

Ep #84: Answering Your Questions About Work



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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.

Hi there, friend. I hope you're doing well today. If you are listening to this when I've just recorded it and just releasing it, maybe you're noticing that summer is starting to wind down for you as well. I'm recording this kind of mid-ish August kind of time frame and I'm definitely noticing the start of the shift.

Now I have to say, I loved this summer and I hope that you loved this summer as well. I got to do golf. I got to pick up pickleball. I still have a trip that I'm really looking forward to, and I've also had a few weekend trips as well as a work away from home kind of work week, which has all been pretty awesome I have to say. But today I thought I would like to do something a little different on the podcast, something I haven't done before, which is answering your questions.

Now, here at Abilities as clinicians, we support each other in some monthly meetings. And in part of that way that we help each other is people submit their questions in advance and we take that opportunity to do some group coaching and group mentoring. It's been one of the most favorite things that I've done at work there for a while, other than this podcast of course.

But I've just been noticing that there's some questions that have come up that I actually thought might be helpful to share here on the podcast as well. So obviously I'm going to remove names and some identifying features because I want to protect and preserve confidentiality of everybody involved. But I did think

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that this would be helpful. And I'd love to hear your feedback whether you find this helpful as well. So today's question that I'm going to answer is how to move forward with a coworker you don't trust.

Now, before I answer my perspective on this question, I know you may already know this but I just want to share how much of a passion project this podcast actually is for me because I really do want all clinicians to have the opportunity and ability to use this kind of tool set and tips as a way to help them and to magnify their impact, even if they never either work alongside us or with us here at Abilities.

And again, I'm saying this again and again because it's actually true. I consider myself so lucky to do the kind of work that I do. And recording this podcast is part of the fun that I get to do as part of my work week. So what I would like and what I would ask of you today is to help to make this more meaningful by helping to spread the message.

There's a message here to be spread that there's an opportunity to have and improve our skill set and our mindset around the work that we do. And if we have more clicks, that will help more clients and ultimately more clinicians. So let's work together to make that happen.

So you can do this in two specific ways. One, if you can follow, rate and review this podcast wherever you're listening to it, that helps feed the algorithm. I'm going to say I don't exactly know about this because I'm not a tech person, but I know it does help the algorithm. So when there is a clinician just like you, that's searching for something like this podcast, just like this, this podcast will come up for them.

And then secondly, if you can share the podcast or even better yet, a favorite episode that you have with a colleague that you're currently working with. Again, if you've heard this before, you've meant to do it, maybe you thought of somebody that it might be helpful, but you haven't done it yet. It's totally fine. Of course it's okay. But let this be the sign. Today's the day that you can help that clinician to feel better about the work that they're doing.

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And if this is your first episode, again, welcome. I'm so glad you're here. Thank you so much for listening. And hopefully as you listen, you can think about who of your clinical friends that you think would love to hear more of this kind of information to help them at work. Again, thank you so much in advance for your action here. And with that, let's get back to answering the question.

So the question came in just like this. They said, "I have a colleague who doesn't communicate well with me. They also update their notes inconsistently after me sending emails and verbal conversations. If it doesn't change in the new year, I plan not to use this colleague for any future new clients. What, if anything else should I do?"

So I love that question. Thank you so much for sharing that. Let's talk about it. First of all, I just want to acknowledge that working with other humans can be hard. It really is. The thing that we often like, which is working with other people, can also on the flip side be hard, especially when you don't work on the same days or sometimes even in the same organization.

So knowing that, it can make total sense that when you come up to a kind of challenge like this, you can feel frustrated, you can feel untrusting, and you can question what, if anything else you can do. So as I was considering this, I have some questions that may or may not help you. And if you are struggling with this question, they're questions that you can ask yourself as well.

First of all, how can you support yourself in this situation? Because knowing that this situation can feel, you can feel frustrated, untrusting, and just kind of questioning, I know that can dysregulate your nervous system a little bit. And knowing that the best ideas come from a regulated nervous system, the first question I have is how can you support yourself best in that situation? So I would just invite you to kind of sit with that for a moment and see what kind of things come up for you.

Secondly, what is your responsibility to this person that you're talking about? So more specifically, are they under your supervision or not? Because that's really going to define how you approach that. If you have a supervision aspect to this person, you're going to have more of an obligation to that person to actually

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supervise them. Say, if they are an assistant that's working with you, for example, versus if they are a colleague in a similar or maybe different discipline with you where you do ultimately want to work together because we all like to work together within a team, but you may not have that same obligation to supervise. So that's the second question.

And the third question is what is the ideal behavior you are looking for? Now, that may sound kind of obvious, but I actually ask that because often we focus on what we don't want or what we're not getting instead of what we do want. And so the follow-up with that is if you think about the ideal behavior you're looking for in that other person, my question is have you actually asked for this?

So if somebody isn't communicating the way that you want, what is the kind of communication that you are looking for? Are you looking for that in a chart note possibility? Are you looking for that for emails, from text, from phone calls? What is the frequency? Just being very specific about what the ideal behavior is from your perspective.

Again, the person gets to decide if they're going to meet your expectation or not, but they have no way to even have an opportunity to meet that expectation if they don't know what your actual expectation is at the end of the day.

So what I would say finally is what you can actually do, what can you do, is first take care of yourself. So again, answering that question, how you can best support yourself in that situation, answer that. Think about how you can best take care of your feelings and what feels empowering to you. That's the number one thing that I would hope that you take away from this.

Secondly, if you have a supervisor yourself, that is going to be a great resource for you to connect with. Or if you don't have a direct supervisor, using another colleague, be that at the same level as you or even in another organization, just to get another perspective and to get that support, that can be really helpful.

And then thirdly, again, I'm saying this, it sounds obvious, but I'm here to tell you, as I have talked about this situation in various ways with various people, have you shared your distinct expectations with that colleague? What do you want and are you sure that they know that?

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You would be surprised how often those expectations aren't being shared and the fear that they have about sharing those expectations. So just being mindful of that and making sure that your expectations are very clear, that can be so helpful for people to be able to meet you where you want them to meet you.

Now, knowing that this question comes from a real experience that we actually talked through before as a clinical team, I know for a fact that the person who was asking that question actually hadn't expressed the expectation explicitly to the person. And when they did, things actually changed.

And also for them, knowing that this happens to other clinicians was super helpful to them. And so hopefully, you knowing that this happens to other clinicians, I'm here to tell you that it does, that was actually very helpful to them as well, because they had actually thought that it was a them issue.

So even though they were frustrated that another clinician wasn't communicating well with them, they were carrying a level of shame that somehow they weren't good enough of a clinician to be able to be communicated well with, which was super interesting. And unfortunately, it was adding an extra level of suffering to an already challenging situation.

So I hope that this has given you a new perspective. And I'd be really curious to find out whether or not you agree. And whether or not you agree or not, what do you think I missed from this question? How would you handle it differently?

Or maybe it reminds you of an issue that you have at work. I would love to be able to give you my perspective here, across the podcast here, and to be able to get the collective wisdom of clinicians just like you that are listening to this episode.

So whether you have feedback or would like to share a question to be able to be discussed on this podcast, either way, I'd ask you to email me at heather@abilitiesrehabilitation.com. Because the truth is, yes, I'm busy. We are all busy as clinicians. Of course we are. But I promise you, I am never too busy to talk to you.

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With that, I hope you have an amazing rest of your week, and I will 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*.

It doesn't have to be a five-star rating, although I sure hope you love the show. I'd really want your honest feedback so I can create an awesome podcast that provides tons of value. To learn more about me and the work that I do, visit my website at www.abilitiesrehabilitation.com/clinicianscorner to download your free getting it all done at work process and to see what I'm up to. 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. See you next week.