

## Ep #31: When You Feel Stuck at Work



**Full Episode Transcript**

**With Your Host**

**Heather Branscombe**

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Episode 31, When You Feel Stuck at Work.

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.

Hi there, friend. How is it going? I can't even believe that I'm recording this in August. Summer is such an amazing time to live here in BC. The weather is amazing, the sun is out making the day super long. And I right now am in active planning mode.

We are launching at Abilities a super unique certification. It's an internal certification program for our clinicians in September. And the more I get input and the more I work on it, the more excited I get. I love supporting clinicians to be their best selves, and thereby increasing their impact. And it feels like an amazing way to do it.

August has often felt like that kind of shift for me for planning. When I had kids at home, it's when I started to shift my mind and start to plan back to school and to start to sort out their routines. And now that I don't have to do that, I've shifted more strongly to my career and my impact professionally and in our industry.

So how are you feeling right now? Are you motivated? Or maybe you're feeling a bit stuck. If you are or have ever felt stuck, then this episode is for you. Now, before I start, I just want to ask you to help me to help other clinicians just like you get unstuck. The best way that you can do that is to follow and rate the show wherever you listen to it so it feeds the algorithm, and then share this

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podcast with a colleague that you think it might be helpful with. It's such an amazing way to pay it forward for your colleagues. Thanks for that.

And with that, let's talk about being stuck. How have you felt stuck at work? For me, feeling stuck has generally fallen into about three categories, although I'm sure that there are more. I've thought about feeling, one, stuck at my job. So that feeling that you can't leave your job. I've also felt stuck with a client. And there's also been times that I have felt stuck with a coworker.

Now, again, I'm here to tell you, I'm talking about these because I've definitely felt stuck in each of those categories at some time in my career. And it makes sense that I've done that because, again, my career at this point has spanned over 25 years. I've also had the privilege of being in an in-demand profession for most of my life. I'm so grateful for that.

So it's not like there weren't jobs out there for me. And early on in my career, I noticed that I really liked working with clients in a more longer term relationship kind of view. And with more professional autonomy. What I noticed is it felt like as I was noticing those things, the choices felt more limited as I decided what was actually most important to me as a clinician. And then I also got married and started a family pretty early on in my career, so my values of what I wanted from a position also changed.

When I first started working I used to think it was no problem to commute 45 minutes each way as a newly married person with no kids. And I did exactly that. And once I had children I really wanted to work much closer to home. So by learning what I like to do clinically and then with my changing values of what was important for me in a job, there was a period where I started to feel stuck on where my career choice and where my next career choice could actually be.

I've also had clients where I felt stuck. As clinicians, we often have a metaphorical tool belt of strategies, teaching analogies, and kind of those go-to activities or experiences that I could use with my clients to help them to achieve their goals. But sometimes my toolbox didn't feel big enough. And then when I ran out of those tools in my tool belt, I would feel stuck as to what to do next.

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And I've also had co-workers that felt harder to work with over the years. I'm grateful, so grateful to say that number has been pretty few. But when I did come across a co-worker, especially when I was working with them with the same client, it was really easy for me to feel stuck with a teammate that I didn't really easily work well with.

So I want to give you a new perspective today so if any or all of these things ring true, and if they are happening in your life right now, you have something to use to move forward. What I noticed about all three of these examples of when I felt stuck is that in every situation I felt stuck because I wasn't clear on what I wanted to do next and because I wasn't clear also on the options available.

And truth be told, at some point in all of those situations I wasn't even really looking at all the options available. I was looking at my perceived lack of options. It felt really disempowering. And that's often how feeling stuck actually feels, it feels disempowering.

Now, it's okay to feel stuck or to feel disempowered. It is a normal part of the human experience, even with all of your training as a clinician and even if you're in an in-demand profession. The difference for me now, when I'm at my best self, is that I choose to see my feeling of stuckness or disempowerment really as this opportunity to connect with myself.

The truth is, we feel stuck or disempowered not because we have no other choices, but because we lack clarity to see what those choices actually are. And that makes sense. Remember, our primitive brain offers us those easy go-to choices with little to no effort. That's what that part of the brain is supposed to do. Those choices come from our experience, and if we have no experience in the choices available to us, of course those choices aren't going to be readily available to us.

It reminds me of a recent story. I was talking to one of my children about their career path. Now, all of my children are in their kind of early 20s, and this one particular child felt stuck in their job because they thought they were making what they saw as a "high" wage. And because they thought they were making this high wage, it meant that they couldn't leave that position.

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This amazing young adult of mine couldn't see the possibilities available to themselves because they were looking at the possibilities with their early 20 year old eyes. As someone with much more experience on earth than my child, or my young adult, semi-adult, I could see so many more options and choices that he could choose when he was ready. And that's because my experiences lend to a very different perspective than my young adult child.

It actually reminds me also of an experience of leaving an amazing position with outstanding security, outstanding pay, benefits and a defined benefit pension with lovely people to start Abilities, the organization that I lead today. At times I felt like that job was like golden handcuffs.

Golden because of the compensation, and truth be told, the people that I worked with. But handcuffs because I myself couldn't see another way to create that same kind of compensation and work with the same kind of population, but in a way that more aligned with the values that had become most important to me at that time.

Now, this had nothing to do with the organization I worked for, of course they should compensate their employees well, that's amazing. And while my values weren't really aligning with that organization, it certainly didn't mean that we didn't share some values and that they weren't individually amazing people. As a choice became more clear to me, I decided to take that leap of faith and I resigned from that position. I resigned from the golden handcuffs. And I believe that both myself and the organization benefited from that decision.

Now, as an employer myself now, I don't really want to have people working with me only because they feel stuck. Empowerment is a really important value to me and I really infuse that through our mission to create an outstanding client and staff experience at Abilities. And this organization that I left, they are doing more than fine without me, and so am I. I've never felt more satisfied and passionate about my career because I get to do things like be on this podcast and talk to you.

So if you're feeling stuck, here's a framework that could help. One, just notice the choices that your brain is offering you at first when you feel stuck. And those

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choices may be limited. Then from there, notice what other choices could be available to you. This is where the quintessential brainstorming, right? Brainstorming is when there is no bad thought, there is no bad answer. That thought can be really helpful for you as you brainstorm.

And then if you need more help to think about the potential options, you can ask yourself who else in your network could help you to see those choices available? Whether that's co-workers, other clinicians, former classmates, or other formal or informal mentors, they can all be really helpful for you to see what kind of choices are available. And, fun fact, feel free to add me on that list. You can always DM me or contact me through email through our Abilities website. I'd be more than happy to offer those choices to you.

The point from this is that you want to make this list as long as possible. Even if it's something that you don't think that you might want to choose. Then, once you have all of those decisions, connect with yourself and what feels like the next best step for you? You get to make that decision knowing that most decisions really aren't permanent, and trusting yourself to make that next best decision is a big strategy to help you to get yourself unstuck.

So give this framework a try and let me know how it goes. You know I cannot wait to see the results that you create with this. And I also know both you will benefit and your clients will benefit when they get the best of you at work, completely unstuck. Have an amazing week and I'll talk to you soon.

If you enjoyed today's show and don't want to worry about missing an episode, you can follow the show wherever you listen to your podcasts. And if you haven't already, I would really appreciate it if you could leave a rating and review to let me know what you think and to help others find *Clinicians Creating Impact*.

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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.