

**HOW TO SAFELY AND  
SUCCESSFULLY SUPPORT  
SOMEONE WHO'S  
STRUGGLING WITH THEIR  
MENTAL HEALTH**

Presented by Jessi Beyer



# ABOUT JESSI BEYER

**SPEAKER AND #1 BEST-SELLING AUTHOR**





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University of Minnesota Alumnus (Go Golden Gophers!)

HAVE YOU EVER EATEN  
CHICKEN OFF THE FLOOR?

I MADE A LOT OF MISTAKES  
SUPPORTING HIM, AND WE  
BOTH CAME OUT WORSE  
BECAUSE OF IT.



TODAY I WANT TO SHARE WITH  
YOU WHAT I KNOW NOW SO YOU  
DON'T HAVE TO GO THROUGH  
THE SAME CONFUSION AND  
HURT THAT I DID.

# **PART 1: WHAT NOT TO SAY**



"I KNOW  
WHAT YOU'RE  
GOING  
THROUGH."

YOU DON'T!

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- Even more importantly, it's ***their*** experience and their emotions.

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- You should only apologize when you did something that caused another person harm and when you have the intention to change your actions to prevent it from happening again.



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- It is utterly useless to compare the severity of mental illness, as the person who drowned in one foot of water and the person who drowned in 20 feet of water are both dead.
- Anyone who's struggling with their mental health is hurting, struggling, and trying to heal – it doesn't matter whose mental health was "worse".

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- Going through something so deep and emotional can change a person, and the person isn't always the same at the other end of it.
- Allow them to feel their pain for as long as they need.

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- The person who experienced the trauma is deeply hurt, and you, as the person helping them through the trauma, would be smart to remember that distinction.

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- Each healing journey is unique, and you have no way to know how far along someone is or how hard they've fought to get to where they are.

**"COME ON,  
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- If you're reacting this way, you need to ask yourself why you're wanting to support them.

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---

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- You run the risk of harming their healing process if you tell them what to do without having the proper professional training and understanding of their unique situation.

WHAT TO SAY  
INSTEAD



# WHAT TO SAY INSTEAD

"MY HEART GOES OUT TO YOU/YOUR FAMILY."

Having someone you love struggle with their mental health can hurt you, as well, and that hurt is as legitimate as the pain your loved one is experiencing. Saying something like this lets them know that you're invested in their healing and that they have someone on their side.

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"I HEAR YOU AND I'M HERE FOR YOU."

This line is so powerful, both in mental health support and in everyday life. By saying this, you're letting your loved one know that everything they're sharing – their story and their feelings – are heard and received by you and that you're going to be their cheerleader and their support system as they move through the healing process.

# **PART 2: HOW TO SUPPORT THEM**

**SORT  
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- If they invite you, you can partake in a therapy session with them.
- They might also come to you with some homework from their therapist.
- If neither of those things happen, then pay close attention to this presentation and seek independent help for managing your emotions.

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- If you are able to validate their emotions and let them know that they have the right and the freedom to feel whatever they feel, that can take a load off of their shoulders.
- During the healing process, energy should not be devoted to feeling insecure or ridiculous about their emotions.

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- They don't need to be protected or handled with kid gloves.



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  - Continue to invite them out to social events.
  - Continue your Sunday morning coffee date.
  - Continue complaining about your annoying relationship.
- This will enable your friend or family member to retain some normalcy in their life during a time that is very, very painfully abnormal.

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- Holding the space means being “willing to walk alongside another person in whatever journey they’re on without judging them, making them feel inadequate, trying to fix them, or trying to impact the outcome. When we hold space for other people, we open our hearts, offer unconditional support, and let go of judgement and control.”

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- You have to choose to sit in the dumpster with them, even if you want to climb right out.



# **Eight Steps to Holding the Space**

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## FAILURE

Their failure is not your failure, so keep your ego out of it. Their relapse does not mean you held the space improperly.

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## CATCH THEM

Make sure that they know that you're able and willing to catch the broken pieces of them if or when they fall apart.



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## CHOICES

Allow them to make their own choices, even if they're different than the choices you would've made.

**CONNECT  
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- Let's look at 10 different types of therapy that can be helpful for them.



## TALK THERAPY

Talk therapy, like cognitive behavioral therapy, is the most common form of therapy out there. Therapists can be found at [psychologytoday.com](https://www.psychologytoday.com).





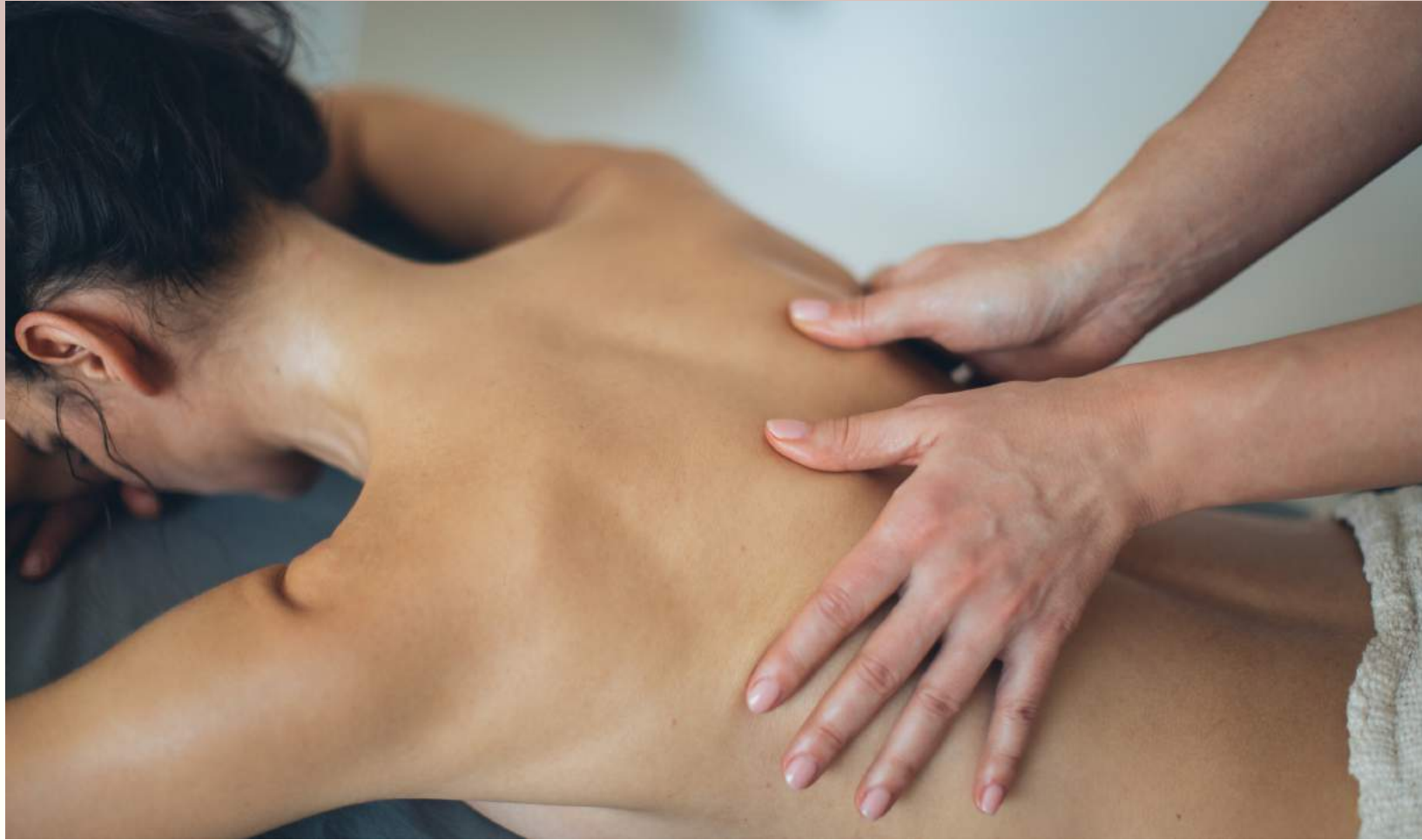
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## EMDR

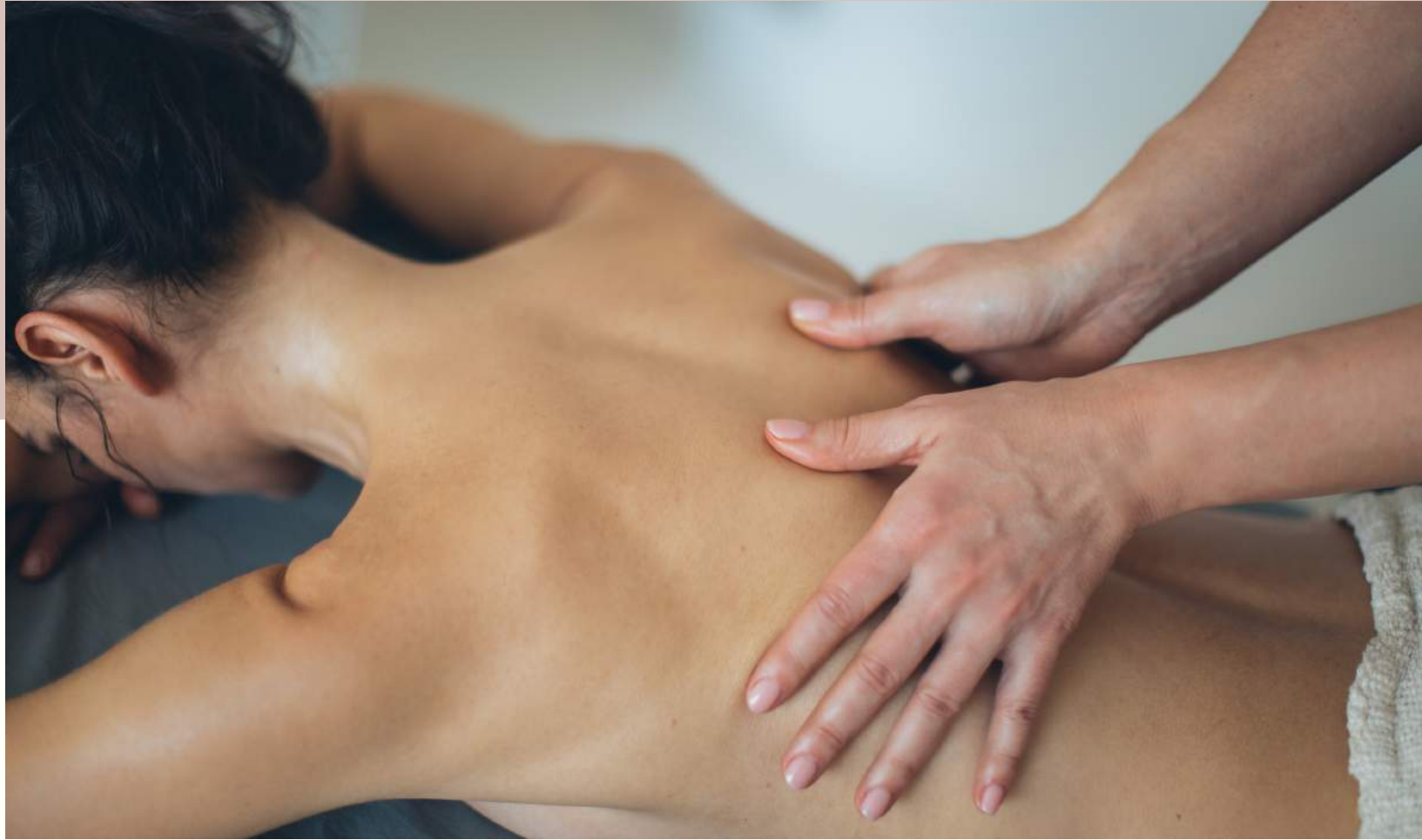
EMDR reframes how you view yourself and your mental illness using bilateral stimulation. Therapists can be found at [emdria.org/find-a-therapist/](https://www.emdria.org/find-a-therapist/).



## CRANIOSACRAL THERAPY

Craniosacral therapy harnesses your natural healing mechanisms to heal your mental illness. Practitioners can be found at [iahp.com](http://iahp.com).





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## MINDFULNESS AND MEDITATION

Mindfulness and meditation train your brain to come back to the same place. There is no certifying body for meditation or mindfulness, so look for LCSWs or LPCs.



## DANCE-MOVEMENT THERAPY

Dance-movement therapy is a creative arts therapy that works with the mind-body connection. Therapists can be found at [adta.org](http://adta.org).





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## TRAUMA-SENSITIVE YOGA

Trauma-sensitive yoga's goal is to connect your mind and body. Therapists can be found at [traumasensitiveyoga.com](http://traumasensitiveyoga.com).



## EQUINE-ASSISTED THERAPY

EAT is the use of horses to re-position your perspective of your mental illness.

Therapists can be found at [eagala.org](http://eagala.org) or [eponaquest.com](http://eponaquest.com).





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## CANINE-ASSISTED THERAPY

The use of therapy dogs can help regulate and pace the therapeutic process. There is no certifying body for canine-assisted therapy, but there is a list at [akc.org](http://akc.org).





## ECOTHERAPY

Ecotherapy is simply the process of incorporating nature into therapy. There is no certifying body for ecotherapy, so look for standard mental health credentials.





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## FLOWER ESSENCE THERAPY

Flower essence therapy combines the power of nature with flowers' ability to resonate with the body. Rescue Remedies can be found at [directlyfromnature.com](https://www.directlyfromnature.com).



**PART 3: HOW TO TAKE  
CARE OF YOURSELF AS THE  
SUPPORT SYSTEM**



I DRUG MYSELF  
OVER HIS  
JAGGED EDGES.

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Resentment and co-dependency  
built up between us.

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My mental health severely struggled,  
even for years after our relationship  
ended.

# I DRUG MYSELF OVER HIS JAGGED EDGES.



Resentment and co-dependency built up between us.



My mental health severely struggled, even for years after our relationship ended.



I could have been a better support system for him if I took better care of myself.

# HOW TO KEEP YOURSELF SAFE

YOUR MENTAL HEALTH  
MATTERS, TOO.

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- Have someone else hold the space for you, too.
- Remember that you are not a therapist, so don't try to be one.



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## TAKE CARE OF YOU!

Make sure to take care of your own mental health by asking for what you need and getting support from a therapist.

# THANK YOU!

PLEASE FEEL FREE TO REACH OUT WITH  
QUESTIONS OR TO GET A COPY OF MY SLIDES.

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