

## Ep #4: What We Believe as Therapists and Why It's a Problem



**Full Episode Transcript**

With Your Host

**Heather Branscombe**

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Welcome to *Clinicians Creating Impact*, a show for physical therapists, occupational therapists, and speech-language pathologists looking to take the next step in their careers and make a real difference in the lives of their clients. If you're looking to improve the lives of neurodiverse children and families with neurological-based challenges, grow your own business, or simply show up to help clients, this is the show for you.

I'm Heather Branscombe, Therapist, Certified Coach, Clinical Director, and Owner of Abilities Neurological Rehabilitation. I have over 25 years of experience in both the public and private sectors, and I'm here to help you become the therapist you want to be, supporting people to work towards their dreams and live their best lives. You ready to dive in? Let's go.

Welcome back, friend. I'm recording this podcast in the middle of the actual launch of the podcast. And I am so thankful for all the kind words that I've been receiving, even before the launch of this podcast happens. So thank you. You have been so amazing, and it's been an awesome opportunity to reconnect with so many, as well as to make new friends as part of this launch. So again, thank you for listening, and know that I now consider you some of my new work friends, even if we've never met.

Today, I want to talk about our beliefs as a therapist and why it might be a problem. One of the things that I noticed when I got specific training to be a coach is it really changed the way that I listen. I listen differently now than I used to, and I like to believe it's for the better. One of the things that I've noticed is that there are certain beliefs that we each have, and I include myself in this, that don't really help us in getting and creating the impact that we want.

If you've noticed that yourself, and maybe through listening through some of the first few episodes of this podcast, you've noticed how some of your thoughts might be helping or not helping you, you might be interested in learning more about beliefs. What I want to offer you first is that what we believe is usually based on our past experiences.

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So basically, beliefs are thoughts that we think over and over until we believe them. We learn thoughts directly and indirectly, and they become ingrained, just like some of the patterns that we might see in the clients when we're making an assessment, whether we're looking at a pattern of how they move a certain way, they speak a certain way or react in a certain way.

So just like those patterns we notice in our clients, we have those same patterns in our thoughts. And again, just like a fish is unaware of the water in which it swims, we're often unaware of the thoughts we're thinking. So we must develop the skill of becoming more of that watcher. We need to learn to watch our brains think so that we can recognize thoughts and beliefs for what they actually are.

So this can be really especially important as a therapist, and I think it's highlighted best in the shift that we're seeing right now in our professions collectively, especially around things like cultural safety and humility. So recognizing our bias is just another way of saying recognizing our unintentional beliefs, which, again, are just unintentional thoughts we've had on a repeated basis. So what that means is often, we think that we're observing facts when we're actually making judgments based on what we've learned in our past.

So, for example, we'll think the thought that's a pretty sunset, and then we won't question that as a fact. The same goes for thoughts like he's being rude or she's not nice. Those beliefs are so deeply ingrained that we don't even see them as beliefs. So some of the beliefs that I came up with as a therapist that could apply here are things like charting isn't fun. Have you heard that before? I know I have. This is a difficult client, or this is a difficult caregiver. This is a difficult co-worker.

I thought of those because those are things that I hear almost daily at work. And we often say them like they're a fact. We can even think things that sound maybe more positive, like there are so many people looking for services that building a caseload is going to be really easy. Or something like it's not fair for me to charge what I think I deserve as a therapist when the people that I serve can't afford it.

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So notice that those things may also sound true because we hear them a lot. So I want to give you a very personal, and I have to say a little vulnerable, example of where a passive belief can sound good but may not actually be super helpful. So, fun fact, I can relate to this, and it's kind of why I went into coaching in the first place.

So, again, I know that I've shared why I decided to get further training and certification on the podcast before, and it's the belief that I wanted to help the people that I work with. And that's true. Again, doesn't that thought that I want to help the people I work with, doesn't that sound amazing? Even altruistic? What could be wrong with that fact? And I could even say that it is a fact.

But it really isn't. It's a belief. And while I held that belief, the other belief I had if I'm really being honest, is I wanted to be a better coach because I thought if I could coach better, then the people I would work with would want to do what I want them to do. That hurt. Do you feel that? I feel that. That does not sound better, and it's not true.

So to be perfectly clear, this has nothing to do with anything the people that I work with, anything that they were doing or not doing, and it has everything to do with me. I love the people I work with. But notice how a belief that sounds positive can also have a less helpful side. So it was much less helpful for me to believe that I needed the people that I work with to do what I want them to do.

That's the belief that I discovered I wanted to change first. Why? Because I know that when I connect with who I really am and what I'm really about, it goes against my values. It goes against my mission to create dream jobs for those that I'm working with. It goes against my values of creating a client-directed experience and that people inherently know what's best for them.

So when I went for coach training, one of my very first aha moments was that the people that I work with are not a problem. I was the problem, or more specifically, my thoughts and my beliefs were the problem. So, notice how that's so much more empowering for everyone involved.

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So how can you discover your existing beliefs? The key is to get into that meta-level space where you get to be the watcher of your brain and your own thoughts, and then you get to decide if the thought is serving you or not. You can take ownership of your beliefs and choose which you want to get rid of and which you'd like to keep.

So, the next question is, how do you know what thoughts to look at? So one way to find those beliefs that aren't helpful is to look at how you're feeling. So you may think that the feeling is coming from the world because we've so often drawn that kind of conclusion. But we know from looking at the model that our feelings come from what we're thinking. It's the thoughts that create that disempowerment, and that will block the new beliefs that require self-empowerment.

So another way is to find out through some prompts. So I want to give you a couple of prompts, and I want you to see what thoughts come up when you answer them. So, prompt number one, one thing I don't like about my work is... Number two, that won't work at work because... Number three, I've never done it, so... Number four, it's my client's fault because... And then number five, it's my co-worker's or colleague's fault because...

So take the one prompt that sounds the most powerful, or all of them if you want, and fill in the blanks. See what kind of thoughts come up and notice the feeling that you feel and that's generated from that thought.

So one belief that I also hear a lot is that therapists or even any staff right now are hard to find. Now, if I offer that thought, and my brain does offer that thought every once in a while, my brain can also offer a lot of evidence that it's true. I know that because if I put out an ad for a therapist, it's not like I have 100 applications to choose from. And even if I did, my brain could then decide to think, well, how many of these candidates are even a good fit, and how will I ever figure out if they are a good fit?

So notice that if I believe good staff are hard to find, no matter how many applicants I get or don't get, my brain can use that as evidence of my thought.

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Isn't that amazing? Brains are amazing that way. So one day, I just decided to decide that that wasn't true. Can you believe it? You can actually decide to believe whether or not therapists or good staff are hard to find.

So then I decided that if my new belief was true, how would I feel? If I think that good therapists can be found, that feels a lot more peaceful for me. And then, I asked what I would do if I felt that peace because I believe good therapists are out there and they're ready to work with me. So I acted from that thought and that feeling, and guess what? I had a period where I hired five amazing therapists that started within five weeks of each other. And my brain started to find the evidence for that thought, and then my new belief began.

So, if you want to start believing something, you have to first recognize that it's a current belief that you've chosen. And then you must decide to change your mind. Now, I'm not suggesting that facts aren't true. Facts are facts, whether we believe them or not. The truth, however, is definitely subjective.

For example, a rock is a rock. That's a fact. But we can choose our truth about that rock. Do we choose to see that rock as a dangerous weapon or as a beautiful part of nature? We can choose either, and both would be true. So we get to decide which one we want to believe and which one we want to focus on. Our brain will find evidence for whatever we ask it to look for, so be conscious and purposeful in what you ask your brain to do.

So what I want to leave you today with is the fact that all thoughts are optional. And you really do have the ability to choose whatever you want to believe. Doesn't that sound happier and more hopeful than the alternative? It does to me. And in practice, I'm here to tell you it is for me. It doesn't mean that I don't have to practice this. This is a practice. But I feel much more curious and empowered at work than I ever have before. And the results that I've been able to create show me the evidence that it's true.

So my challenge for you today is to question your beliefs about your work. How are they true? How are they not true? And what do you want to do with that

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awareness? I can't wait to see the impact that you create with this. See you soon.

To celebrate the launch of the show, I'm going to be giving away a \$100 gift card and two \$50 gift cards to Amazon. I'm going to be giving them away to three lucky listeners who follow, rate, and review the show.

Now, it doesn't have to be a five-star review, although I sure hope that you love the show. I really want your honest feedback, so I can create an awesome show that provides tons of value for you. So visit [abilitiesrehabilitation.com/podcastlaunch](http://abilitiesrehabilitation.com/podcastlaunch) to learn more about the contest and how to enter. And I'll be announcing the winners on the show in episode ten. Thanks so much.

Thanks for joining me this week on the *Clinicians Creating Impact* podcast. Want to learn more about the work I'm doing with Abilities Rehabilitation? Head on over to [abilitiesrehabilitation.com](http://abilitiesrehabilitation.com). See you next week.