

Thanks for joining us on Not Boring CEs, where we don't think you should be bored to death while getting your Continuing Ed. Keep listening here, then hop over to notboringces.com to get all your online CE credits. Alright, y'all, let's get to learning.

Courtney Katzenberg started clinical work in January 2021 after a career transition from the field of education that left her seeking an internship that would provide the opportunity to employ evidence based, compassionate and mindfulness focused modalities with the perinatal population. She found a wonderful home at [be.psychotherapy](http://be.psychotherapy.com) in Baltimore, MD and is now a full-time therapist. She has expanded her work to all individuals and couples looking to live with more compassion and authenticity. Courtney's specialties include chronic stress and burnout (work, parenting, perfectionism), shame & self-criticism, and couples working towards more thoughtful and compassionate communication.

Allison Puryear (she/her): Welcome back to Not Boring CEs! I'm here with Courtney Katzenberg, and we're talking about compassion-focused therapy.

Courtney Katzenberg: So thanks for being here, Courtney! Absolutely, I am very excited to be here and share CFT.

Allison Puryear (she/her): Yeah, so can you kind of, like, let's go super basic. Can you tell us, like, let's start with self-compassion.

Courtney Katzenberg: Sure.

Allison Puryear (she/her): In general. Absolutely, yeah.

Courtney Katzenberg: Yeah. So, and, I'm gonna share, kind of, the... so, coming from a CFT lens.

Courtney Katzenberg: kind of looking at compassion and kind of getting into... I can share about the flows of compassion, but so self-compassion is... compassion for self is one of the flows, but so, like, the overall definition would be a sensitivity to the suffering of self and others.

Courtney Katzenberg: and a commitment to relieve and prevent it. So that's a lot, but it's this idea that, one, we're gonna engage with our suffering.

Courtney Katzenberg: And then two, we're going to take intentional steps to prevent it.

Courtney Katzenberg: And so it's not just, like, this problem-solving, let's just solve the problem. It's like, wait, let's slow down, and what is the actual suffering that's going on? What is the distress? And so, we can think of it both for ourselves, and then the flows of compassion to others. And often, we're really good at... for others. It's right, that how do we then turn to our own distress? And...

Courtney Katzenberg: First, know what it is, so then we can be intentional about how we prevent it and alleviate it.

Allison Puryear (she/her): Yeah, so I think, like, I think about the other self stuff, like, there's self-esteem, there's self-indulgence, like.

Courtney Katzenberg: Crew.

Allison Puryear (she/her): How do we differentiate self-compassion from self-esteem, for instance?

Courtney Katzenberg: Absolutely, and it's funny, because I did my master's thesis, I wanted to do it on parenting, and I... the mentor was like, I think what you're talking about is, like, self-compassion in parenting. And I was like, no, no, no, no, that is not what we're talking about.

Courtney Katzenberg: underneath was this fear of, like, I don't know what that is, so how can I do a whole research paper on self-compassion?

Courtney Katzenberg: So, then I was like, I think I'm really talking about self-esteem. So I... what I did is I actually took Rosenberg's self-esteem scale, and I altered it for parents, and I had a little focus group of moms.

Courtney Katzenberg: and gave them this scale of the Rosenberg self-esteem scale for parents that I had kind of created. And they were like, I hate this, because it's about...

Courtney Katzenberg: It's about comparison and competition. And so, of course, I had cleaned up my living room, because I'm having people over, so it looks spotless. And one of the questions is kind of like, you know, I am as good as other parents. And they're sitting in my spotless living room, because I have made it spotless.

Allison Puryear (she/her): And they're like.

Courtney Katzenberg: Well, my living room doesn't look like this.

Courtney Katzenberg: And so it inherently creates this comparison and competition, which just... we're always then one up or one down. And so self-compassion says there's more than one way to be. Like, am I doing for myself where is my distress, as opposed to where is my distress compared to someone else's?

Courtney Katzenberg: So that's where self-compassion is kind of that looking inward as opposed to the looking out and comparing.

Courtney Katzenberg: And then... so yeah, so then I went back to my mentor, and I said, I hated self-esteem, and he's like, he knew. And he's like, okay, self-compassion. Went back with the self-compassion scale, and they're like, oh, okay, this feels good.

Courtney Katzenberg: Yes.

Allison Puryear (she/her): Yeah. Yeah. So, I think about, like, a lot of my clientele that I've had over the last couple decades, the idea of self-compassion feels indulgent. It feels like I'm letting myself off the hook, and I really need to, like, punish myself more, and things like that. So, how do we differentiate it from this self-indulgence, both, like.

Allison Puryear (she/her): Maybe from, like, a definition standpoint, but also, like, how do we talk to our clients about how, like, this is actually different from, like, letting yourself off the hook, quote-unquote, you know?

Courtney Katzenberg: Yeah, yeah, and self-indulgence is almost avoidance, I think. Like, if I just indulge myself, I'm actually not encountering my distress.

Courtney Katzenberg: And that's where self-compassion is. It's not... it is tough, it's hard, because you have to face... you have to be brave and face, like, oh, this is actually what's...

Courtney Katzenberg: upsetting me, and so it is... it can be hard. I often think of it, I talk about it like it's a coach.

Courtney Katzenberg: The ideal coach is a compassionate coach. You know, you have a tough game, the next day you show up.

Courtney Katzenberg: And it, like, you know, a harsh coach would say, we are... that was terrible, I can't believe that, you know, you need to do all these things because, you know, basically you're the worst team ever.

Courtney Katzenberg: But actually, what if it was just communication, or what if it was passing? You know, doing all these other things is not actually getting to the root. A self-indulgent coach might say, you know what, we shouldn't even have practice today. You know, it was a tough day. But again, you're not... that's not helping you be better. It's not helping you be accountable.

Courtney Katzenberg: So the compassionate coach says, like, that was a really tough game, wasn't it? Like, you probably don't feel really great right now.

Courtney Katzenberg: But we can show up today, we can support each other, which is then, the next time you step on the field, gonna make you feel that much more prepared. Where if you didn't practice, you're not gonna feel prepared. And if you had all this shame put on you, you're gonna go.

Courtney Katzenberg: and show up on the field with fear. Well, I can't do that again, but not really ready to, like.

Courtney Katzenberg: Put it all out there.

Allison Puryear (she/her): Yeah, yeah, that makes sense. Okay.

Allison Puryear (she/her): I feel like that's, like, very actionable in session.

Allison Puryear (she/her): Absolutely.

Courtney Katzenberg: Yeah.

Allison Puryear (she/her): So, like, CFT is its own modality, right?

Courtney Katzenberg: Yes, yes.

Allison Puryear (she/her): So, kind of break down the core principles of CFT for us.

Courtney Katzenberg: Yeah, yeah, so see, and the kind of a little background is that,

Courtney Katzenberg: Paul Gilbert developed it. He knew,

Courtney Katzenberg: CBT really well, and so he was doing all this cognitive restructuring, he was, you know, using those tools, but finding that clients weren't making, you know, were still struggling, and he's like, they know what to say.

Courtney Katzenberg: But what is... what's... what... where is... where is the mismatch? And so he one time had, he shares this in a wonderful... he's on a pod... The 10% Happier podcast.

Allison Puryear (she/her): So we shared.

Courtney Katzenberg: story where he, you know, had... he just tried to have the client say, like, just share with me, like, what is going through your head right now? And so, like, you know, she... I can't exactly the exact words, but, like, for example, like, the phrase, like, you know, everyone goes through this. Well, you could also say it

Courtney Katzenberg: Everyone goes through this, you know?

Allison Puryear (she/her): Like,

Courtney Katzenberg: That's kind of shame, and so it's also, like, how are we talking to ourselves? How are we using compassion? Not just the words, but, like, a whole kind of tone of voice, you know?

Courtney Katzenberg: thought... thinking, and so that was kind of where he was like, okay, we really need to build up this compassion. It's not just about the thoughts and behaviors, it's how do we motivate ourselves to actually keep going and with compassion. So that's just a little background I like to share to help understand. So it,

Courtney Katzenberg: CFT, the core principles is, one, that we have, we have more than three systems, but, for, like, emotion regulation, but kind of the three main that we focus on is the threat system, which is very much our protection, you know, those connected to anxiety and fear and anger.

Courtney Katzenberg: We have our drive system, achievement, motivation, you know, pursuing.

Courtney Katzenberg: And then we have.

Allison Puryear (she/her): I'm writing down. Like, where'd my pen go?

Courtney Katzenberg: And then we have our soothing system, which is connect... contentment, or really rest and digest.

Courtney Katzenberg: And no system is bad, it's just how do we find balance? And we're in a society where threat and drive, those are... sometimes you might even have clients draw, you know, where you are right now, how big are your systems, how connected are they to each other? And so, often in our society, threat and drive

Courtney Katzenberg: are very big, and soothing is kind of over here, you know.

Allison Puryear (she/her): Hmm.

Courtney Katzenberg: and oftentimes, they kind of... people might bounce back and forth, like, I feel threat, let me do something. Oh, doing something put me into threat, you know, and so now, we kind of...

Courtney Katzenberg: a lot of CFT is, let's build up the soothing system. How do we rest and digest?

Courtney Katzenberg: Which is a lot of other, you know, modalities, it's just kind of how they conceptual... how CFT conceptualizes it.

Courtney Katzenberg: And compassion is kind of how we move through it. So it's kind of like, how do I use compassion? How do I recognize I'm in threat right now?

Courtney Katzenberg: And where do I want to get to? Maybe I do need to get to drive. Maybe I do need to go and do something, or actually, maybe I actually really need to slow down right now. Where am I right now? And what do I need?

Allison Puryear (she/her): Could we take, like, a made-up clinical...

Courtney Katzenberg: Yeah.

Allison Puryear (she/her): Circumstance, and kind of work through.

Courtney Katzenberg: Sure, yeah. The systems and the compassion piece? Yeah, so, like, let's say, for example, and so what tied to this is... can be what we call our tricky brain, and so our tricky brain says that we, you know, our brain wasn't designed

Courtney Katzenberg: by us. It was designed for us. Nature created it, and so therefore, like, you know, we... no one sat down and was, like, you know, pressing keys in a keyboard.

Allison Puryear (she/her): We just...

Courtney Katzenberg: with it. And so, for example, like, let's say

Courtney Katzenberg: your child doesn't listen to you, right? And so that you... that puts you into anger. You go into threat, right? And so now, what we're gonna try and do is, like, we're gonna try and get them to, you know, get them to listen to us.

Allison Puryear (she/her): Excellent.

Courtney Katzenberg: might yell.

Courtney Katzenberg: And so now we're yelling, you know, we're trying to do something, trying to achieve something. Well, now we feel anxiety because we know, like, ugh, I know that really isn't the best way for me to deal with this.

Courtney Katzenberg: You know, and so then you might think, like, I'm such a bad parent, and so now you're kind of in these loops that can happen, and then there's shame comes in, and so now it's like, well, I should go and get a library book on, you know, this problem, and so now we're back to drive, you know?

Courtney Katzenberg: At this moment, kind of getting to soothing.

Courtney Katzenberg: taking... you know what, I just need a little break. The same way we would tell our kids, like, you know, maybe you need a break, like, I need a break, like, I need to not keep doing

Courtney Katzenberg: I need to actually pause and just kind of tend to myself in this moment.

Courtney Katzenberg: what's coming up for me right now? Am I tired? You know, am I fearful that one day my child might never listen? I have a feeling that a lot of parents worry that their kid might not ever listen. You know, I'm not alone in this struggle.

Courtney Katzenberg: So, all the things that you would say to your friend, you know, kind of then turning that inwards. And so, kind of soothing, being like.

Courtney Katzenberg: We call it the off-ramp, like, let's just kind of... Take an off-ramp, you know, So...

Allison Puryear (she/her): Yeah, I think about how this modality is so perfectly suited for parents, because... well, for a million reasons, but one of which is, like, it's unrelenting.

Allison Puryear (she/her): like, there's not an opportunity, to just be like, well, I'm gonna call in sick for a couple days, in the way you might be able to for work if you're feeling overwhelmed.

Allison Puryear (she/her): It's...

Allison Puryear (she/her): There aren't, for many of us, there aren't other relationships that we have with people where they just pretend you didn't say a thing.

Courtney Katzenberg: So... No, it is... it is such...

Courtney Katzenberg: a fascinating, right, dynamic, like, this relationship is so different, and so my... the thesis ended up being self-compassion, and another, variable, reflective functioning, is barriers to parental burnout. And so.

Courtney Katzenberg: Right, as you say, parental burnout is this idea. It's different than job burnout, it's actually even more intense, because at least your job, you get to, you know, say, like, that was a hard day, but I'm just gonna go home and forget it. Like, you know, parenting.

Courtney Katzenberg: it's... it's all 24-7, and so... Yeah.

Allison Puryear (she/her): Yeah, it's forced resilience.

Courtney Katzenberg: And it was funny, because I tried to... the other variable I included was more about, like, a doing action, reflective functioning. Let's be curious about what our kids are thinking. Let's, you know, wonder. And that had no impact on parental burnout.

Courtney Katzenberg: In terms of parenting when you're feeling good, like, those are great skills, but, like, when you're feeling burnt out, self-compassion, that absolutely showed that if the

higher self-compassion, the lower parental burnout, and then the inverse, the lower self-compassion, the higher parental burnout, it's almost not about doing more.

Courtney Katzenberg: It's actually about kind of slowing down and realizing, like, in this moment, I can't do anymore. Like, I actually need to turn inwards.

Allison Puryear (she/her): Which is fascinating, given the threat and the drive, the way those function inside of us, which are telling us, do more, do it faster, be more efficient, get more done, that that's actually contraindicated.

Courtney Katzenberg: Right.

Allison Puryear (she/her): Yeah.

Courtney Katzenberg: It feels... it feels hard sometimes to be like, I'm just gonna, like, stand here, I'm just gonna turn inwards.

Courtney Katzenberg: But right, that ultimately, like, settles the system, you know, brings things down, and actually then opens, because we say with threat, you're in tunnel vision. Just remove the threat.

Allison Puryear (she/her): Where we can get to soothing, then all of a sudden.

Courtney Katzenberg: we can see, oh wait, my kid isn't... they don't ever listen. I saw them last week listening, but when we're in the threat mode, it's just like, you know, this kind of more black and white thinking.

Allison Puryear (she/her): Right. And with our kids, most of the time, it's not a threat threat. You know, like, nobody's at risk of dying. Like, it's more...

Allison Puryear (she/her): Our authority feels threatened, or we feel like we're not doing a good job, and that makes us feel threatened, or we didn't like the way we just handled that, and that feels threatening to our ego, and, you know...

Courtney Katzenberg: Yeah, and then also that future of, like, what if my kid never listens, you know? Right, right. Yeah. You can paint the picture of them, you know, a 25-year-old who still doesn't have listening skills, and how quickly we get there.

Courtney Katzenberg: So once trying to bring on that soothing helps you realize, like, where are we in this moment?

Allison Puryear (she/her): Yeah.

Courtney Katzenberg: No.

Allison Puryear (she/her): Did you find in your thesis work that different age groups, like, the parents of different age groups, so the older the kids, is it easier to have that self-compassion, because now you've screwed up enough that you just kind of had to muddle your way to some self-compassion? How, like, how does it shift and change as the child ages?

Courtney Katzenberg: I wish I took it further. And I... there were so many things I wanted to do. I also got to the end of... I had a little self-compassion at that point. I was just like, weird.

Allison Puryear (she/her): Fair.

Courtney Katzenberg: But it was... that was definitely a topic of conversation, because

Courtney Katzenberg: threat, the threat, you know, in parenting feels different at different ages. Like, you know, the motor never stops running, you know, under 5, but then the, you know, as they get older, it's a different, and so, you know, kind of different feelings of threat that happen.

Courtney Katzenberg: And they get very smart, and they, you know... So, but yeah.

Allison Puryear (she/her): I didn't.

Courtney Katzenberg: To get a chance to look at that.

Allison Puryear (she/her): And just thinking, too, as they become school-aged, if you're needing to advocate for your kid with the school, like, that's another level of threat that...

Allison Puryear (she/her): is related to them, but isn't coming from them, and how, like, nobody wants to be that mom, you know? But also, like, you don't want to be a Karen, but you need to advocate for your kid, like, finding that balance.

Courtney Katzenberg: It is, and I think one of the things that I... also appreciate.

Courtney Katzenberg: about... I don't know if it's the modality, but sometimes this idea that we can't solve the problem overnight, you know, that we can start to put pieces in place, but that doesn't mean... you know, that alleviating and preventing the distress sometimes takes time to get into place. So you might see your kid is distressed at school.

Courtney Katzenberg: But you can't make a change overnight, and so it's kind of like, how do we be sensitive to the distress, sit with it, you know, build tolerance to it?

Allison Puryear (she/her): Knowing that we're working to make changes, but that it doesn't happen immediately. Yeah, it's interesting, it reminds me of a conversation I just had yesterday with a friend, because sometimes we perceive a threat that's not there.

Courtney Katzenberg: Like, her daughter was saying she chose to sit alone at lunch and, like, read a book and hang out, but, like, you think about, like.

Allison Puryear (she/her): my generation and all the movies. Like, if you were sitting alone at the table, you were a target. And so, like, my friend was like, what can we do to support you? And she was like, Mom, I literally just needed some downtime, calm down. And that's, like...

Allison Puryear (she/her): as a mom, I can relate to, like, that would make me very, like, concerned for my kid, too, when the kid is doing exactly what she needs, and she, like, doesn't need our compassion, doesn't need our threat, doesn't need our worry. Just back up.

Allison Puryear (she/her): So, yeah.

Courtney Katzenberg: Which makes me... which is part of the reason I love being a therapist to parents in this age group, because these kids are like, how cool that her daughter knew, like.

Allison Puryear (she/her): Hell yeah.

Courtney Katzenberg: in that moment. It's like, oh, this gives me so much hope that.

Courtney Katzenberg: you know, teaching them these skills, it really does... it works, and we get to see it with kids, so...

Allison Puryear (she/her): Yeah. Yeah.

Courtney Katzenberg: And I... and then, just to finish up, a last core principle, which I kind of mentioned, but those three flows of compassion. And so, it's compassion for others, which we tend to,

Courtney Katzenberg: be pretty good at, the compassion. Although I... when I was thinking about this, I think the closer the person is to you, it's almost like it's a little muddled.

Courtney Katzenberg: It's almost like we're better at a distance sometimes.

Courtney Katzenberg: Compassion from others, which is... can be hard to do, as well, depending on kind of where we are, and then compassion for self.

Courtney Katzenberg: And so it's, you know, even helping clients recognize, like, what feels... where do you feel most comfortable, which one feels the hardest, and so kind of using different tools for those different flows.

Allison Puryear (she/her): And I'm thinking about the compassion from others, and how sometimes people aren't expressing compassion in the way we need to hear it, or we're not expressing it the way our kids need to hear it.

Allison Puryear (she/her): And, like, is there some...

Allison Puryear (she/her): Dynamic to helping them voice that.

Allison Puryear (she/her): Is that a part of CFT?

Courtney Katzenberg: I... so that's a great question. I think...

Courtney Katzenberg: It kind of leads into which,

Courtney Katzenberg: kind of thinking about is that some of those One reason why.

Courtney Katzenberg: is these, like, fears, blocks, and resistance to compassion. And so that sometimes can get in the way of why someone... we're giving it and they're not receiving it, or why we're feeling like that... how it's being stated. There's...

Courtney Katzenberg: it doesn't feel... something feels off, and so I think part of that is, like, a fear, like, I'd like compassion, but I'm scared, and I don't know how to take it in. A lot of times what this can show up for clients in the sense that, like, I,

Courtney Katzenberg: as a child, I really wanted compassion, and my parent couldn't give it to me. And instead of kind of saying, oh, you know, because it's a child recognizing, like, my parent can't do this, we think compassion is the problem. Wanting compassion.

Allison Puryear (she/her): was.

Courtney Katzenberg: problem.

Courtney Katzenberg: Therefore, when this... now this therapist comes in and starts showing compassion, it's like, oh, no, no, no, like, I wanted that before, and that didn't work out.

Allison Puryear (she/her): Absolutely. Hmm.

Courtney Katzenberg: problem, and so it's almost this, like, slow exposure to compassion of, like, you know, not just, like, you know, kind of allowing... tiptoeing into the compassion pool for our clients.

Courtney Katzenberg: the block is, I'm not scared, but something gets in the way, and that happens with self-compassion a lot, like, I'm not scared of it, but I just... I don't know how to do it. Like, there's something blocking it, there's just something. And then the resistance, which is a bit of that, like, I don't want to be self-indulgent, I don't want to be weak, and so therefore, like.

Courtney Katzenberg: I'm resisting this. So...

Courtney Katzenberg: if, right, some, you know, someone, you try and give it, and they resist it, it's like, oh, do you think I'm not strong enough, and that's why you're giving me compassion?

Courtney Katzenberg: And so that, you know, and so... but kind of also having a conversation with someone, like, what would feel good for you? Like, what would feel compassionate in this moment? What, you know, does... do you kind of want to hear in this moment?

Courtney Katzenberg: Can sometimes be helpful.

Allison Puryear (she/her): Yeah. So, can we dive into the, like, the blocks? I don't know what's... because I feel like I've heard that a lot.

Allison Puryear (she/her): And I've probably felt that a lot. So I'm curious how you assess, like, how you help them figure out what's blocking it, if that's important, or if there's just a moving through it that needs to happen.

Courtney Katzenberg: I think that... so, I tend to, like.

Courtney Katzenberg: I think one for me, just even hearing it when I did the training, like.

Courtney Katzenberg: oh, okay, like, this is not me doing something wrong, because I'm like, I tried to give compassion in my... like, it's just like... it's like something wrong happened, and so I think even noting it, and kind of,

Courtney Katzenberg: And then, kind of, like.

Courtney Katzenberg: a couple... two things come to mind. One, kind of having a conversation, noting it, but then also normalize and explore. Like, does it make sense that shame or, you know, kind of resistance showed up here?

Courtney Katzenberg: and kind of helping them understand why they might, you know, from their own experiences. Like, just does that make sense? And then...

Courtney Katzenberg: could your threat system be trying to protect you right now? What might your threat system be saying that, like, with compassion in the room, what that means about you, what that, you know... and so kind of just being curious about it is one.

Courtney Katzenberg: Two, there's tools that we can use. One of the exercises we use in CFT is, like, creating a compa- ideal compassionate other.

Courtney Katzenberg: And so we kind of walk... it's almost like a meditation, and walking through our clients through this kind of script, and the idea being...

Courtney Katzenberg: Right, sometimes the flow to compassion in... we struggle with.

Courtney Katzenberg: and create this ideal compassionate other, because I have a float of compassion. I had two others, right? So now I'm, like, doing a workaround. So it's not me giving myself self-compassion, it's my ideal compassionate other who's giving me self-compassion. And so sometimes we kind of work with it in that sense, you know?

Allison Puryear (she/her): It's almost like a little... a little bit of an IFS nod. Like, yeah.

Courtney Katzenberg: Yeah, yeah, yeah, so it... and it absolutely... I did it in training, and it just blew my mind, and sometimes, you know, I imagine myself walking... there's this house, I've never seen anyone come out of it, but, like, I know someone lives there. It's half a block down.

Courtney Katzenberg: And I see lights on, I see flowers outside, but I've never seen anyone. And so...

Courtney Katzenberg: Brenda is... and I sometimes just walk down and have a cup of tea, and just kind of, you know, Brenda helps give me the compassion I need at that moment, and so...

Courtney Katzenberg: imagery is a big part of CFT as well, and how we can imagine worst-case scenario.

Allison Puryear (she/her): Boy, can we.

Courtney Katzenberg: Why don't we also imagine compassion and, you know.

Courtney Katzenberg: possible... different possible outcomes, so... Yeah.

Allison Puryear (she/her): Got it. Okay, so it's okay if they can't figure it out initially.

Courtney Katzenberg: Yay.

Courtney Katzenberg: And that, sometimes, usually, fears and blocks and resistance would come up, like, kind of later.

Allison Puryear (she/her): Evening.

Courtney Katzenberg: really kind of talk about it. But, you know, as you're talking about the self-critic, and, you know, kind of starting to talk about shame, but...

Courtney Katzenberg: kind of for the therapist to know that, like, oh, there's some resistance here, that that's a block, and that's okay, you know, you're not doing anything wrong. That's just what's coming up for the client.

Allison Puryear (she/her): Yeah.

Allison Puryear (she/her): So I'm thinking about, like, as a parent, we're modeling... we're modeling compassion for our kids.

Allison Puryear (she/her): They're having meltdowns, different kinds of different ages, and we are hopefully meeting them with compassion.

Allison Puryear (she/her): And, as they get older, it's not as clean as, like, a tantrum when they're 3 or something, and they get it out of their system and they're done.

Allison Puryear (she/her): They're more like us in that way as adults, that, like, sometimes we get a little stuck, and we keep circling a drain.

Courtney Katzenberg: Yeah.

Allison Puryear (she/her): how do we compassionately say, like, okay, like, it's time to do X, Y, and Z now, like, dry it up, kid, without it being, you know, not compassionate.

Courtney Katzenberg: Right. It is... and it's... it is not... Easy.

Allison Puryear (she/her): I'm...

Courtney Katzenberg: I, you know, had all the answers with that. I, am currently, myself, listening to Dan Siegel, No Drama Discipline.

Courtney Katzenberg: And so, I think, though... I think... the...

Courtney Katzenberg: trying to get at the distress, like, why does it feel so hard for you? And so that kind of, in that compassionate lens of, like.

Courtney Katzenberg: what is... what is the distress, you know? And it might... first, you're meeting with, you know, as Dan Siegel would say, which I'm not always perfect at by any means.

Courtney Katzenberg: meeting with connection, you know, bring the temperature down, and then trying to find out what is the distress? Like, why is homework just feeling like something that you just don't want to do, you know? And so kind of trying to

Courtney Katzenberg: Figure it out, like, and then being able to hopefully Find a solution forward.

Courtney Katzenberg: it's... to me, it's so often about, kind of really getting to, like, what is it? You know, like, it's more of this overall piece, but, like, letting...

Courtney Katzenberg: letting it settle, and like, you know, kind of like a sand toy. It's like letting all the sand kind of come out and being like, okay, what's left here?

Allison Puryear (she/her): Got it. So it's, it's...

Allison Puryear (she/her): being curious, guiding, like, doing a lot of what we do as therapists, but without therapizing our kids. And so, if we're working with parents, we're helping kind of break down that...

Allison Puryear (she/her): those steps for them of, like, it's probably not actually about algebra. You know, it's about what... yeah.

Courtney Katzenberg: The same way a couples therapist, like, it's probably not about the mug.

Allison Puryear (she/her): Right, right, yeah.

Courtney Katzenberg: Right, it's not, you know, what is underneath that? What is the story they're saying, you know? I think what's also interesting is you said, though, about modeling compassion, and this is where what's hard is our parents modeling self-compassion.

Courtney Katzenberg: can all day tell our kids, like, you need to be self-compassionate, but, like, if I'm not doing it for myself.

Courtney Katzenberg: modeling it, you know? So that's where that, like, self-work comes in, too, and kind of, okay, where's my distress here? My kid's really stressed about algebra.

Courtney Katzenberg: how did, you know, do I have my own sense of distress about algebra? Kind of getting curious about my own, and then how can I now show up, you know, not in threat for myself either?

Allison Puryear (she/her): Yeah, yeah. When I think about how...

Allison Puryear (she/her): We can bring our own stuff into it in a way, and some of our own unrealistic or ungrounded expectations.

Allison Puryear (she/her): Like, ultimately, like, your kid doesn't really need to be good at algebra, and they don't have to like it. They're gonna have to need to do just enough to get through school, and that doesn't mean making an A, necessarily.

Courtney Katzenberg: Yeah, yeah. And, like, kind of what is the skill at play? Is the skill, you know, sometimes just doing things we don't want to do.

Courtney Katzenberg: Talking about that with my daughter, that it's like, it's not about the problem on the page, this is you just building a skill, like.

Courtney Katzenberg: doing things that really aren't... and you're not alone, like, I have things in my day, you know, that I... it's not just, you know, so that's kind of the skill here, kind of targeting, like, you know, understanding.

Allison Puryear (she/her): And I think about how when you're not self-compassionate.

Allison Puryear (she/her): And your parental burnout is higher.

Allison Puryear (she/her): You know, you just could come out like, you think you're the only one who doesn't have to do stuff they don't want to do?

Courtney Katzenberg: Right, right.

Allison Puryear (she/her): And, like You know, and there's more extreme, then it's worse for everybody.

Courtney Katzenberg: Right, and then those loops keep...

Courtney Katzenberg: Voice!

Courtney Katzenberg: guilty, so you might withdraw, I just shouldn't even be here, right?

Allison Puryear (she/her): Yeah.

Courtney Katzenberg: And so how do we take that compassionate off-ramp and just be like, okay, what are all the pieces here?

Allison Puryear (she/her): And... Compassion doesn't mean not.

Allison Puryear (she/her): having, like, a standard or not getting things done. Like, the homework still has to get done. You can be compassionate about the fact that they don't want to do it, or that it's hard, or that they don't get it.

Courtney Katzenberg: Absolutely. But how can we be curious, but...

Courtney Katzenberg: to a place that we're still gonna show up in, you know, we have a responsibility, you know? How do we... how do we find the most compassionate way to get it done? Like, there isn't one way that, like, it has to be done at the table at this time. Let's be curious. What is gonna, you know, how we can get this done.

Courtney Katzenberg: It still has to get done.

Allison Puryear (she/her): Yeah.

Courtney Katzenberg: Yeah.

Allison Puryear (she/her): And I think about how, like, if we...

Allison Puryear (she/her): Sorry, that just echoed in my ear really loud. If we are concerned about...

Allison Puryear (she/her): like, become self-indulgent. And we're not holding the boundaries of, like, the work still needs to get done.

Allison Puryear (she/her): It can suck. And... It's gotta get done.

Allison Puryear (she/her): Then, it's like, create this cycle or this situation in which we're kind of perpetuating self-indulgence.

Allison Puryear (she/her): You know, like, I wanna... I didn't get the part in the play I want, and I don't want to be honest, so I just wanna drop out, even though I committed.

Allison Puryear (she/her): That kind of thing, of, like, that really sucks to show up for rehearsal. And, like, watch somebody else play the part you really wanted. That really, like, it really does suck. We've all been in some kind of situation like that, where we wanted something bad, and...

Allison Puryear (she/her): Didn't get it and had to watch somebody else enjoy it.

Courtney Katzenberg: Yay!

Allison Puryear (she/her): I'm like.

Courtney Katzenberg: Right.

Allison Puryear (she/her): Yeah.

Courtney Katzenberg: I think self-compassion is, like, almost

Courtney Katzenberg: having those examples... that, again, that idea of, like, I'm not alone in this, like.

Allison Puryear (she/her): I'm not.

Courtney Katzenberg: Because it feels like in threat, you know? It feels like I am the only one in this.

Courtney Katzenberg: And so, right, how do we try and pull in these examples and, you know, kind of that, like, I had that experience, too, and, you know, because our kids don't see us struggle all the time. That's part of it, too. They only...

Courtney Katzenberg: for how many years? And so it's, like, you don't know what struggle is, because you're doing... you have practiced for so many years, and so kind of...

Courtney Katzenberg: Almost giving opportunities to share your struggles, so it's like they, you know, or they're, you know, allowing them to connect with others, but that they get those examples, that they're not the only one.

Allison Puryear (she/her): back.

Allison Puryear (she/her): Yeah, and especially, I think, about, like, in early adolescence, when it's so easy to feel...

Allison Puryear (she/her): So singled out, and, like, it's gotta... you're the only weird one in this weird way when, like, literally everybody in your class feels that way, and no one's talking about it.

Courtney Katzenberg: Well, that's the thing, no one's talking about... and it, you know, as you've talked... but, like, and how it shows up, that, like, you know, and...

Courtney Katzenberg: CFT talks a bit about this. There's a great perinatal book, and it kind of talks about this idea of, like, we want to be on the in-group. Like, evolutionarily, it makes sense to want to be in the in-group, because that got you resources.

Courtney Katzenberg: So, anything that could threaten you, could put you on the outgroup, becomes so... that much more scary, because just inherently, we desire. And so, right, when it's so quickly shifting in those years.

Courtney Katzenberg: it kind of leaves you in this place of threat of, like, is this going to be what's going to put me on the out-group? And, like, you know, and this just biological response to that, because...

Courtney Katzenberg: We inherently, it felt safer to be on the in-group.

Allison Puryear (she/her): Yeah.

Courtney Katzenberg: And so that's what I started to say with the perinatal book, they kind of talk about that too, is that as new moms, where we also have that feeling of, like, am I doing it right? You know, this fear of shame, like, am I going to be the mom on the out group? Like, am I the one not doing it right?

Courtney Katzenberg: And that can put you in threat, but then also doesn't allow you to fully show up, you know, and so how to build that soothing system.

Allison Puryear (she/her): Yeah, and it's such a vulnerable stage of life. Like, gosh.

Courtney Katzenberg: Boom.

Allison Puryear (she/her): Yeah.

Allison Puryear (she/her): And it's, like, I think there's... with all parenting, right? But I'm thinking particularly with this, because so many parents struggle with self-compassion, there's such a parallel process going on with, like.

Allison Puryear (she/her): how you're parenting, and how you want your kids to be giving themselves self-compassion, and how you are or are not, that sometimes it's like a do-as-I-say-not-as-I-do kind of situation.

Courtney Katzenberg: It is, and... but I think it...

Courtney Katzenberg: it's such a joy to be... and even CFT says, even for therapists, like.

Courtney Katzenberg: to be doing their own, you know, if you're gonna use, like, and not... but, like, compassion, like, doing your own compassion work, you know, that, like, because it helps you understand it that much more, and... and, you know, kind of be able to empathize, and, you know, the struggle of applying it. But right, it's...

Courtney Katzenberg: I think it... it slows things down. Like, I had a moment, I remember early parenting, where I... there... and there's all these, you know, this kind of, what is... what rule should we follow, you know? And, like, I... if I let my child... if I don't follow the rule once, or shift it, you know, forever, you know, that anxious thought, and it's like.

Courtney Katzenberg: but those are the moments that I have to turn inward, and, you know, but then that...

Courtney Katzenberg: what that does model and slows things down. So I do... it is this kind of, how do we both together keep...

Courtney Katzenberg: fast.

Allison Puryear (she/her): Yeah.

Allison Puryear (she/her): And it's interesting, like, As a... as a therapist.

Allison Puryear (she/her): I'm thinking about, like, therapist parents. So you've got it on all these different levels, right?

Allison Puryear (she/her): You're... you're responsible for modeling it all around. And...

Allison Puryear (she/her): Sometimes, when you're stressed out, that's just way harder.

Courtney Katzenberg: Yay.

Courtney Katzenberg: But it's... it is...

Courtney Katzenberg: so it's... compassion is a motivation, and so... and one of the things they said in the training, that it's self-sustaining, you know, that if I'm motivated by compassion... and so... and they do talk a lot about how do we give ourselves, how do we...

Courtney Katzenberg: If we showed up as a perfect therapist, if we showed up as a perfect mom.

Courtney Katzenberg: We are setting our client and child up for failure, because the world is not perfect.

Courtney Katzenberg: therefore, it's gonna be like, wait, you... you failed me! Like, I need.

Allison Puryear (she/her): Didn't know.

Courtney Katzenberg: how to, like, have hard conversations when things don't go as, you know? And so, as a therapist, being able to say, like.

Courtney Katzenberg: last week when I said that, I just want to, like, check back in on that, you know, and having those authentic conversation, and even as a, you know, with kids, that idea of repair. How will, you know, we want them to apologize, but, like.

Courtney Katzenberg: They need to hear it. They need to know that, you know, they don't need to be perfect either.

Courtney Katzenberg: That kind of really... which allows it to be self-sustaining. It's not like I have to show up every day and do this perfectly. I need to show up

Courtney Katzenberg: Make mistakes, and know how, then, to show up again.

Courtney Katzenberg: it allows me to, you know, carry that forward. It's not always perfect by any means, but... Right.

Allison Puryear (she/her): Yeah.

Allison Puryear (she/her): I'm thinking about the, like, the attachment...

Allison Puryear (she/her): information. I went to a training once, and the whole idea of, like, you're nailing it 30% of the time. That's not their language, it's mine. You're nailing it 30% of the time, you're screwing up 30% of the time, and you're repairing 30% of the time. And it was so life-changing for me to hear that.

Courtney Katzenberg: Oh my god, I remember where I was standing.

Allison Puryear (she/her): Yes.

Courtney Katzenberg: I decided that in grad school, and I was like.

Allison Puryear (she/her): Yeah.

Allison Puryear (she/her): Yeah, and I was already a mom, like, I was out in the workforce, like, I had been a therapist for a long time when I heard it, and I was like...

Allison Puryear (she/her): you know, trying so hard to hit, like, 90% doing it right, that's what I thought was reasonable. Like, I wasn't expecting perfection, just near perfection.

Allison Puryear (she/her): But what that did for my own self-compassion, just having that information.

Allison Puryear (she/her): And, you know, it's all in the repair work. And so, like you're saying, you don't want to be perfect because it's setting them up for failure. That repair work is where so much healing and so much understanding of relationships and all of that comes in.

Allison Puryear (she/her): And modeling that for kids gives them the opportunity to be able to, like, do that with friends, with peers, with teachers. Yeah.

Courtney Katzenberg: Yeah, yeah.

Courtney Katzenberg: Now.

Allison Puryear (she/her): So, yeah.

Allison Puryear (she/her): It's a good way to, like, kind of combine

Allison Puryear (she/her): like, being let off the hook in a legitimate way. Like, you don't have to do this just right.

Courtney Katzenberg: You don't have to... and that, you know, oftentimes I talk with clients that, you know, they want to find the right way to do it.

Allison Puryear (she/her): And I...

Courtney Katzenberg: We're looking for the compassionate way, because the right way is a very small... if there even is, it's a dot that's so small that

Courtney Katzenberg: because it's probably not even there. Like, there isn't one... and so, like, the compassionate way is, like, what feels aligned for you? What allows you to be able to keep showing up? And so that, so often, is...

Courtney Katzenberg: how can we find the compassionate way? It's like, I just... and because we're exhausted, and so we just want someone sometimes to be like, this is what you need to do in this moment.

Courtney Katzenberg: But if we ultimately, like, take a step back.

Courtney Katzenberg: We wouldn't be so exhausted if we potentially, in my mind, if we knew that we could show up the best of our ability.

Allison Puryear (she/her): and not feel this pressure to show up, you know, do it the right, you know, that I can...

Courtney Katzenberg: show up as best as I can, and then I'll shift if I need to. And so then it kind of makes us not necessarily as exhausted, because we know we don't have to do it just perfectly, you know?

Courtney Katzenberg: Doing the best we can.

Allison Puryear (she/her): Yeah.

Allison Puryear (she/her): Yeah, and it's like this... doing the best... the best we can. I think about the whole line of the therapists have been using forever, of like, your parents did the best they could, and how... I mean, not all of parents do, but many do.

Allison Puryear (she/her): And how it kind of trains people to have some compassion for their parents' imperfections, which allows them to have more compassion for their own.

Allison Puryear (she/her): Yum.

Courtney Katzenberg: Yeah, and two of Paul Gilbert's big lines is, like, one, like, you didn't choose...

Courtney Katzenberg: even, like, our react... like, if we yell at our kid, if I... I play the tape back just to be like, right, I didn't choose in that... I didn't have this conscious thought and was like, I'm gonna yell right now, you know?

Courtney Katzenberg: And so that recognized... and then also then other people weren't necessarily choosing their response, they were responding in probably a way they didn't love either, and so kind of that flow of compassion.

Allison Puryear (she/her): And then once you.

Courtney Katzenberg: as, like, it's not your fault, but it is your responsibility. And so that's that kind of accountability piece. Like, it's not your fault you responded that way, right? Something kind of... okay, but now it's your responsibility. And with your parents, it's not your fault your parents...

Courtney Katzenberg: did what they did, but it is your responsibility. How are you going to move forward?

Allison Puryear (she/her): Yeah.

Allison Puryear (she/her): Yeah, and to be able to pass that on to kids, too, because that's a conversation I have a lot with one of my kids, is like, she'll be like, it's not my fault, and I'm like, nobody said anything about fault, baby, like...

Allison Puryear (she/her): Nobody did anything malicious here, or, you know, like, nobody was trying to get out of anything, like, things just didn't go the way they were meant to go, or the way we wanted them to go, but we both have responsibility in that, and so let's figure out what our next move is. And just being able to, like.

Allison Puryear (she/her): differentiate responsibility from fault, especially for kids, because it... I think it feels the same for them for a long time.

Courtney Katzenberg: And I... it's funny, even you just saying, your kid says it's not my fault, like, minor vicious to blower, because I'm dealing with that all the time, and you know, this idea of his parents, us talking about, you know, that flow of compa... it's like, okay, your kid says that too, like, it's not just... I'm not alone, like, the shame, you know, went down, because it's a part of kids being kids, and...

Courtney Katzenberg: that's where we can be so isolated, so we don't get to see other kids, and so to know, like, oh, that's just a normal kid behavior, to say that, but right, that idea, that fault and responsibility, like, we, you know... and I think, you know, kids want, you know, that's just the way their brain thinks, but it's like...

Courtney Katzenberg: having these conversations over time, that it's like, we don't have to worry about fault, but right, how can we take responsibility? How can we show up and be accountable?

Allison Puryear (she/her): Yeah, so it's interesting that, like, normalizing something, and how powerful that can be in this model.

Allison Puryear (she/her): Because, like...

Allison Puryear (she/her): Why would you feel shameful for feeling something, or doing something, or experiencing something that, like, so many other people experience?

Courtney Katzenberg: that.

Courtney Katzenberg: see it, so then we just think. And that's what I think I say more than anything. Like, it makes sense. Like, it makes sense. You would feel that way. And Russell Colts, he, he has a wonderful, he's one of, CFT, kind of.

Courtney Katzenberg: shares a lot. He has a book... a couple books, and he has a, TED talk about anger. He does a lot of CFT and anger, and he has, like, this very... and he... sometimes it can go very long, sometimes it's short, but it's like, given your history, your brain, your childhood, your learning experience, doesn't make sense. You'd struggle here.

Courtney Katzenberg: And, like, the answer's always yes. Like, given all those factors, like, it makes sense that this would be an area of struggle for you.

Allison Puryear (she/her): Yeah.

Courtney Katzenberg: So...

Allison Puryear (she/her): Well, and thus far, we've talked about, like, you know, like, things we beat ourselves up for, or our kids beating themselves up for, or whatever, that, like, as therapists, we beat ourselves up for that we don't need to.

Allison Puryear (she/her): You know, like, they're normal things, and I don't think beating ourselves up does any good, but, like, what about when we do make... when we do something wrong? You know, like, somebody hits a kid, like, slaps them across the face.

Allison Puryear (she/her): how does CFT, like, I hear some of, like, given your experiences, doesn't make sense that you went there, but how does CFT kind of work through that?

Courtney Katzenberg: And so I think it's that conversation of, like, you know, how...

Courtney Katzenberg: there's distress there, right? You know? And so, how are we going to show up? How are we going to alleviate and prevent this the next time? And so really kind of... but that might be that, like, more holding accountable,

Courtney Katzenberg: You know, kind of... This mistake was made, but, like, okay, now...

Courtney Katzenberg: You know, and thinking about,

Courtney Katzenberg: So is this... I'm backing up. Would this be for working with the kid, or working with...

Allison Puryear (she/her): Like, if you're working with the adult.

Courtney Katzenberg: The adult, and the kid did something.

Allison Puryear (she/her): Or the parent hurt the kid, in that kind of circumstance.

Courtney Katzenberg: Yeah, yeah, okay. Well, in that, you know.

Courtney Katzenberg: that... there's probably going to be a lot of shame there, right? And so it's kind of helping, because if the parent lives in shame, they're ultimately gonna struggle to show up for the kid.

Allison Puryear (she/her): so it's...

Courtney Katzenberg: kind of this idea of, like, yes, this happened, like, we're not gonna avoid the fact, like, this happened.

Courtney Katzenberg: And how can you repair? And how can you show up? Like, what all... what factors kind of led you to respond in such a... in this way? And I have a feeling that there's probably a lot of stressors

Courtney Katzenberg: Outwardly in their life. And so we need to kind of look at What is going on?

Courtney Katzenberg: all these other stresses. What do we need to kind of, like.

Courtney Katzenberg: get rid of, you know? And so, kind of, what is putting you into threat? And it's probably... it's probably a pretty long list. Like, it's not just the kid's reaction. Right.

Courtney Katzenberg: Right, and so it's kind of, like, really getting to know what are all the threat areas.

Courtney Katzenberg: And also, you know, how do we hold ourselves accountable, but not beat ourselves up? Because that ultimately... if we want to show up better for our parent, for our child.

Courtney Katzenberg: Living in shame, living in fear of being a parent isn't ultimately getting us to show up better for our child.

Allison Puryear (she/her): Right.

Courtney Katzenberg: It's kind of like, what can I do? What self-work can I do to help myself get to drive and get to soothing? Know when I'm in threat, know what my tools are to, like, bring that down?

Courtney Katzenberg: So kind of it being, like, not just about that moment, but knowing that the distress is, I'm not showing up the way I want to for my child, and how do I do that?

Allison Puryear (she/her): Yeah. Yeah.

Allison Puryear (she/her): it's interesting imagining, like, the compassion for when somebody has done something really egregious, you know? They still need it in order to not continue doing it.

Allison Puryear (she/her): Then no one has ever been shamed out of.

Courtney Katzenberg: a negative behavior, you know?

Allison Puryear (she/her): Right.

Courtney Katzenberg: hard. It feels, you know, that, you know, we want people to know when they did something wrong, but also.

Courtney Katzenberg: If they're now in fear, you know.

Courtney Katzenberg: That's not... they're not gonna... their tunnel vision is still on, and so, like, for them, they're not gonna be able to show up as compassion either.

Courtney Katzenberg: Yeah.

Allison Puryear (she/her): Yeah. Okay. So... Let's see, what are some...

Allison Puryear (she/her): We've talked a lot about modeling and, like, things like that, but are there some strategies

Allison Puryear (she/her): For modeling and, like, cultivating... cultivating self-compassion.

Courtney Katzenberg: Both for ourselves and for our clients, really.

Courtney Katzenberg: So, one of the things that, I kind of...

Courtney Katzenberg: this overthinking, overdoing, usually means that there's some under-feeling going on. And so that is...

Courtney Katzenberg: one of... one metaphor I use a lot that I pulled from, I think it was the Self-Confidence CFT book, which is wonderful, and it's a pawn metaphor, and it's kind of this idea that,

Courtney Katzenberg: And I love it, because a lot of the trainers and

Courtney Katzenberg: Paul Gilbert is English, and so you're standing in a pond in your Wellington boots, and, you're trying to find something.

Courtney Katzenberg: it... something might be distress, or, like, the solution, or just, you know, you're... you're struggling with something. And so.

Courtney Katzenberg: If you start walking around, You're just gonna create mock.

Allison Puryear (she/her): And so, actually, like, if you're trying to find something at the bottom of the pond, like, you have.

Courtney Katzenberg: to stand still. Like, you kind of have to let everything settle to allow, like, clarity. And so sometimes I, like, you know, imagine my, like, with the situation, like, okay, I'm in the pond right now, like, I just.

Allison Puryear (she/her): Hmm.

Courtney Katzenberg: at all. And that also, right, if I'm moving around, I'm overthinking right now. I'm overdoing. What am I not feeling? What is this underlying emotion here? What kind... and usually it's a threat emotion. What is kind of driving this?

Courtney Katzenberg: putting me into drive to try and fix, but ultimately isn't actually, like, getting to that... that core, like, what's at the core.

Courtney Katzenberg: So that kind of, like, is just kind of a way of thinking about things. And then some tools, you know, one of the things that using a big thing is soothing rhythm breathing that we talk about out there in CFT.

Courtney Katzenberg: And one of... I really like it, because it's not...

Courtney Katzenberg: They do give numbers to it, like 4 breaths in, 4 breaths out, but then it's ultimately finding what feels rhythmic to you.

Courtney Katzenberg: And, like, because otherwise, like, I started to realize with certain meditations, like, they're kind of putting you into drive. It's like, okay, I breathe in 4, I breathe out 4. You know, I'm doing, I'm achieving.

Courtney Katzenberg: It's really about finding what is soothing for you. And so, like, we'll say, like, you know, like, waves rolling in and out, you know, but that kind of connection to self, as opposed to just achieving a certain number.

Courtney Katzenberg: The same thing with, like, a,

Courtney Katzenberg: Five Senses Meditation, but just setting a minute.

Courtney Katzenberg: and kind of checking in with your different senses, as opposed to, like, 5 things you see, 4 things you hear. Again, that's kind of putting you into drive, where if you...

Courtney Katzenberg: Give yourself this openness and curiosity of what am I seeing around me, checking in with those senses.

Courtney Katzenberg: So those are some tools that, like, allow you to get to that soothing, and then choose where you want to go from there.

Allison Puryear (she/her): Yeah, it's interesting how, like, it sounds like so much of this model is keeping us from going back to fight or flight, where our brains are not working so well.

Courtney Katzenberg: Absolutely. When I, like, laughed myself because...

Courtney Katzenberg: I would, in the perinatal period, go for walks, and my, you know, thinking loops were going, and...

Courtney Katzenberg: This is before I knew CFT, and I would do this rainbow meditation, and so I'd find things for the rainbow, and then I'd be like, I'm still thinking, and so then I would do an alphabet, where I'm gonna find things to go with each letter. But then I remember I, like, got to H, and I picked something, and I was like, that is not good. And I was like...

Courtney Katzenberg: This is my own exercise that I've made up, and here was.

Allison Puryear (she/her): Critics don't.

Courtney Katzenberg: up and being like, no, no, no, no, no.

Courtney Katzenberg: Right? How do we just make it, you know.

Courtney Katzenberg: Bringing everything down, that there isn't a right or wrong answer, it's just kind of engaging... engaging our senses, slowing things down, grounding our feet,

Courtney Katzenberg: But yeah, getting ourselves out of that thread, and recognizing we are in the thread, you know, we're never gonna... never not go to threat. Like, it makes sense, it absolutely has kept us safe, you know?

Allison Puryear (she/her): No.

Courtney Katzenberg: how do we recognize, oh,

we're there? And as you said, like, is this really a threat, you know?

Allison Puryear (she/her): Yeah.

Courtney Katzenberg: I'd be in.

Allison Puryear (she/her): Can't.

Courtney Katzenberg: about where I go.

Allison Puryear (she/her): And I'm imagining for myself, like, I like that pond metaphor of it. It might even be helpful to think about, like, all the things I think it is that it's not, just, like, settling and seeing what else might come up.

Allison Puryear (she/her): Because I know, for me, I sometimes... it feels, and I know that I'm not alone in this, so I have lots of self-compassion, that, like, sometimes it just feels like my brain won't do it. Like, I just can't... there's stuff hiding from myself, and being able to, like, sometimes I have to visualize

Allison Puryear (she/her): Certain things in order to, like, have other things pop up.

Courtney Katzenberg: Yeah.

Courtney Katzenberg: And that

Courtney Katzenberg: CFT uses a lot of that, like, visualization, like, we have this tool, and so another one is, like.

Courtney Katzenberg: a compassionate, calm place, you know, kind of, again, not, like, the compassionate other, but, like, walking people through a script, and kind of what would be your compassionate, calm place, and kind of what would be there, what would you be doing, what would it look like? And so, kind of in these moments, how can I go there?

Courtney Katzenberg: And then it opens, you know, when you come back, your thoughts are a little more open, and gives you a little more space.

Allison Puryear (she/her): I like it. And so rhythmic breathing, like, that's, like, 4 in, 4 out, until you, like, kind of find your own pace, or... Yeah.

Courtney Katzenberg: start there, you even, you, like, put on your compassionate face, you know, which might be a smile, you know, it's kind of, what would your compassionate tone of voice sound like? You know, it's kind of, like, almost putting on this, like, compassionate self.

Allison Puryear (she/her): Hmm.

Courtney Katzenberg: you are... To help you, kind of, then get in that compassionate mindset, you know, and compassionate.

Allison Puryear (she/her): Yeah.

Courtney Katzenberg: thinking, and... Another...

Courtney Katzenberg: exercise, and this actually, it's funny, this kind of kicked off. I was formerly a teacher, and I knew I always loved psychology, and I,

Courtney Katzenberg: but thought, how could I ever change? You know, all these things. And then I remember standing there and being like, if my daughter came to me at, you know, the age I was, 35, and said, but this is what I know I want to do, like, change careers.

Courtney Katzenberg: I would say to her, like, you absolutely should do it.

Allison Puryear (she/her): Mm-hmm.

Courtney Katzenberg: I say that to her, like, I should say that to myself. And so, and I use it with clients, when they're in distress sometimes, I'm like, what would you say to your... your child in this moment, you know?

Allison Puryear (she/her): Got it.

Courtney Katzenberg: Parenting things, and they immediately have an answer.

Courtney Katzenberg: Very compassionate answer, you know.

Courtney Katzenberg: you know, helping them be like, can I say that to myself? Why does it feel hard to?

Allison Puryear (she/her): And it's a smart way to leverage the fact that we're... most of us are naturally more compassionate to others than ourselves.

Courtney Katzenberg: sometimes friends... we choose friends who also struggle with, you know, self-compassion, so it's sometimes, like, I have a hard time, because I'm like, well, my friends would also be, like.

Allison Puryear (she/her): You know, scared of everybody else.

Courtney Katzenberg: Right. With my kid, I'm like, no, you know, so...

Allison Puryear (she/her): Yeah, yeah, and...

Allison Puryear (she/her): I mean, it's... it's kind of like a thing that we hear all the time, but, like, we'd never talk to anybody else the way we talk to ourselves sometimes.

Allison Puryear (she/her): And, like, even just imagining saying any of those things to my daughter is just, ugh, you know? And I'm not... I'm not somebody who's particularly hard on myself at this part... point in my life compared to when I was younger, you know?

Courtney Katzenberg: do that.

Courtney Katzenberg: I have a little story, I don't know if we have a moment, but...

Allison Puryear (she/her): Yeah, yeah, I'm gonna real quick close these blinds, because there's a car, and the sun is reflecting off their windshield, and despite the fact that it is bright and sunny, they've got their windshield wipers. That's what those...

Allison Puryear (she/her): So anyway, go ahead, so sorry.

Courtney Katzenberg: So during the CFT training, they had us pull up a moment of shame that we had previously experienced, and then they had us write down, so we pull it up.

Courtney Katzenberg: And then write down what we say to ourselves about that moment of shame. And so, the training was kind of based in the UK. It was virtual, but it was based in the UK. And so they were like, text what you wrote down to this number.

Allison Puryear (she/her): And then.

Courtney Katzenberg: sent the message in Zoom. And so they started... and now this training was, like, clinicians, you know, these are therapists, they're... they... a lot with, the National Health Service, you know.

Courtney Katzenberg: And they read through what people said to themselves.

Courtney Katzenberg: And then, it just broke your heart, like, you're in the Zoom knowing that people are, you know, and it just was such a powerful moment to just recognize that, like, even clinicians, you know, that the self-talk is just...

Courtney Katzenberg: It can be so harsh, and it just, like, breaks your heart to think that people are walking around, you know...

Allison Puryear (she/her): Yeah.

Courtney Katzenberg: themselves up like that, but it was such a powerful moment to be like, wow, and to then sit, like, be looking at them through Zoom, it was done very well.

Allison Puryear (she/her): Yeah. Ugh.

Allison Puryear (she/her): I guess we're just...

Allison Puryear (she/her): We're just given all that we've experienced, and the ways that we're wired, like, it makes sense, right?

Courtney Katzenberg: Right, well, because it doesn't keep us safe to sit there and... you know, the zebra, thinking about how amazing he is.

Courtney Katzenberg: while he's eating grass, you know, that's not gonna keep him safe from the lion. He has to be sitting there on guard, you know?

Allison Puryear (she/her): At any.

Courtney Katzenberg: moment, and so that's why, you know, it makes sense that our brains are Teflon to the positive and Velcro to the negative, because that keeps us safe. And so while we... we know that we now have these tools to be like, okay, this is the default.

Courtney Katzenberg: I can use compassion to kind of override that system.

Allison Puryear (she/her): Yeah, absolutely.

Allison Puryear (she/her): Yeah, so, like.

Allison Puryear (she/her): you mentioned an intervention of, like, what would you tell your kid in this situation? What are some other interventions that...

Allison Puryear (she/her): People could use, even without getting trained, maybe, in CFT, but they could use in a session this afternoon.

Courtney Katzenberg: Yeah, yeah, I mean, even, you know, kind of,

Courtney Katzenberg: Just, like, that question of, like, when, you know, a person is coming in and feeling guilty about something, or their response to something, and just kind of, like.

Courtney Katzenberg: helping them slow down, like, given your history, your brain, your learning history, you know, does it make sense? Like, you know, asking them that you would struggle in this moment.

Courtney Katzenberg: Then, kind of, then asking, like.

Courtney Katzenberg: And so, what might you need, you know, in this moment? How could you, you know, what is it that you then need to help alleviate or prevent this feeling, you know, this distress?

Courtney Katzenberg: So that's, as well, kind of helping people kind of bring down the nervous system, but then also start to identify, like, what would be what alleviates that.

Allison Puryear (she/her): Yeah.

Courtney Katzenberg: There's all sorts... there's others, but, like, you know, kind of these... and,

Courtney Katzenberg: like that... those scripts of, like, the Compassionate calm place, and so on both, the Compassionate Mind Foundation and then Balanced Minds, they give a lot of resources, and so they... you can pull scripts for different meditations off of there.

Courtney Katzenberg: And kind of even having clients identify, you know, what

Courtney Katzenberg: the different flows of compassion in their day, you know, or the past week, like, when did you give yourself compassion? When did you get compassion from others? So kind of priming their mind to start picking, you know, really kind of savoring these moments.

Courtney Katzenberg: Not... yeah.

Allison Puryear (she/her): Yeah, I'm thinking about the... the balance of that, particularly for people who are in helping professions.

Allison Puryear (she/her): Like, if we take a therapist, for instance, and you've got a therapist who's also a parent, so there's a lot of giving compassion and giving compassion, and it is not the nature of the role to get compassion from your therapy clients, and depending on your kids, you might not be getting an ounce of compassion from them.

Allison Puryear (she/her): How...

Allison Puryear (she/her): like, how do you talk to your clients about finding a better balance? Because self-compassion is still not the same as compassion from others.

Courtney Katzenberg: I think he... How do you talk to your clients about getting a better balance of...

Allison Puryear (she/her): Yeah, so that they're getting compassion from other people, because I think even if you work really hard on self-compassion, that's still gonna feel missed.

Courtney Katzenberg: Right, and it's hard because, you know, so often.

Courtney Katzenberg: it's hard to get it from your partner, too, because both of you are in the trenches, you know? And I think right that idea of...

Courtney Katzenberg: Connecting to other parents, just the power in that, of you just saying, my kid said, you know, like, always says it's not my fault, like, just brings down that nervous system, kind of brought me out of threat in that moment, you know?

Courtney Katzenberg: Outlook Just having these guys, as much as you can, foster...

Courtney Katzenberg: time to connect with other people who, you know.

Courtney Katzenberg: And it might, you know, it's simple little sprinklings of just, like, normalizing, you know, people who are going through the same thing.

Allison Puryear (she/her): And, you know.

Courtney Katzenberg: parents always struggle, like, but I should be with my kid, but it's like, if you're with your kid depleted.

Courtney Katzenberg: Is that as good as you taking that 2 hours, connecting, receiving compassion from others, and then showing up to them with the more full cup?

Allison Puryear (she/her): So...

Courtney Katzenberg: And that's that compassion, like, I'm gonna... I know I need this. And it's even compassion to them, because it's like, I'm not showing up for you the way I want to.

Courtney Katzenberg: And so if I really, you know, it's gonna feel hard for me to find the time and for me to do this, but we actually, in the short term, it feels hard, but in the long term, what it's gonna do.

Allison Puryear (she/her): Yeah, and I think about how, like, if we open up and we're real with our friends, if we're able to make time for friends, that could also be, like...

Allison Puryear (she/her): really helpful, because I find every time I'm, like, hanging out with my friends and the kids are out of earshot, like, there's just... there's a lot of compassion flowing back and forth.

Courtney Katzenberg: Right, absolutely, right. And it's, you know, those little mo... and it really just, like.

Courtney Katzenberg: And I think about, you know, kind of in the evolutionary sense, like, if we were, you know, with the village, like, you'd be seeing, like, we'd all be together, so you'd always be seeing other kids, so your kids...

Courtney Katzenberg: Behavior would be normal.

Courtney Katzenberg: But because we just are kind of in our silos, we don't get to see that. And I think... so, the United States has the highest rate of parental burnout, which is really interesting.

Courtney Katzenberg: But I think because... and we're also the most individualistic country.

Courtney Katzenberg: Activistic countries actually have much lower rates of parental burnout because, you know, they're sharing the load, they're also seeing that this behavior is normal, you know.

Allison Puryear (she/her): Yeah, and I'm thinking, too, about how, like, policies get made based on what we experience in our lives, and if you don't see the entire village suffering, then it's just you and, you know, who needs paid parental leave?

Courtney Katzenberg: Exactly, well, that's the thing, and then that builds the shame. It's like, well, it must just be me.

Courtney Katzenberg: out that I'm the only one. How many times I'm like, I wish everyone on my couch today could have just, like, talked to each other, because they.

Courtney Katzenberg: Like, it's not just you, but, you know, but then we feel like we have to put on this face that, like, oh no, everything's okay, and so... but, right, being willing to have these, you know, authentic, vulnerable conversations with their friends and other parents really goes a long way.

Allison Puryear (she/her): Absolutely.

Allison Puryear (she/her): Anything else you want to leave therapists with that would be really.

Courtney Katzenberg: Beautiful.

Allison Puryear (she/her): for them to be able to either go deeper on CFT, or...

Courtney Katzenberg: Right. Implement some things we've talked about.

Courtney Katzenberg: Yeah, no, I mean, I think,

Courtney Katzenberg: I... I'm trying to think.

Courtney Katzenberg: I think just, you know, it... therapists are doing a lot of compassion as it is, you know, like, it's already there, and so it's just kind of, you know.

Courtney Katzenberg: Continuing to do that, continuing to know that you don't have to be perfect because you're modeling for your clients, that you don't have to be perfect.

Courtney Katzenberg: I just think my brain is swirling, so...

Allison Puryear (she/her): Yeah, yeah, I put you on the spot, no worries.

Allison Puryear (she/her): Awesome. Well, thank you so much, Courtney. Genuinely. I feel like I'm taking a lot from this conversation, and I'm gonna use it both as a parent and a therapist, so thank you.

Courtney Katzenberg: I am very excited, because last year, when I found CFT, I was... I tried to find, like... I'm like, I want more people to talk about CFT with, because I was so excited, so...

Allison Puryear (she/her): Yeah.

Courtney Katzenberg: I'm honored to be able to share about it, because it's done so much for me.

Allison Puryear (she/her): Yay, awesome. Well, thank you, and I'll talk with you later!

I hope that broadened your clinical horizons! Head over to notboringces.com to get your CE credit. Wanna have a Not Boring conversation with me about your clinical area of expertise? You can apply there, too. If you like this conversation, leave us a five star review, tell a friend, and be sure to subscribe for future conversations.