of each other.

Maggie Holland: I'm sure we have all been in a Facebook group where somebody poses a question and everybody comes for them in the comments that this is unethical. You're being an awful therapist.

Maggie Holland: and so I think humor gets lumped in with that so often as being an unprofessional way to show up.

I think this kind of also has some roots in

Maggie Holland: the beginning of our field with Freud, the whole blank slate mentality, and that is the most professional way that we can show up

Maggie Holland: But humor also allows us to, and Freud thought this, too, humor also allows us to access different ways of thinking different things that maybe we aren't so comfortable expressing directly, and so yeah, I think that's the first one that gets in the way of just like man. Our nature as therapists is to kind of call each other on what's ethical, what's not ethical? And I know that comes from a good place. But I think that's our first one. And

Maggie Holland: well, I think the therapist ethical versus, not ethical, that's ethical and not ethical with quotation marks around it. It's not usually based in

Allison Puryear (she/her): any of what our licenses say is ethical or unethical. It's like you're doing something I don't do. And I'm not comfortable with. So I'm gonna label it as bad.

Maggie Holland: Yes, yes. And so for me, I'm a counselor, and so kind of looking at my code of ethics for looking at the ACA right? And you know, if you look through there, it doesn't ever mention humor directly. But I think what our code of ethics and pretty much any fields code of ethics does mention is kind of for the ACA. It's maleficent

Maggie Holland: cool. That's a hard word. But basically, this boils down to you're not gonna do anything that causes your clients harm. And that's a really broad phrase. But it's also a little bit

scary, because if you look at the code of ethics "Do no harm" to your clients is literally over the whole thing. Like if you pull that up, put in harm, the whole page and document is gonna light up on every single page. So

Maggie Holland: I think a lot of times this gets lumped in with doing harm and humor absolutely can be harmful. It can be reductionistic, it can be mocking. It can be painful. But there are really respectful and ethical ways to use it. But yeah, I think this boils down to that that phrase of "do no harm" to your clients and if you're not intentional, about it it absolutely can. Yes, yeah, okay, so let's let's talk about another. Myth that you run up against

Maggie Holland: yes. Yes.

Maggie Holland: so I think another thing that comes up for us as therapists, and I think this one it can come up as we talk with other therapists, too. But there's this perception that we have as therapists that we are supposed to have it like more together than our clients like. We're supposed to have life figured out, and we're supposed to be taking it seriously and doing

Maggie Holland: all the mindfulness and meditation and self care, and like we are doing all these things to take life seriously and really, just do everything correctly right. And I think sometimes, as you joke with somebody as you use humor

Maggie Holland: as you bring levity to a moment that is really really serious. It can kind of feel like, you know. Yes, there's times we avoid with humor, for sure. But sometimes the humor can feel like, you know. Maybe we don't have it all figured out. Or maybe we need to joke about the absurdity of life because there are just absurd things in life. And so I think there is some pressure that we're gonna have it more together than our clients.

Allison Puryear (she/her): Yeah, it's interesting, this pressure, right? And even if we know we don't have it altogether. It's like we're supposed to pretend like we have it altogether in session. When, like, we're all humans, we all share the same feelings like

Maggie Holland: there's not a feeling my clients have that I haven't experienced probably recently. It's just that like, maybe maybe I'm more practice in in tolerating those feelings? Not always. Sometimes I'm not more practice than my client. Sometimes I'm like choosing

Allison Puryear (she/her): more wisely than I might have in the past, and that my client? Maybe sometimes not. I see how like this being this being a myth kind of feeds into that whole professionalism thing right? Yup, Yup, absolutely. And like, you know, life can be a very serious thing. And so I think sometimes

Maggie Holland: this also pulls on our innate desire to wanna help right of like a client is coming to us in their deepest pain. That's when they reach out for an intake session. They reach out in their deepest pain, and they're saying, Please help me, you know, and you know we wanna show them we're taking it seriously. We wanna show them I can help. I do have it together enough to help and so I think sometimes

Maggie Holland: in our brain it's like, who's gonna trust me if I joke about it. If I don't have this altogether. If I don't have it figured out, are they? Gonna trust me to help them figure it out?

And so I think that this can really get on our way sometimes of, you know.

Maggie Holland: the ways that this can help our clients, the ways that this can be really beneficial for us.

Allison Puryear (she/her): yeah, I think this gets in the way in a lot of ways for us as therapists. Yeah, yeah, when I think about like.

Allison Puryear (she/her): these things are all everything that you've talked about so far like the professionalism, the

Allison Puryear (she/her): the perception that we're harming clients and the like, needing to have our stuff together, like all of that's based in other people's

Allison Puryear (she/her): opinions, views that's not us coming from our own clinical grounded place. Those fears in those myths all come from our fear of being viewed as not good enough.

Maggie Holland: Yep, yeah, and you know something, I always like to remind people when it comes to like using humor and relationships like our clients are coming to us when they're struggling the most right. They're not showing up as their best selves.

Maggie Holland: And it's really really hard to be in a relationship with somebody and to continue that relation potentially for long term, that some some therapists do long term work is really hard to stay in relationship with somebody that you don't like.

Maggie Holland: that you don't delight in that like you don't have some commonalities with, and somebody that is in the throes of their mental illness. You know they're not going to be able to communicate those things that you would probably really enjoy about them if you hadn't met them in this setting. They can't communicate those things to you very well right now, and so you know, humor can sometimes be this way that we bridge the gap, and we find

Maggie Holland: commonalities with our clients, and we find things to delight in, because

Maggie Holland: all of us have probably had those moments where we love our clients to death, and there are many days where we don't like them right and like there are many days that a client shows up and didn't do any of the homework we talked about and didn't make any progress. And you know they're like, Why is it feeling like this? And you wanna like, shake them and be like, because you didn't do your homework right? And

Maggie Holland: So in those moments, I think humor can be like a really basic thing that we can return to to look at like the absurdity that's you're in therapy. And we have homework right like. So we can return to that on a base level and be like, Oh, yeah, I am here to help you. We are here together to work this. So I think humor can be this really basic way we relate with our clients when we don't like them very much. Yeah.

Allison Puryear (she/her): I love this idea of delighting in our clients. I've never thought of it that way. I think about it like delighting in my kids. But I haven't thought about delighting in my clients, and I realize like

that's why I love every client I have. I really do delight in them, even when they're making choices that I'm like. Oh, no, no, no, no, not again. Yes, yes, like please, please. Left turn. No, no, no, don't do this. I am here in the car with you, but like, please don't drive off the road absolutely. But the idea of like, and that I feel like when we have humor in our relationship with our clients.

Allison Puryear (she/her): Even when they're going through a hard time.

Maggie Holland: It's easier to find that delight as a clinician, and for them to maybe find some delight in themselves as well, or some delight in the therapeutic process, which is not an easy

one. Yeah, no, it's not an easy one, and you know, we really sit through the most painful moments of some people's lives that their family and friends don't get to see sometimes. And you know not only that, but humor.

Maggie Holland: If we bring it in, and we do it in a respectful way. We do it in an intentional way. There's a lot of research that actually shows that we are more likely to have positive outcomes or clients to feel positive outcomes, and for us to also feel that there was a positive outcome with this client.

Maggie Holland: Now, that's if we use it intentionally. That's if we use humor respectfully. Right? The big caveat but you know it almost helps us ensure that we help the client to get there. And so it

Maggie Holland: it always blows my mind seeing it in these Facebook groups. When when people say, Don't joke around about things, or you know, self disclosure is kind of in the same realm of you have to be careful and intentional about how you do it, but it can be so helpful to help us connect with our clients initially to stay connected with our clients and really help them get where they are trying to go little bit less resistance hopefully.

Maggie Holland: That's the ideal. Right? Yeah, absolutely. Yeah, yeah. And I like that a little bit less resistance. I mean, I know the very first therapist I ever had in my life was a blank slate therapist, and as a very deeply insecure teenager.

I could not tolerate that, because I just knew everything she was thinking about me were all the things I hated about myself. Right? Yeah.

Allison Puryear (she/her): You would never crack a joke. She would never like. It was outside the realm. Now I think that there's some blank slate therapists out there who do great work, but they work to do me. There's this sense of like.

Allison Puryear (she/her): different people are gonna work for different clients. We've got a superstar client. They don't have a funny bone. They're like.

Allison Puryear (she/her): not interested. They've never laughed at. Stand up, comedy all that like. Probably not the person to do like a joke with or find some humor in anything. But absolutely, I think the majority of us

Allison Puryear (she/her): probably

Allison Puryear (she/her): appreciate that. Yeah, humorous

Allison Puryear (she/her): kind of injection into the clinical relationships. So there's not so damn heavy.

Maggie Holland: Yeah, absolutely. And you know, I think with some of that, too, of like

Maggie Holland: we can totally talk about. How do we use humor ethically in the room? We can talk about that later. But you know, a big piece of this is reading the room right like knowing what kind of clients you're working with, and and there's a lot of blank slate therapists out there that are absolutely wonderful. And you know they can work really well with somebody who

Maggie Holland: trends towards using a lot of humor as a deflection, as an avoidance like Oh, my gosh, yes, like I am not your therapist, if that is something that you do, I'm gonna call you

on it. But you know it's gonna be a huge thing I have to work through, too, and that's my job as the therapist. But

Maggie Holland: to a blank slate clinician. They're gonna have a much easier time calling that out and challenging that cause. They don't naturally tend towards doing that. So so much of this reading the room, knowing your clients knowing yourself. But yeah, if you you know, run of the mill client talking about, I'm not gonna say run of the mill, because we all have our special stuff. But you know, a lot of clients really appreciate an injection of some like

Maggie Holland: laughter, because this is heavy work, and a lot of this sucks like, you know, when clients come in. I say this sucks, and then it sucks more, and then hopefully, it sucks less. And that's what we're aiming for. So hang in there. But yeah, a lot of it sucks. So a lot of clients appreciate it.

Allison Puryear (she/her): Yeah. And we're gonna talk in a little while about how how to use humor intentionally and respectfully, we're gonna get to that for those who are like, okay. But how? But can we talk about some of the benefits for clients for us to bring that injection of humor in? Yeah, absolutely. So I think the first one I always like to mention is, you know.

Maggie Holland: they are building a relationship with essentially most of the time a stranger that they met on the Internet right like they don't know anything about us. We don't know anything about them. And so there can be. Humor can be the way that a client begins testing the waters and begins to. Okay. I'm gonna express

Maggie Holland: this absurd thing that I'm struggling with, and a little bit of a joking way. And we're gonna kinda see how that lands. Right? That's basic relation building for everybody. And our clients are no exception. And so sometimes humor can be a way to test and and look at. What is the communication expectations from this person that I met on the Internet? Yes, they're a therapist. But what are the communication expectations? You know. What are the things that

Maggie Holland: she really connects with? I'm a female. So what are the things she really connects with? You know, and it can also be a way for them to begin testing communication skills that they might not have gotten to test with other people in their life before right? Cause. Humor is

Maggie Holland: for most of us ingrained in our life. That is part of our

Maggie Holland: everyday relationships. You know we joke with our partners. We joke with our kids. We joke with our friends hopefully. You can joke with your family right?

Maggie Holland: And so that's a natural relational pattern, and some people haven't gotten to practice that before they don't know how to practice it. And and so I think, first and foremost, it's a really important tool for expression that our clients get to practice with us, and they get to use it to get to know us, and we get to use it to get to know them. It's interesting because I think about that.

Allison Puryear (she/her): the the snarky humor that people will sometimes use like they get to practice. They get to have real feedback

Allison Puryear (she/her): from a therapist cause. That's our job to be like. Oh, that feels like one of those jokes that you make where like there's a truth underlying it that you may need to express. Is there something you want to say to me? I'm really interested in hearing it, and I'm I'm eager for you to express yourself in a way that, like their best friend and their mom's not

gonna respond in that way. They're just gonna be like. She did it again. That passive, aggressive bullshit, you know. And so it's a great way for people to be able to like

Allison Puryear (she/her): practice humor in ways they can take into their real life.

Maggie Holland: Yes, yeah, absolutely. Yeah. And in ways to understand cause in that snarkiness, right? That's that's like a reductionist pain, reductionistic, painful way that humor can be used. Cause if that client is using that snarkiness

Maggie Holland: in their family dynamics right? But then also saying, I have no idea what everybody's mean to me when I go home for holidays. If you allow humor to come into the room and you get to say

Maggie Holland: that's maybe why everybody's being kind of mean. Are you saying things to your family? Because, like, that's probably it, or that's part of it right? And so when we allow the full client to come into the room, even their humor in the most delightful ways, and their humor in the most painful ways like. That's another piece of themselves. And then we get to work with that versus if we don't welcome humor into the room.

Maggie Holland: oftentimes by leading by example. If we don't welcome that into the room, we're missing a whole piece of the puzzle of like, what is happening in these relationships that aren't working. Yeah. Yeah. Well, I'm just thinking, like, we're modeling that intentional, respectful humor.

Allison Puryear (she/her): They don't have to be snarky to be funny. They can.

Allison Puryear (she/her): They can still make people laugh. They can still get that reaction that they're looking for from some people in their lives without putting anyone down or anything like that.

Maggie Holland: Yeah, yeah. Because, as therapist is our job first and foremost, to be the place, they test things right, and we give honest feedback of that did not land right and talk about what made you make that joke that did not land and like if I saw you in a public setting, and you said, That's me like this would be my reaction. And so, first and foremost, we get to be the testing grounds. And we have to hold that. And so really being aware of, like

Maggie Holland: when humor comes into the room. This is just another tool for us to work with, to understand our client for them to understand us. Yeah, it's really important that we allow space for that.

Allison Puryear (she/her): Yeah. So

Maggie Holland: let's talk some about just laughter in general, because I think there's great clinical benefit there? Yep, absolutely. Yeah. So laughter. You know, I'm gonna i'm, gonna try not to go full nerd on everybody, but

Maggie Holland: great good. So laughter. Essentially it kind of a big thing that it does for us as we're laughing. Is it? It releases dopamine right? And so in the therapeutic room. Why, that is specifically really important for us as therapist, to make sure that there is some laughter, that there is some humor, because dopamine. When it's activated, it actually helps enhance learning. So the things you're talking to your clients about, if you can.

Maggie Holland: Not all the time. I'm not asking everybody to be a clown in their sessions right? Or stand up, comedian. But if we can infuse some laughter, particularly if it's a topic a client's been struggling with, or something they've been struggling to practice.

Maggie Holland: it actually enhances the ability to recall information and learning. It helps build motivation and it helps clients to stay focused.

Maggie Holland: Now, all of those things obviously obviously apply to us as well. But that's some really awesome things for us to work with this therapist to help help clients get to where they're trying to go. Just our job right? And so, you know, enhancing, learning, enhancing motivation, enhancing a client's attention and retention of information.

Maggie Holland: Oh, my gosh, that is like what we want our clients to do every week. That's you know what we're here for. And I think it's really important to that. If a client is laughing with somebody, they also get the added benefits of the serotonin of connecting with another person. Because now that laughter is shared.

Maggie Holland: So if you do it by yourself, you're watching a funny cat video. Sure you get all of these benefits. If you do it with somebody else. You get even more benefits, and your brain feels even better. So

Maggie Holland: there's a lot of just in your brain the soup of neurotransmitters.

Maggie Holland: wonderful things that happen when we especially with other people. Yeah, yeah, love it.

Maggie Holland: Yeah. And you know, if most of us in this field have read the Burnout book by the Nagosi Sisters. Wonderful book! If you haven't read it and you're listening. This, please go pick up a copy and take care of yourself.

Maggie Holland: But and it's called burnout, something completing the stress cycle.

Maggie Holland: yes, and you will recognize it in a bookstore, is it? Says Burnout, like 5 times in red. Take it up. But a big thing that they talk about in there is this idea of completing the stress cycle right? And this idea that in modern society that we don't. We have stressors that come up. But we aren't always physically reacting and completing that stress cycle to

Maggie Holland: get that stress process out of our body. Because, you know, somebody sends a me an email, and you're not gonna literally run away from your computer or fight them. So we don't get to complete the stress that comes into our bodies very often. And so laughter, and particularly laughter with somebody else

Maggie Holland: is a huge way that we can complete that stress cycle. And so it's a huge stress management tool as well. So for our clients as we're talking to them about how important it is to process the stress out of their bodies. It's important for us to model that and bring that into the session, too.

Maggie Holland: and we can't. If you do walk and talk therapy, you're doing it. But for therapists that are classically sitting in an office, and we're not able to move around a whole lot, you know, we don't really hug clients. And so this is a way that we can ethically complete the stress cycle with a client in session together, and then we can model that and call out, this is what this is supposed to feel like when you process that stress out of your body.

Maggie Holland: we can be creative, too, for those art therapists out there and expressive arts therapists. You can do that in a session. But yeah, this is a way for people who like me. Maybe you're not so artistic. I don't do walk and talk therapy. This is a way that I can help clients complete the stress cycle actively in session, which I think is really important.

Allison Puryear (she/her): Yeah, I love this idea cause so many of the things in their books. So they basically walk you through like, here are a number of things you can do to complete your stress cycle, pick one, go with it, try the others go with it, you know. You don't have to do all of them. But, like, you know, one of them is

Allison Puryear (she/her): sex. We're not gonna have sex with our clients. We're not gonna like. Hear all these things that we're not gonna do

Maggie Holland: But this one is accessible to all of us. Yep, for the most part, I mean not everybody's funny, not everybody's into humor, but the majority of therapists can respectfully and intentionally bring humor into their session. And and they might be thinking the thing and just feeling like they're not allowed to say it out loud. Absolutely so. Yeah. And you know, and that you think that highlights another really big benefits for benefit for our clients is, you know, you're thinking something, and you're not gonna say it out loud.

Maggie Holland: This is also a really good way for clients to practice risk taking like. Make that joke with me. I'm telling you I'm a safe person. Make that joke with me. Let's see if it lands and then you know.

Maggie Holland: sure we're gonna tell them if it doesn't land. But we're gonna do it in a kind way that says it was safe to try that risk and have got you. And like.

Maggie Holland: let's alter your technique a little bit, maybe but I think that highlights something that's really helpful for our clients, too, is it helps them practice, risk taking and this is particularly well.

Maggie Holland: particularly important for people who have, like social anxiety and struggle to relate to other people. You get to practice that here. And we're gonna practice taking that risk and making the joke and drawing the attention to yourself and sitting in that and regulating yourself as the attention is on you, cause you made a really funny joke. Yeah. So I think that actually rolls in really, well, that's another benefit for clients. So many benefits. It's so great, absolutely. Yeah.

Allison Puryear (she/her): let's talk some about like psychological flexibility, because that feels like it has

Maggie Holland: an important part in this sure, yeah. So psychological flexibility or component of acts. I always want to say act when I see it. For all you ACT therapists out there. I'm doing it right.

Maggie Holland: So hectic comes from that right which is basically psychological flexibility is being present in the moment. And whatever is coming up and happening in the moment, the current situation

Maggie Holland: being aware of it, not necessarily trying to change it. But like we're kind of rolling with it a little bit right? And we're gonna show up intentionally with whatever this is. Gonna say, true to myself, true to my values. And I'm gonna show up in an intentional way, even if the things showing up is really really hard, right?

Maggie Holland: And so people who excuse me.

Maggie Holland: people who struggle sitting in the moment with things, especially things that are really really hard humor can kind of be their first way to start doing this because it's it feels a little bit less threatening sometimes. Right of like, Oh, man, this this emotion, like, let's say, I'm learning to sit with anger right? And you know that's really really uncomfortable for me to sit with anger

Maggie Holland: if we can kind of like make a joke about it. If we can kind of bring some levity to the situation, it can make anger feel? Not so heavy. Right? All of a sudden. Okay, it can be a little bit funny. I am so mad at the slow walker on the sidewalk right woo. I just wanna like zoom pass them and make a mean comment like I am struggling to just sit in the anger. I don't want to be a person that says mean comments to people. I'm struggling to sit in this right

Maggie Holland: you know, in your brain you can go through what are all the ridiculous things I would even say to this person if I zoomed by. I made a mean comment. You know, all of a sudden it kind of diffuses that a little bit, and it helps us sit with. Okay, I'm angry. And there are a lot of choices that I can make right now. There are some absurd ones.

Maggie Holland: There are some that I really actually want to do in real life, but it can kind of help us bridge the gap and sit with what is here right now. And that's a big thing, as therapists we do for clients. But sometimes it's hard, right, especially as we get into anger is a hard one for people to sit with grief is a hard one to sit with. And so these really heavy emotions that

Maggie Holland: it can feel like they're drowning us, sometimes, bringing a little bit of levity to it again, not in a reductionistic way, but bringing a little bit of levity to it, can make it a little bit more tolerable for our clients, and if it feels a little bit more tolerable, they're able to make more intentional choices about. How am I going to show up as I'm grieving. How am I going to show up as I'm really pissed off?

Maggie Holland: And when they show up more intentional they feel better about themselves. There's a whole bunch of great things that happen when clients can make intentional choices, and so sometimes for clients that really struggle to tolerate

Maggie Holland: humor is like the bridge of the Gap to do that. It's like sticking your toe in the water instead of jumping in headfirst.

So yeah, hugely helpful for flexibility and mindfulness and sitting with whatever feelings come up.

Allison Puryear (she/her): love it.

Maggie Holland: i'm thinking about like,

Allison Puryear (she/her): just the like the positive feelings that happen among like. when when I'm with somebody, and we're laughing right? The the dopamine, everything that's happening that you talked about, that we got to geek out on for a second, but also, just like

Maggie Holland: they're able to delight in us, too. Yeah. And we're able to delight in the. And it's like the relationship is delightful, even though sometimes it's really hard. Yeah, absolutely. And even though sometimes it's it's this can kinda be one of those times where we also get to model, holding both for clients, too. There are. There are absolutely times, you know. I mentioned grief earlier.

Maggie Holland: There are times we can be sitting there crying with our clients because the grief that they've been through is so heavy. Or whatever thing they've been through, is so heavy. And you know also there's humor in it, too, you know. And so those times when we can show clients, we can hold both, or we can delight in them, and they delight in us back, you know. I really. So I've got this phrase I picked up in grad school.

Maggie Holland: I had a professor say it to me one time, but you know.

Maggie Holland: helping our clients seek what she called the good soup of life, right of like, like a really good soup fills you up. It nourishes you like. It's if it's soup season, and that is the best thing that could happen. You is have a really good soup, right? I might be a really big soup fan. I don't know. I love soup, big soup, soup, fan.

Maggie Holland: I really need a t-shirt that says that. But so like the good soup life right? It nourishes you. It fills you up like it's just the best you know, hits the spot. And so when we get to delight in somebody else, and they get to delight in us at the same time. And we have this moment of really beautiful, just pure connection. I think that's a good soup of life. Isn't it right? And so

Maggie Holland: so many of our clients come in often times because they're isolated, and they haven't had that good soup in their childhood in their adult relationships. And they're dating and so I think also, one of the most basic things we can do is is kind of show clients. This is what good soup of life feels like. This is what good soup and relationships feel like.

Maggie Holland: so yeah. But you didn't expect a soup metaphor to come in today, did you, Allison? I mean, I love it. It's good. I'll take it on a cold winters day. Absolutely. So I think. Kind of showing showing our clients. This is what delighting in your relationships looks looks like and this is what it feels like. And this is how it happens in a way that doesn't also hurt hopefully. So

Maggie Holland: so to me, that also just like sounds so pleasant clinically as a therapist, can we talk some about the benefits of using humor in session for therapists. Yes, absolutely. Yeah. Humor is one of those things, and laughter is one of those things. It

Maggie Holland: rarely goes one direction, and if it does is something clinically we're talking about still useful, right? But for us on our side, basic as we're starting out kind of going back to clients using it for a tool of expression for us. This can be a really great way to begin our rapport building right? So you know all that dopamine that comes out oxytocin that comes out, which is our bonding chemical we want our clients to feel bonded to us. And so that helps begin that process

Maggie Holland: when we do it respectfully and thoughtfully. And I think another thing with the rapport building is, if we use humor and laughter, it can be a way for us to ethically self disclose. That doesn't make it necessarily all about us right? And so you know, if a client is sharing something that they're struggling with.

Maggie Holland: And you say, this is reminding me of this meme that I saw on Instagram today. And this is feeling similar. Does that land right? You have just disclosed a lot of things without making about yourself. You're saying. You know, I'm on Instagram. I'm with it. I'm funny. I look at the memes right like I get the jargon, you know. And so this is a way for us to self disclose. That doesn't necessarily make it about us. So

Maggie Holland: I think this can be a really really important tool for rapport building and helping clients get comfortable and kind of do that attaching to us so that we can work the therapeutic

relationship. Yeah, what I'm thinking, too, about completing the stress cycle. Sometimes sessions are really heavy for us. Yes, and we're holding a lot. And so it doesn't just complete the stress cycle for them, or at least get it started. It can do it for us in session, too.

Maggie Holland: Absolutely. Yes, yes, it's it's the Burnout book where I'm like everybody. Go get this book and read it. It's so important for us to complete that stress cycle as well. And so, you know, laughter have you have a back to back day?

Maggie Holland: Don't recommend it. Take Allison's courses. If you have a back to back day, and you might not necessarily be able to take a really long walk if you had a really heavy session, you might not be able to take a walk and process some of that out, so that you can sit really well for your next client. Now I know all of us work to sit our best that we can after a heavy session. I believe in everybody, and also it can be really hard, right? And so if we infuse some humor into most of our sit are

Maggie Holland: client sessions. It can kind of help get us to the end of the day while still being pretty mentally clear. Yeah.

Maggie Holland: so yeah.

Maggie Holland: what else is a benefit for clinicians with humor. Yeah, yeah, you know. And I think, another one that

Maggie Holland: the play therapist out there going to be so happy. I'm saying this is that humor and joking with another person in adulthood is a way that we can re-engage with play that feels

Maggie Holland: a little bit more natural. You know, play is pretty essential when we're kids to understanding our world processing things that have happened to us.

Maggie Holland: And those needs are pretty basic. They don't necessarily go away just because we become adults. We are just told by society, we need to stop playing. And so, okay, that's one of the most efficient ways that kids play. That's one of the most efficient ways that they learn. Then we get to adulthood, and we make it way harder on ourselves, right? Like, stop playing. Just figure this out like an adult right?

Maggie Holland: And so I think that humor can be a way that we relate to clients. Sure. But it can also be for us a way that we play with clients in a way that's still ethical for both us that still doesn't harm the client.

Maggie Holland: And plays really, really important. It's important to play with your kids if you have them. Sure. But it's important to have play in our relationships, including our therapeutic relationships. It's important to have some level of play at work. Otherwise you're probably gonna be miserable. And so I think play is really important even for us as adults. And humor is a way that we can socially, acceptably

Maggie Holland: play highly recommend play for everybody. But also.

Maggie Holland: if you're just getting your toe back in that water proverbially.

Maggie Holland: yeah, humor can be a way that we play like a play on words or

Maggie Holland: puns. I know there's gonna be people that grown out there the lowest form of humor. But puns are like a play on words. Right? And so it's kind of using your brain in that playful way of you know that spontaneity, and that's, you know, processing the world and

looking from a different point of view. I think play can be really helpful in humor as a way that adults can do it a little more comfortably.

Allison Puryear (she/her): I love that, and I think about

Maggie Holland: so. I had to get reintroduced to play probably 2021, because I got so miserable through the whole thing in my house experience, and as a hardcore extrovert, it was very hard for me.

Allison Puryear (she/her): And so in 2021, I was like, I'm so miserable and not myself, and I don't know what's missing. And so I was like, well, what was fun when I was young, and I ended up signing up for an improv class.

Allison Puryear (she/her): and now I mean, I've been doing improv since then pretty much every week, and it is. It is my playtime, like we literally like the improv community where I live, will be like, Oh, let's play and it has helped bring out other forms of play like banter with my husband when we were dating banter constantly. And then, you know, 15 years of marriage, we're instead like, Well, who's gonna drive? Who here, you know, and it became so much more

Allison Puryear (she/her): like less

Allison Puryear (she/her): fun. And goofy, like we would. Yeah go to stand up together and laugh there. But there wasn't as much laughter between us, and when we get the banter going I'm like this. Oh, my body needed this and I'm able to delight in him, and he's able to delight in me. And I think this idea of like being an adult.

Allison Puryear (she/her): For some reason we we

Allison Puryear (she/her): took on this idea that we weren't supposed to be playful, that it is for children like you were saying, like.

Maggie Holland: we really really need to reconnect to that play to be whole people. Yeah, yeah, we adults it too hard and lost the play, you know. Not a good thing. Yeah, we're trying to do it right? Well, everybody told us, this is the right way to do it. So like, okay? And then we go do it. And they're like, Wait, why am I so miserable? Wait. Why are we all anxious and depressed like? It's not gonna solve all those issues, you know. But yeah, this is probably a really big foundational thing. If I had to guess, if that, you know

Maggie Holland: life is absurd, having some levity to it, having some play flirting with your partner. You know those

Maggie Holland: all the good brain chemicals come out when we play right. Like all of that feels really good. And we have those connection moments, you know, on a really basic way that says again, I delight in you, and you delight in me. Oh, my gosh, that's what relationships are supposed to be right. So we don't have that delight. Yeah, they don't feel great. They feel really transactional a lot of times.

Maggie Holland: Yes.

Allison Puryear (she/her): I'm thinking about the modeling of vulnerability, too. Like.

Allison Puryear (she/her): let's let's talk some about that.

Maggie Holland: Sure. Yeah.

Maggie Holland: yes. And so

Maggie Holland: vulnerability, right? Essentially what that is is, we're kind of like offering our heart up on a plate, you know, and

Maggie Holland: oftentimes our clients struggle with vulnerability. Most of us do. It's a really scary thing to feel, because when we offer our heart up on a plate. You know, somebody can accept it and nurture it and protect it, and that feels really lovely.

Maggie Holland: And people can also reject that. People can also reject it. But people can also stab it right? And so that is

Maggie Holland: a really scary thing of knowing like I can have best case. I can have worst case by offering some vulnerability right now. And so I think humor again bridges the gap, and I think that this can be a way that you know if I present a funny interpretation of the world right like.

Maggie Holland: Oh, my gosh! How ridiculous our credit scores! Why do we have those right and like so weird that we live in a world that has credit scores and lava lamps. What is that? Right?

Maggie Holland: And so I present a funny interpretation of the world.

Maggie Holland: and you are totally allowed to reject it. You know you are welcome to come back to me with like. Well, this is why we have credit scores, and this is what it is. And like. This is the science behind a lava lamp, and like, if you know that information, I'd be super interested to hear it. And I'm probably gonna go Google it after this, like, how does a lava lamp work?

Maggie Holland: but we are literally as we do that as therapists, and as we do that as human beings, we are literally offering to the other person a glimpse into our personal world. This is how my brain ticks. This is what I think of this. This is an opinion I have on this right when we say, here's a funny thing in the world. We are saying. Lava lamps are absurd. They're cool, but they're absurd, right?

And so I'm offering that to you, and it's not overtly about me right like I think you should have no lava lamps in your house right like.

Maggie Holland: It's not overtly about me, but we give that other person the power to reject it. We give them the opportunity to accept it, or we give them the opportunity to like. Meet us in the middle and work it together right like. Oh, my gosh! Imagine a world where we have to live inside lava lamps that's working this absurdity together! Right? And I think that that can be really vulnerable, but it can be kind of a way that we

Maggie Holland: enter into vulnerability with clients again. This gives them a chance to practice. This gives us a chance to practice but it kind of can give some neutral ground when it comes to how to be in relation with another person which

Maggie Holland: is inherently, really vulnerable. You can reject any of that at any point in time. There's nothing I can say or do about it. I can stop offering vulnerability, and I could stop offering ways for you to reject me. But it's kind of like a it can be an entrance into vulnerability that we model for our clients that we do for ourselves. That

Maggie Holland: maybe isn't so serious. And so, if the rejection happens, it feels a little less personal, and so we can come back and do it again. But yeah, at the core of it a lot of times. Humor also requires a lot of vulnerability.

Allison Puryear (she/her): Yeah.

Allison Puryear (she/her): Umhm, I'm thinking about that. You just said something about like it. It

Allison Puryear (she/her): I lost your words, but like making something not quite so heavy.

Allison Puryear (she/her): And just thinking about. There is a kind of shake it off.

Maggie Holland: Vibe. It can be helpful. We don't want to diminish the pain that somebody's in. There is a an intentional and respectful way to use humor with that. Can we talk some about that? Yeah, absolutely. And if you can't tell, I use shake it off. Is ll use that all the time. I'm a big Swifty. I know you are too like so like shaking it off like so much of our world is absurd, and there is so much pain in our world.

Maggie Holland: There are ridiculous things in our world, there's so much that is outside of our control, and if we really stay focused there, that can really leave us feeling stuck right particularly, we have no influence and control over things. Sometimes things just suck. And we just have to make it through this sucky period, you know. And so I think sometimes that humor can be a way that we can begin that movement of shaking things off. You know there's a lot of motion and shaking something off.

and that can feel like a really big change if you've been stuck.

Maggie Holland: And so I think humor can be a way that we can begin that movement. We can begin getting comfortable with shaking things off. Because, you know, at the end of the day, if there's something sucky that's happening. And we happening and we just have to make it through it. What are you? Gonna do you know we can wallow in it? And also we can. How do I sit with this and keep moving forward, you know.

Maggie Holland: And so you know I have a colleague that gave me this example at one point in time. She's a couples counselor.

Maggie Holland: God bless couples therapists out there so grateful. I will refer to you all day. You are doing the really hard work. So I had a a colleague that gave me an example. One time of this couple came in and the wife was like, Man I just. I'm just really focused on keeping everyone happy. I just noticed that this week. I can't shake it. And honestly, I want to do that.

Maggie Holland: I just want to keep everybody happy. Want to keep the equal equilibrium. And so.

Maggie Holland: my colleague, she responded back. She's like, Okay, cool. Let's focus this entire session on figuring out, how do we keep everybody in your family happy at all times? Let's figure that out. Said it with a straight face, she said. Right and and then the partner piped in and was like, Wait a minute. I actually don't think that's possible. And they kind of just looked at each other. She's like, welcome. This is what the sessions gonna be about like.

Allison Puryear (she/her): Yeah. And so and so it can feel. So that's an example of it can feel really scary. If we don't maintain the equilibrium it can feel really hard to tolerate.

Maggie Holland: particularly as a mom. If your kid is struggling. If your kid is having a big feeling, it is hard to tolerate when your kid's not happy, it's hard to tolerate when your partner's not happy.

Maggie Holland: you know. And so I absolutely understand this draw. And also that's one of those uncontrollable things in life. Right. That's one of those things that can leave you feeling stuck. And so if somebody is so in that mindset, this can be a way that we kind of rattle that cage and say, I don't know that this is actually the best thing here. And and can offer that without being judgmental. I can kind of like

Maggie Holland: this. We offer that vulnerability. We offer that space, and that client could totally have rejected it, and it would have been fine, you know. But we offer that interpretation, and it's kind of here it here is a lifeline.

Maggie Holland: maybe. Grab a hold of it. Nope, not yet. Okay. You say, you know, I'm here right? But here's a lifeline. Why don't you grab the life preserver? Let's figure something else out. Yeah.

Maggie Holland: yeah, yeah.

Allison Puryear (she/her): I'm thinking of like all the times I've done that in session without fully realizing, I mean, like I knew what I was doing. but without thinking about it, of how it is like a shake it off

Allison Puryear (she/her): kind of a response. So I love any sort of Taylor. Yes, so like the like. Humor is like our way of like. We shake it off a little bit. It can be and so it can be really helpful with that, you know, particularly clients that are stuck, and how most clients that come to us are stuck in some way, shape or form.

Allison Puryear (she/her): So I'm eager for us to get into like, okay, so how do we use humor and therapy? I also wanna talk about like how to use.

Maggie Holland: how to respond to humor and therapy. We could tag that on at the end. Yes, because I do work with a lot of people who are going to use humor to deflect and like, sometimes I'm like, that's funny. I gotta. I gotta moderate my response. Yes, yeah. And so you know, speaking on just that one. First and foremost right of like

Maggie Holland: that can be a way that we allow our humanness to show and our vulnerability to show. And, like.

Maggie Holland: you know, I think in therapy, something really important for us to acknowledge is, there is an inherent power, dynamic, differential, that at least clients perceive, and we might work our butts off, trying to get the client not to feel that power dynamic as acutely but at the end of the day, you know, clients come in viewing us as like the expert, and you know, we do have all these years of training and experience, and CEUs and all these things. And

Maggie Holland: so to some extent we are right. And so I think, with some of that of like also showing our humor and like showing our humanness can kind of bring us to that level of like, okay, we're on the same page here, like

Maggie Holland: client makes a self-deprecating joke. And man it was on point and like do they know themselves and like, do you have insight. Yes.

Maggie Holland: but to change your behaviors. No right. And so I think there is something to be said for, like throwing your head back and laughing about that. And then, after we're coming back to me like, Okay, but bringing around like that was self deprecating and like, let's talk about it like

Maggie Holland: dang. That was funny. And also, and you got me. And also we gotta talk about that right? And so, yeah, it can totally be a way to deflect. And it can totally be a way to avoid things.

Maggie Holland: but in that, you know, I always like to look at like, is there a purpose? This behavior. And so for some people, if they haven't had that good soup in their family relationships, growing up, cracking. That funny joke was maybe the closest thing that they could get to a connection with a caregiver or a sibling, or somebody that might have been the closest way that they can ensure connection. So also looking at like.

Maggie Holland: what is the purpose of this? Maybe it'd be. It's to deflect, and also to get that need filled of. I need to connect with somebody. And so yeah, there's ways that clients can use it that aren't helpful. And but I do think, acknowledging it. If it's funny, laugh at it. You're gonna always loop back around and be like, alright. But that was self deprecating like, let's talk about it.

Allison Puryear (she/her): And I'm gonna make up something that she would totally say rather than disclosing things she has said, but like if somebody

Allison Puryear (she/her): inconvenienced her in a pretty significant way, she might come into session and be like, Oh.

Allison Puryear (she/her): well, Maggie did. XY. And Z. So obviously I need to make her wish she was never born. Now, you know, like which she's not gonna do. She's not gonna do. But she's having fantasies about it, right? So I'll be like brilliant while you're plotting. Maybe we can talk about the way that you're hurt, that she inconvenienced you and

Allison Puryear (she/her): the plan for getting your life back to whatever position you wanted or needed it in. So it's like acknowledging like, yeah, that was funny. And like, I love that her humor always goes towards the dramatic. It's something we're working on. So it's always a great example of like, oh, look!

Allison Puryear (she/her): You're tending towards a little dramatic drama like this is a little smidge dramatic for the situation. Can we talk about how big the feelings really are? And

Maggie Holland: and so there's that there's that validation. And also, like you're doing your job as a therapist by naming the thing and taking it from there. Yes, yes, absolutely. Yeah, and calling it out. And also it's normal to like

Maggie Holland: plot against like mentally have a fantasy of plotting against somebody who wronged you like us, holding space for that, and like, yep.

Maggie Holland: go ahead and plot, and also why I'm here right? You know, cause I'm not your henchman. I'm not your minion. I'm not your sidekick. So like.

Maggie Holland: Okay, I'm gonna stay in my lane, lovely do what you're gonna do don't do what you're gonna do, because that's something we have to work with, right. But like.

Maggie Holland: I hear you, that is valid. And also, yeah, I think that can be really really powerful, like just that normalization, that validation. Because just thinking about that client hypothetically, in this situation, most people in her life probably say, Oh, my gosh, you're being dramatic. Just chill, right? And so when we say, Okay, cool

Maggie Holland: plot away. And also let's react in a way that's appropriate for this situation, like, let's stay, true to who we are. Let's talk about those feelings. You know. I think that first piece we sometimes underestimate how powerful it is of like totally valid to want to plot

Allison Puryear (she/her): gotcha, and also piece that comes after that. That's where I get to step in right? Yeah. And if I wanted to stay in the humor selfishly, because she's funny, then I would be like, Tell me, tell me, what's the plan? But I'm not going to do that, because that's that's spending our clinical time

Maggie Holland: on things that aren't really clinically relevant for our goals. Yes, absolutely. And so I think this one a big thing to remember as if you're thinking about using humor and therapy. You're highlighting a really great one of like not acting like in a way that we collude in the avoidance of like the feelings. Right? Cause humor can be a huge deflection of feelings.

Maggie Holland: It can be also a really great little peek inside all those feelings like you. This example of like, okay, as you're plotting, let's talk about the feelings that are motivating you, plotting this thing that happened 5 days ago, or whatever it is, right. And so

Maggie Holland: recognizing and really being mindful of reading the room of like what's happening here, so that we don't accidentally collude in the avoidance. And you know you're if you end up hanging there for a second or so. Okay, that's all right. Your humanness is showing right. But ultimately it's our job to read the room, to be mindful to be monitoring the interaction. And what's happening? And is it therapeutic.

Maggie Holland: and it's really easy to collude in the avoidance, especially if there's something for you as a clinician that you don't feel. Maybe I don't have the training. Right? I don't have the skill, or I'm nervous that this thing comes up right. And so if you notice that happening, okay, that's just information for you to work with and go get training on that thing or go consult on that thing. But really, I like to use the word colluding specifically one. It's wonderful, too. It's kind of a heavy word, right?

Maggie Holland: So colluding in the avoidance is is what I usually like to say with that one of like, it's easy to do. We're all humans. It happens but really monitoring the room and monitoring that relationship.

Maggie Holland: That's our job. So if you notice, okay, I am colluding and a lot of avoidance.

Maggie Holland: Yeah, okay, we're gonna look at other ways that we can work with that and also get training. Get consultation, get support. It's probably happening for a reason. And it's okay, yeah.

Maggie Holland: yeah, absolutely. Yeah, yeah, what are some considerations? Yeah. So I think you know, biggest one. Obviously, in the beginning of the relationship. Ease into it, you know.

Maggie Holland: you know the one I use of like. Oh, this is giving me the vibe of that meme I saw on Instagram, right like that can be a way to ease into it if somebody says like rejection and like, Oh, I'm not on Instagram. I don't look at me if I don't find those things funny.

That's just your information to work with of like

Maggie Holland: ease back right? And so a lot more reading the room with that one. so yeah, basically read the room all the time. The other just general suggestions. I like to give. Keep it. PG, right like.

Maggie Holland: unless you're a client like I only work with adults mostly only work with women for the most part. I can totally cuss right? Like R rated movie gets one F word, every movie right? Like, I guess I'm on an adult level. But for the most part. If you're not sure you're still building the relationship. Keep it. PG, see how it goes. See how it lands and adjust from there. Right? Yeah. And I think, like language is probably something. We can be a little more flexible with it versus like

Allison Puryear (she/her): sexual content, because a lot of our clients aren't telling us the deeper sexual stuff going on, unless it's, you know, unless that's what they're coming in for.

Maggie Holland: absolutely. Yeah. And if they're coming in like, let's let's say that somebody is coming in for a sex addiction or a porn addiction right? Sometimes using humor can like

Maggie Holland: release some of that shame. It can kind of shake it up a little bit of like. Okay, if I can joke about this a little bit with my therapist in respectful ways, in appropriate ways like man, sexual content is one that you really need to tread with caution. But if we can joke about things a little bit, the basis of shame is, this is something abhorrent about myself. This is a flaw in me, and I need to hide it

Maggie Holland: need to make sure nobody sees this, and so if we can again bridge that gap, I feel like that's my phrase. Today we can bridge that gap, and we can make some light hearted jokes about it. Then sometimes we can release some of that shame you're spot on, though. That sexual content is absolutely probably the biggest area we need to be careful. Cause. That's you know.

Maggie Holland: the horror stories of someone bringing complaint to a licensing board. Now you lose your license right? Like

Maggie Holland: this is one of those areas. Be careful with humor in this area. But language is a lot more flexible. You know, reflecting, and clients experience back to them of like man. It feels like there's an elephant sitting on your chest. How are you even breathing right now, you know, like this feels consuming and so things like that is a little bit safer, as I say, keep a PG, yeah. Language

Maggie Holland: most of the time. You're good. Read the room. I actually say in my consultation calls like heads up, I cuss, is that an issue for you? Let's get that out of the way right now. I don't want you to be blindsided by it. But this is something I do. If you're uncomfortable, I'm gonna make a note. I'm gonna do my best, but also letting you know if something slips. I told you upfront right like I'll do my best.

Maggie Holland: So language is a little bit more flexible. But the content. What I usually say is, if you are making a joke, if you're doing some humor.

Maggie Holland: a good rule of thumb is to make sure if it's at somebody's expense, make sure that it's your expense that it's at right? So we have to be really careful coming back to that power dynamic of making sure that we don't use humor to establish ourselves in a higher place of power, like I'm funnier, or I'm smarter, or I'm whatever and so, if there is a joke. Make sure it's at your expense.

Maggie Holland: Right? Yeah, I think about when I'm like telling clients.

Allison Puryear (she/her): We've maybe talked about them having a really hard conversation with somebody in their life. I'll sometimes be like, alright. Are you ready to hate me?

Allison Puryear (she/her): Okay, here's the homework, you know, and like to just like lob it up to also take the edge off. And it's not at their expense. I'm not being like.

Allison Puryear (she/her): not sure you're gonna be able to do this. Well, you know, but I'm like, I know you're gonna hate me like encouraging you to have this conversation moment, too, of like if it's at your expense, right like.

Maggie Holland: So when that client goes and does that thing that they didn't want to do, let's say it's having a really hard conversation with a family member. They go do it and then they they probably are thinking about you while they're doing it, and they're probably like you're the worst like the whole time as they're having this uncomfortable conversation they're like, why would you make me do this right like?

Maggie Holland: But then it's like, this is also a way that we get. I got to go with that client now of I'm there with you, not physically, not actually in your brain, but like you can pretend we're having a conversation. I told you you're gonna hate me as you did this thing right. And so

Maggie Holland: they have that difficult conversation the whole time in their head. They're like.

Maggie Holland: it's freaking worse. Why would you make me do this? This is so stressful! I re I can't handle it. And then I know you would say that I could handle it right like it could be this whole dialogue that actually empowers them to stay in the situation because we're kind of with them. Right? And it's a really different vibe than if I'm like.

Allison Puryear (she/her): alright. So what do you think? Like as homework?

Allison Puryear (she/her): Yeah, to have that conversation with your mom to just like, let's let's schedule the day you're gonna do it. Let's create some accountability around it. It's a very different vibe more doable if you just can add some like dumb humor. Y'all, it doesn't have to be like that's nobody's laughing genuinely about like.

Maggie Holland: yeah. It adds a little like injection of humor. It makes it a little lighter which can make it feel more doable.

Maggie Holland: Our skill and monitoring the room and monitoring the relationship. If you're feeling it get too heavy, and it's starting to feel like your clients. Eyes are glazing over. Come back to this. Laughter will return their attention because of the dopamine, it will return their motivation and learning to the room. And so, you know, let's say that you start saying.

Maggie Holland: Okay, when do you want to have this conversation with your mom. That's so hard. And you just start seeing the eyes glaze over. You know, it can be like man. It feels like I'm losing. Yeah, you know, like, just wanna say you, I know it feels like this probably makes you want to, Barf. And I think you're still gonna be really great at having this conversation. Even if you're barfing, you're gonna be really great. Bring a trash bag

Maggie Holland: you got this, you know of, like you just gotta say it, and then you can vomit on her, and then she won't say anything. Back. There you go! You said your piece like the biggest thing is saying your piece. So some of it is reading that room, and like, if you feel like your

clients, eyes are glazing over. Humor is a really good, quick way to bring them back into the room.

Allison Puryear (she/her): There are therapists who don't know how to read the room, and they know they don't know how to read the room like they pay attention to things clinically like they feel like

Allison Puryear (she/her): they know how to be

Allison Puryear (she/her): clinical in session, but they don't necessarily have comedic timing, or they don't. They've they don't have confidence in that. How would you advise? Would you advise me like, just hold off on the humor? So they do no harm.

Maggie Holland: Or would you advise? They do something to create that skill set Umhm. And I think so much of this is individual and specific to the situation. Right? If you have people to practice with right like, if you have a consult group, that's probably a better place to practice if you got family or friends that you trust, that's probably a better place to practice. You know we don't want our clients to be our guinea pigs a little bit, join an improv group, you know. Join a you know, comedy class

Maggie Holland: play, you know, and begin like, get some Barbie dolls out and play this out like, what could this look like, you know? Do some dress rehearsals? And so I think some of it do like if there's a therapist that doesn't have

Maggie Holland: any comedy in their bones right? No timing. No, I don't even know what I would say in this situation. You're probably working with a very different client set than I am right. And you're probably doing really, really wonderful work. And so I also want to come back to this

Maggie Holland: comedy is, and humor is not required to have really great therapeutic relationships. It's not required for growth. No, none of that, especially if you work with a certain client population that like, let's use an example, really distorts reality like you say something, and they take it very literally

Maggie Holland: right. Your humor might look very different. You don't need to have a lot of comedic timing and say the right thing like your humor is gonna look different. And for some clients to humor like. If you ask a client to repeat something back that you just said, and you're like Whoa! That is not what I said.

Maggie Holland: humor is probably not for your clients, and so, you know, I like to emphasize. Hey? Humor is not required for people who have some humor in their bones and want to do some of this connecting with clients.

Maggie Holland: What I mainly wanna do is encourage you to use it thoughtfully. Use it in a way that's gonna help your client like go for it. But it's also not required. And if you're just not naturally a funny person, if you want to be. That is your own personal work. Probably do that outside of the therapy room with your own therapist, with a comedy group with a consult group with family friends.

Maggie Holland: but it's not required so

Allison Puryear (she/her): awesome.

Allison Puryear (she/her): But if you've got that in you, then it's a really great opportunity to

Maggie Holland: connect more clinically. Yeah, to

Maggie Holland: enjoy work more and to help therapy clients kind of move along at potentially a faster clip than they would otherwise. Yes, and if you aren't naturally a funny person, and you're wanting to be funny as a therapist. I think there's also some really great personal work here, too. Are you missing play in your life, and that's something you need to reinfuse. Is there a self confidence thing you have around this?

Maggie Holland: Just let that be information for you just get really curious about it, you know. Play around with this idea of what if I was a funny person? What would that mean to me? Right. I think anything that comes up like this of like, okay, I want to use humor in my sessions. I have no idea how.

Maggie Holland: Why explore that. That can be some really really helpful things that once you

Maggie Holland: pinpoint it and figure it out and work with it. That's now something that you can bring to your clients that maybe struggle with social cues right? That maybe they can't read the room right like you could probably be a great therapist for those people? And so I think, really getting curious about it and using it

Maggie Holland: in a way that's therapeutically helpful. Yeah, there are a lot of clients that also struggle with cues, and don't have a funny bone in their body, and probably very much want to, and you can speak to that experience better than any other therapist that has not had that experience. I love that awesome Maggie. Thank you so much for being here. I really I hope that everybody listening or watching decides to

Allison Puryear (she/her): just play a little bit more appropriately, respectfully, intentionally. Bring that humor into session and

Allison Puryear (she/her): and see what happens for you and your clients. Yeah, yeah. Have fun with it. Like this is, life is ridiculous. Have a little bit of fun with it, like none of us make it out alive. Have some fun. Love it.

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