

Sophie Gray: Rethinking our mental wellness journey

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SPEAKERS

Sophie Gray, Katy Weber



Katy Weber 00:00

What were some of the signs that led up to you first suspecting that this was ADHD and kind of walk me through your diagnosis journey and when that happened?



Sophie Gray 00:10

Absolutely. So you know, that it's like ADHD, I think I know you talked about on the show, but that just like would never have crossed my mind because of, you know, the overactive little boy kind of reputation that I had gotten. And that was really not what I was like growing up. So that wasn't ever a part of my parents thought, like, they would never have imagined that that's something that I would have been diagnosed with. And it wasn't actually until, you know, it was this year, like in 2020, where I was going to a new therapist, and I was really actually going to her specifically to talk about my work habits, because I was really struggling with how I was working, and I needed to have the TV on and then sometimes I would be locked in. So I'd be working, you know, without moving from like nine until nine, so 12 hours straight. But then the flipside of that would be other days, I couldn't even write an email. And it was that hard time, like the struggle I was having with doing basic tasks that was like, I can't open my mail. I can't send an email, I'm pushing all of these things off. So when I had finally gotten to her and really explained these work

behaviors, my therapist was the one was like, have you ever gone and looked into ADHD and look to get the diagnosis, and I just really hadn't been something that was on my mind. And then when I had looked it up, I was like, oh, and it was like, an explanation of all of these things, both personally and professionally, where even my family is like, Yeah, that makes so much sense. So it was just this like, aha moment for why I am the way I am.



Katy Weber 01:53

Yeah, I know, right? There's so many seemingly random struggles in life that all kind of come back to this diagnosis in such a neat little package. Sometimes I feel like it's almost too good to be true. When I think about all of the different things that somehow relate to it. Like even last night, we were making dinner and my and I brought bowls over in my head when my husband was dishing out dinner for all of us. And he was like, You love bowls, don't you? And I was like, yeah, you know, that's totally an ADHD thing. We're like, you eat out a bowls instead of plates. And he was like, all right, like, just like weird things like that, where you just feel like so much of this diagnosis explains so many things.



Sophie Gray 02:35

Mm hmm. Yeah, I absolutely relate to that. That's every I feel like every aspect. I'm like, Oh, okay.



Katy Weber 02:41

Right. Understood. But I also feel like it's kind of, it's so difficult to explain to people to what it is, especially with women, sometimes I feel like we are all just living experiments, because there's so little that's known about how it, how it exhibits itself in adult women. And I feel like we're uncovering so many interesting things along the way.



Sophie Gray 03:06

I was like reading this, you know, thread on Twitter, ADHD was actually trending, I think, like, a couple weeks ago, and people were like, Oh, you could just say anything's ADHD. And it's like, Okay, sure. But that's not that's not what's going on here. And you know, if you have, if you struggle opening mail, that doesn't mean you have ADHD, if you like bowls, that doesn't mean you have ADHD, but it's the other pieces of the puzzle. That it when you look at your whole life. And it's like, again, that aha moment versus, you know, I personally had a really hard time with, like, using it as an excuse. That was never my intention. And I have very actively in my life, avoided diagnosis that I know, I could have

gotten and could get around my mental health. But I've really wanted to stay away from that, because I didn't want to get I didn't want to feel closed in by that. But I was really surprised that with the ADHD piece, it actually was more about giving myself permission to not be so hard on myself for behaving the way that I was like that I do and that I had been. And it was actually really freeing opposed to being this diagnosis that you know, I feel like if I got diagnosed with my eating disorder when I had one like that would have been very scary for me. And that wasn't what happened with ADHD one, which I find very interesting, huh? Yeah, that's



Katy Weber 04:27

a good point. how, you know, I think Ned hollowell talks about that, too. Whenever I've heard him in interviews, he talks about how it's a good news diagnosis versus bad news, diagnose and kind of what the difference is between those. You reminded me of a post you did recently about like the the struggle you had when you first were introducing yourself as running a Mental Health Network and how you're like, Who am I to run a Mental Health Network? I you know, it was just such a beautifully articulate post about like, those of us who struggle The most wanting to help people like if you really stop and think about it, it actually makes a ton of sense that you would run a Mental Health Network, but that your default was like, Oh, I should have everything perfectly together. So when you look back at your life, like, where are you? What was what were you like as a student? Were we like, as a kid?



Sophie Gray 05:18

Yeah, you know, when it came when I kind of like reflect back because I actually saw this really interesting posts that was about like how diagnosing ADHD, especially in adulthood, like a lot of it comparing to like your child behavior, as opposed to like, what it is for you at least that was my experience that a lot of the questions in my diagnose like, with a doctor or like me, like when you're a child, and I was like, Well, I can view it through the lens now, but like, Is there not a version for adults, like it was least my experience was a little strange in that way. But when I think when I was thinking and reflecting of how I was in my youth, and you know, when I think about school, I am not academically inclined, I'm not the book smart type of person. And I had to try really hard. And you know, I did great for the first month of every year, and then I was over it, and I was, I was not into it. And it just wasn't what I was interested in. And I think that's a big part of it. If I'm not interested in something, it may as well not exist to me. And there was no part of school that was intriguing to me, or like a particular area, I guess, other than writing that I really thrived in. And they're the one thing my mom does say is that she was like wondered if I had like some type of defiance disorder. Because she was like, you just put in like, people telling

you what to do was like, No, she's like, we'd be standing in line. She was an example we'd fly to to Scotland where my parents are from. She was like, we were in like, Heathrow Airport, which is not in Scotland. But you were like, stand like, everyone, there's this massive line, and your sisters are standing perfectly in the line. And then you're like, so why are we waiting? Why do we have to do this? Are we sure like, Is there not another way to do this. And this is like me as a seven year old, like trying to think of my own ways to accomplish things that is faster, and will get me what I want quicker. And I think of the example I worked in it in a seniors home when I would have been 14 to 16. And they had like three hour shifts. And in Canada, you have to work for three hours, or you can not work for three hours, but you still have to get paid for three hours. And I remember that, okay, we had these like layout tasks, and I would be more efficient and go quicker and get things done. Like, I don't I guess I viewed it as better. But I created my own systems rather than the systems that they built for us. And it took me two hours and I be I can't do anything. And they're like, Well, no, you have to stay over three hours. And I'm like, but I did what you did, you told me to do. And I did it better. So I want to leave. And it was always more so that the structure is being imposed in me, that makes me very uncomfortable even till today. Like I don't love to do lists, because then I have to do them. And someone even if it's the list telling me I have to do it, that does not work for me. So that's really where I think that it showed up for me. And then in the in my later like you fears it definitely came in from an insecurity, low self esteem that was like, really, that's where I became really, really hard on myself, which was interesting to learn that that can also be when the condition is undiagnosed, that you can lead to that low self esteem, which was, again, a really nice kind of release for me to realize.



Katy Weber 08:39

Oh, yeah, I mean, I feel like I spent so many years feeling filled with depression and anxiety and being medicated for depression and anxiety, but also having this like additional layer to it, which was like, What is wrong with me that I am depressed and anxious. You know, like, I don't have a bad life. I don't have a reason enough to feel depressed. You know, like, I was constantly like, judging my own depression and anxiety and feeling like this just isn't it? Like it just never felt like it was the right explanation. And then I always sort of felt like, well, if this medic, maybe the medications not working, maybe I need more, you know, like there was always this sort of sense of tweaking, but also feeling like, like, I didn't have a reason to be this depressed, you know, like that, that just didn't feel like the definition that I was looking for the answer that I was looking for. Mm hmm. I'm curious with your parents and your siblings to your sisters. How many of you are there and like, what's it been like since your diagnosis to talk to them? Are you are you cuz I know we tend to like over analyze every family member.

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Sophie Gray 09:48

Yeah, you know, I have two older sisters. So I'm the youngest of three. I was like four years younger than my middle sister and then six years younger than my old The sister so that's quite significant when you're young. So I very much, you know, of course, I wasn't an only child, but I had that type of relationship in particular with my mom, like, my mom is my whole world, and I just love her so much. And still, to this day, we're just so similar. And I just, I love that relationship. So, you know, when I look at their behaviors, I see aspects of other stuff that maybe not necessarily the ADHD, but when I kind of told them, You know, I, I'm not like pretty keep to myself within my family dynamic, but you know, I'm kind of just like, Oh, this is what happened. My parents were more like, my parents with a lot of guilt, because they were like, okay, but how, like, why, why did we not miss this? Like, they're like, there was none of these behaviors. And I really felt for my mom, because she, like, in some way thought that that was her responsibility, like letting that slip? And I'm like, No, absolutely not. And I had showed her this article, that was like, girls my age, I think it was in the 90s were like the last generation with ADHD, because that's when, like, kind of gay nor, like new people knew about it, and it kind of became popular air quote. So I was like, but it manifested differently. So walking her through that. But then I think it's kind of just like, the way I communicated it to them was I was like, well look at these types of words that you use to describe me. So like, the joke is, like, I'm super aloof in the family and super disinterested. So like, I am just like, I'm there, I show up and like I participate, but if I'm not super excited about it, then like, they just know, like, okay, so it's just gonna be whatever, and not super engaged. And then now I have the language. And again, not an excuse, that's, again, something I'm still working with, but the language to communicate why, and that it's not like me being a shitty sister. And like, now what I'm doing is like, I'm putting everyone's birthdays in my, in my calendar, and people's anniversaries, because I just don't, I don't remember those things. I don't I am. So in my own world. So I think using it as a way to explain that behavior, which, you know, my middle sister in particular, like, I think has some issues with and the type of she's like, if we were friends, we wouldn't be friends anymore, because I don't communicate, and I go into holes and I disappear. So it's been, like, nice for me to be able to use that as like a tool to communicate. I'm not doing this intentionally. I just genuinely do not think of these things, because my brain is wired differently than yours. And that I think, at least for me, has been really freeing. And they are so responsive and supportive, and like, great. But it was it wasn't really a big conversation. It's just kind of when you know, they might be kind of ragging on me for something I say, Well, let me just explain that to you for a second. So yeah, I think it's, it's been positive overall, but they're just like, okay, make sense. And then just before?



Katy Weber 12:53

Yeah, I have two older brothers. And they both were very high achievers in school and scholarships and Ivy League and my mother had no idea what to do with me I did terribly in school. And I think it was she thought it was a miracle I ever even went to university at all, much less graduated and, and so like, I've wanted to talk about this with her so much she passed away a few years ago. And like, she's the one person who I just felt like, she probably was just as confused as I was like, they really didn't know what to do with me growing up. And so it was interesting telling my brothers and being like, you know, it's genetic. And so you might want to you know, if you're interested or have any questions, let me know, I don't want to insinuate things but you, especially you, the one of you, you need to look into this. There is something Oh, about not using it as an excuse. But an explanation I think is so sums up like so much of what is transformative about this diagnosis, which is really like, feeling like you have words to explain. behaviors that felt like they were rude, or you were just like, Look, I'm not an asshole, I promise. Look, but then at the same time realizing like, look how hard you work to do things that come easily to other people. Like, look how hard you have to work to be on time. Look how hard you have to work to remember birthdays, you know, all of that stuff that I never even I never even took time to acknowledge, you know, like how much I had worked so hard and like, yeah, like, you know, I'm always fascinated when I talk to women about being late because I feel like it's like a 50/50 split with ADHD or some ADHD is chronically late. That's just how they are other ADHD years, like me, are always on time, usually early and can't do anything leading up to that appointment. Because you become so focused on that appointment. And that idea of like, my point is, I feel like I have a lot of empathy for people who have ADHD and are being late, but I also feel like very like you said, like, very mindful of like, there are certain behaviors that I just don't want to do in my own life. And so these are the ways in which I work really hard to not do those behaviors. And I kind of feel like, I get torn sometimes with like, you know, is this are you using this as an excuse? Or is this a way that you can kind of build from this explanation, ways to help yourself? Like, where does it, you know, like, normalizing lateness? I don't think is the answer. But at the same time, like, we could all really benefit from having more empathy about why people struggle with certain things. And



Sophie Gray 15:36

yeah, you know, when it kind of comes to even like, the birthdays, I had, I really struggled because I was like, Am I not thoughtful person, like, Am I so self absorbed, that I'm missing these things. And, you know, it was it will be as simple as me, I think I need eight, I have it on the day, but I think I need to put it a week before as well to be like, get a gift. Because that is also a piece that I'm just like at and then I don't care about that type of stuff. So

then I just kind of put like, well, if I don't care, then you won't care. And I think, you know, there's, I want to be thoughtful, I want to get gifts for you know, my, my family, not everyone I know. So yeah, it was like, okay, that's an easy tool for me to add into my life. And so being you know, understanding, it's like understanding of yourself, but then also the the norm and then how other people will interpret that. But what I really struggle with is like, and what I always kind of enforce with everyone, maybe particular people in my family, too is like expect expecting others to act, the way that you act is always a recipe for disaster. So okay, this aspect of this, like your anniversary, of course, is super important to you. And that's great. But like, Is that going to be really important to everyone else, or seeing someone and having weekly check ins with them is super important to you, but is that how the other person wants to communicate? And that's kind of like, I'm huge on boundaries. Like, I'm huge on boundaries, because I've never done things I don't want to do, I'm actually like, on the other side is like, I also have to like, be mindful of like, No, I don't want to do certain things my husband wants to do, but I want to be a good partner. So I'm going to, you know, accommodate him because I want to be a good partner rather than me just like ignoring my boundaries, because I'm like, I would say no to everything. And I have feel no particular way to that. But it's like setting people's expectations of reminding them that just like because that's the way they act, and the way they expect you to act doesn't mean that you have to live up to that. And that's like something that I like, continually come back to because I'm like, again, I will be considerate, but that doesn't mean I'm going to bulldoze my life to accommodate how you expect me to behave. And that's like, you know, been something that has been a really good learning point for me ADHD related and otherwise to like, set that. But then also, the ADHD side of things is like, okay, I can't say no to everything if my husband wants to go for a bike ride, and then I say, I should probably say yes, one out of five times, if I don't even what I don't want. You know, I don't need to go every time but, you know, that's also there's a two way street in some parts of it. But there isn't another as if that makes sense.



Katy Weber 18:24

Oh, yeah, that's such a delicate dance to have, like you're saying like, things that are not important to me. I it's really difficult to be able to tell if it's important to somebody else. And I think it's probably why we struggle so much with a female relationships, especially, which is like I was I, you know, I didn't text you enough or you reached out to me three times, and I didn't reach out to you and you we've now I've ruined everything. Like there's always this feeling of like, I haven't done what I'm supposed to be doing as a friend.



Sophie Gray 18:57

Yeah, I feel like in protect, like, I get so extreme about things and like, they'll be

relationships I'll have in my life that I'm like full force all about I'm there I'm showing up and there's other relationships. I like go through seasons of things. And like it's kind of like if you're I don't want to say obsession. But if you're my latest fixture, I will still of course like respecting boundaries, but like I am there I'm responding I'm with it. But if you're not like my mind has nothing to do with me liking you less. You if you're not top of mind for me, you don't accept like, even situation they don't exist. They're not on my radar. I am like tunnel vision. I always say I'm like the horse with blinders things on that I'm just like looking at what's in front of me. And I can't see anything else that's around me. And yeah, that is really difficult with relationships and particular female relationships. But then there's other side that like I'm also then so sometimes so insecure of like well is This person like mad at me or something like that, but then I also like go to don't not caring. So it's a very, like conflicting all over the map. And like, of course, depending on situations and people but that's I think the roller coaster of like the opposites of ADHD even because there's the hyper focus, and then there's a lack of focus and you're like, the one extreme to the other, which is interesting to navigate,



Katy Weber 20:24

right? And why so many of us, I think, initially think we have bipolar or relate to bipolar, or because our whole life is such a pendulum of opposites working against each other. I definitely feel that that struggle when it comes to boundaries with family, like extended family, like there's my close family members who are everything to me, and I will obviously drop everything for them. But I like, I come in really hot with like strangers on the internet, where I'll be like, super into somebody, and I will drop everything if somebody messages me. And it's like, they're asking me for help or something. And I'm like, Can you recommend so and so and I'll spend like three hours googling resources for a random stranger so that I can help them. But then, like, a cousin will reach out and be like, do you have time to chat? And I'm like, no. And again, like, I'm sort of like, where does where does extended family fit into that I always really struggle with boundaries when it comes to that, because I'm like, I feel like you have access to me in a way that I'm not comfortable with. And so I think that's another thing with relationships, too, which is like, feeling like somebody else views you differently than view, view them and then having to deal with like, a lot of the guilt about that, which is like, I don't feel close to you. And I probably should. But I get the sense that you feel closer to me than I do to you.



Sophie Gray 21:42

You know, that's actually I, the concept I view that through is like, I think there's so many people that think they have a right to my time, I have massive problems with that, that is

a big theme actually in my life right now. And then like having a large channel. People think they have access to me, and they don't. And that really, really bothers me. Even when like, with dive through and hiring. It's been really weird to kind of see those boundaries that I have very firmly established cross by people I don't even know. And then it immediately puts me on like, how dare you think you have the time to meet like time, that my time is a requirement to you, I am so willing to offer mentorship and to offer feedback into do all those things, when it's someone isn't expecting you from it and like that, like, I feel it's like an invasion on my space and my boundaries. And that feels just so uncomfortable. Again, expectations, not even authority, but like, it's basically like, here's like the rope that you have to follow, like and stay within this kind of restricted field of expectations, just like that is, I would say super triggering and like the one thing even right now that I get, like super defensive about or when people like don't clearly lay out expectations before something. And I'm like, Well, I need to go into this fully prepared for like every scenarios. So I just think it's that like kind of coming to ADHD, at least from my perspective, it's almost like that sensitive, like that sensitivity to things being slightly off and like not knowing what you're getting yourself into at least like, I don't know, maybe that's an ADHD thing. Maybe it's not but at least that's a theme in my life right now. That is just like been so important for me to like, fully know what I'm walking into. So when I don't I get like totally thrown off and it's just not good for me and like the boundaries that are so important to me.



Katy Weber 23:44

Yeah, that's fascinating. I can't even imagine what you must deal with given the running a company First of all, and but also just like the social media presence and following I mean, I have such a meager social media following and yet like I get so worked up over feeling constantly, like people have access to me in a way that I'm not comfortable with. I can't even meet it must be like a full time job.



Sophie Gray 24:09

Yeah, I like lately, at least I just when I have too much input. When I have like too much Pete like too much like, Oh, I need this, I need this, like so many people like coming at me. I really struggle with that. And like it's completely different for my team. Like I have all of the love and compassion and time for my team. And we have such a great internal culture that I even actually said we do on Fridays. We do daily gratitude, or weekly gratitudes professional ones. And my professional gratitude this week was I really appreciate that they allow me to show up, as I am as like a pretty scattered founder, which you know, is partly because I'm so busy, but also partly because of my ADHD and the way that I function and everyone in my team is so respectful of my boundaries, and I'm just

appreciative of that. But then, you know, what kind of works me up about, dive through growing and everything is like I'm so willing to put the hard work in. But truly, the requirement of my time being demanded by more and more people more and more situations, more and more project does truly bring me so much anxiety. Because like, the last thing I want to, like out feeling out of control is like, literally the theme of my life. And like, really what's triggered a lot of my problems and came a lot of the trauma that I have. And you know, maybe I'm still sensitive to that, because of the diagnosis that it just like, completely throws me off. So yeah, the the constant input, and then the constant like, need to have my attention everywhere is like something that I'm actively learning to navigate, you know, this is just a theme of when we're having this conversation, but maybe in a month, I'll work through it, I feel, that's my startup journey, that I struggle with something for a few weeks, like really, really badly. And then I like, put in the systems I adapt to how I need to adapt to things. So that's always like, something I'm so grateful for, without, like, self awareness, and reflection is like, learn what works for yourself. And then approach that with every situation and hardship that you're facing, you know, again, ADHD triggered or not, but that, like, it's so important to always be prioritizing yourself, like, I'm the queen of that, and I feel no shame or guilt about that.



Katy Weber 26:30

Yeah, and I think also just really, like appreciating that kind of rapid fire pivoting as something that is a strength and realizing that yes, there is time, or there is an importance to consistency, and there is an importance to kind of follow through. But those are things that you can outsource. Those aren't things that you need to focus on, like, why am I not doing those things like really, like leaning into that, that's manic energy, I think has been a big shift for me and why I've felt like such this Phoenix sometimes of feeling like, since my diagnosis, just feeling like I'm starting life all over again, you know,



Sophie Gray 27:18

I'm just like, such a, such a big fan of like, play to your strengths and understand your weaknesses. You know, in business setting, when you're building a company, unfortunately, you have to wear all of the hats, that's just, you got to do it, if you have the means to outsource, whether it be like, you know, for some tasks here, you know, getting someone to clean your house or, you know, having someone do administrative work in your, in your business, that's amazing to be able to do that you have to kind of like learn to not when you can't financially afford that. But I feel very fortunate to be in the stage where I'm able to, not all the way but step into my strengths and like run with that. And you know, that kind of the chaotic energy of the creativity and the that the moving so quickly. Really, I

feel like I'm finally I'm like, okay, I can kind of return to that. But having this like last, I would say like your has been like, wearing all of the hats, being operational, doing the follow through and all of that. And I'm really grateful to have like, forced myself to do all of those things, and then learn that I don't want to do them and then being Of course, in the end a place to not so I know that's a place of privilege in your personal or professional life. But knowing your strengths, and then just admitting your weaknesses, whether you're able to outsource them or not. But you can identify that and be okay with saying, you know, I'm not good at numbers. I am not good at bookkeeping, and that's okay. You know, I'll do what it's necessary until I can get some support in there. But even just acknowledging what you're great at and what you're not so great at is such a weight lifted rather than pretending that you have to be good at everything.



Katy Weber 29:00

Yes. Yeah, like outsourcing could be as simple as frozen dinners. I think that we would have so much pressure on ourselves, like you said, to be good at everything. Okay, so So, talk to me about dive through. I want to find out like, I want to hear more about kind of how that the kernel of the idea and the birth of it, and it just feels like it is growing and growing. And it's such an amazing network. But how did it? How did it start in your brain?



Sophie Gray 29:30

Yeah, absolutely. So it's so funny. I think when people talk about like, oh, like, Oh, that's an overnight success. It's like, Well, no, that person was doing it for 10 years before you heard about them. And I very much can that obviously dive through has been fully breakthrough. We're very much on our way. But when I kind of think I'm like, Wow, I've actually been working on it for four years. So kind of a quick history to that. So I in my first business had built an audience of over 500,000 people Under the Instagram handle way of gray, where I was talking about health and wellness, but through the lens of physical health, not really understanding that a lot of what I was talking about was really problematic was, was fat phobic was classes was ablest was all of these not great things, it's like just a complete lack of understanding of my own privilege. And, and within that, I also was really struggling personally with my own mental health. And it always been something throughout my entire childhood that I had struggled with, from unfortunately, self harm and attempted suicide that, you know, I just pretended to nap. And it was fine. Everything was fine, I was cool. I built this large audience at 18 1920, I had built successful business with it. And then I had a panic attack on an aeroplane and it all came crashing down. So I was coming home from New York, flying into Toronto, and then would have been Toronto to Edmonton, which was a four hour flight, but had a panic attack on the connecting flight and had to drive across the country. So in that experience, I continue to have panic

attacks for the whole drive and really realized that I had been neglecting my mental health for my entire life since you know, when it started when I would have been around like 10 and 11. So I took a lot of much needed time away from work completely. I didn't think I was taking time away. But I really was like now that I reflect, you know, I tried to do other things to try to scramble, but nothing really panned out. But it was really me like working, going therapy, working with a journaling. Medication isn't a part of my journey. Because I actually am terrified of taking anything, even even supplements. So I'm getting medication, like literally, I wish I could, I've just like have a fear of medication, which then doesn't let me manage my symptoms through that route. So I'm the biggest fan on medication. And we took it would take it if I didn't have trauma around drugs, unfortunately. So I just really worked on my mental health. And throughout that process at that time, like this would have been 2017 all that mental health was in the kind of mainstream was self help. And I would sit in a spare bedroom in my house and I would read all of these self help books, and they left me feeling so empty, and they left me feeling like something was missing, and that I was in on a secret. And they were actually not very helpful. And they were really damaging. And I have a big problem with the self help industry because it's just this cycle of unqualified people offering advice in like a really big in a really big ways. So I took really personal problem with that, then I was like keep but no one's talking about this. Like concretely. It's like, you'll be fine, manifest all good, good vibes, toxic positivity. And it's like, well, no, I am struggling. And I need someone to, I need to know what's going on within my mind. And it really dives really started from that frustration of there was never tangible and accessible mental health education. Now when I say accessible price point, but also like jargon, because that was the other side of things. There was this dominant self help space. But then there was this clinical mental health space that was filled with language that I didn't understand there was just unaccept I just couldn't I couldn't get it. I couldn't grasp it. I couldn't see it for myself. So really, from those kind of two perspectives, I was like there needs to be a way to communicate mental health from licensed professionals. And there's a time and place for everything, but then offering this education and this understanding of how like how people are doing and being honest of like, this sucks. It sucks to wake up every day, wanting to stay in bed, it sucks to have panic attacks every night, and be terrified, be terrified in your own mind. And I wanted to have a really candid conversation with that. So you know, I started really focusing on journaling that was really the tool for me that was that main thing again that I latched on to as ADHD people do. So dive through actually started as workshops, I would do journaling workshops, and then it started as like a PDF that you could download journaling exercises on and then it became a journaling app. And then today and really in the last year year since the pandemic, what we really expanded into and became is This Mental Health Network and ultimate hub, that we work with licensed mental health professionals, we work with people that are having conversations in the mental health space in a, in this sort of way where it's a really honest

and real conversations about people's experience rather than just being like, go and worry, just, you know, practice your gratitude and you'll be fine. Well, no, I won't be. So like, we need to talk about it. So you know, there's a lot of, it's actually this last week, I've been really connecting with why I sort of dive through just because what's been going on? know, there's been some stuff in the self help space that's been happening. And it's really kind of like, reignited that passion, to offer psychoeducation. And then, like, normalize the conversation around mental health. So that's our two goals. And we do that through podcasts, that we work with incredible people like yourself or podcasts. We also have articles that are written by our internal team, but reviewed on by mental health professionals. And then we have a mobile app that ties everything together from a feeling tracking, to journaling, exercises, articles, courses, and all that good stuff. So just really wanting to help people dive through what they're going through. Because that's what I needed to do, I could no longer pretend I was fine. I had to truly face it head on and dive through what was in front of me, which was not fun at all.



Katy Weber 36:28

Such a good name did that just like pop in your head one day?



Sophie Gray 36:32

Yeah, you know, I am in love to this day with the name. There's kind of multiple meanings. And I love telling people because it's really kind of funny. So we're really, it took me probably six months, it took me six months of me journaling. And like I can't wait to like, you know, one day like look back, like I look on back on the journals all the time. But you know, when dive through really becomes what it's going to become like look back on those reflections, but had all of these names. And I remember looking at it recently, and like the words dive were somewhere through with somewhere, so it was always there. But I was driving and I had like the name come to me. I pulled over because I wanted to check if the URL was available. And it was which was really exciting. where it comes from. So I think about what's like it signifies a society's need for convenience is a drive thru. That's the perfect. And now I guess it's skipping its delivery apps out Uber Eats and such. But you know, at that time before those were popular, going through a delay, like a drive thru was the quickest way you could get what you wanted. And working on your mental health is not quick and not easy. So I was like, I wanted to kind of have that play on words. Another side also my like I mentioned my family's Scottish. So I say, like, come through the living room to my husband. And he's always like, no, that's like not he's like, what am I coming through? Like, there's no doorway. Like, that doesn't make sense. But it like does in my family, like come through here or come through into the living room. And it like my husband like, thinks it's the funniest thing ever. Because he's like, That's not right grammar

or whatever. Like, it's just know how you say that. So then it's also a loving dig at him. Because I say through all of the time. So just diving through and yeah, heading face on. So multiple meetings. And I just I'm still like in love with the team, just like my me patting myself on the back for that one.



Katy Weber 38:35

Oh, you should. It's brilliant. It's great. And oh, man, there was so much in there I was taking notes. So like, I love what you say about about having the conversations and that kind of candid exploration versus self help industry. And that idea that somehow out there are like a set of rules. And if you just follow those rules, everything's going to come into place. And I think so many of us feel that way of like everybody got the manual, but me, you know, that idea of like, there's something I'm missing, there's something I still need to be doing in order to reach that epoch of happiness. And if I just figure out what that is, I'm going to get there. And that's just like, the opposite. You know, the more you focus on that, the worse it is. And so for me like with this podcast, that was like a real realization for me just because I had this journalism background, and I and I realized when I was diagnosed that, that I was learning more I was learning so much about myself and kind of like so much of this diagnosis. And so much of the treatment, I think for ADHD is that understanding of yourself and understanding how you tick and that idea of like the being able to explain things to yourself in a way that makes you feel good about the fact that you are who you are as opposed to feeling terrible about who you are. And so for me, it was really just like, I you know, I realized that the reason why I love interviewing people so much Because I learned so much about myself. And that that's, you know that there's something so beautifully symbiotic about these, these conversations where I can ask people questions, and they can talk, share their journey. And then I just learned so much about myself. And then I'm like, now there's this extra element of people are actually listening to it and learning about themselves. And like, it's just, the whole thing just feels so magical to me. Basically, that idea that like, really exploration and conversation is how we are going to heal ourselves, not by chasing the set of self help roles. It's really just like understanding who we are in that organic, a wonderful, intuitive way that we are all different, and that what's going to work for me is not gonna work for you, etc. But like, how can we still help each other in that symbiotic way I was why I was like, so drawn to dive through and just your, your, your, your vision and your eat those.



Sophie Gray 40:57

And like, honestly, when I think about the self help my self help Phase I was that was when I was the most depressed I remember sitting up in our spare bedroom, and I just why keep I

mentioned the bedroom, like I just because it's so vivid for me. And I remember, I would sometimes be in there for three hours during the day, because again, I was kind of between things very unfortunate that I had that that time. And that was a privilege. But I would just sit and cry all day. And I would be so I was so truly depressed, because I was just like, I don't have all the pieces, something is missing in me. And I'm just not getting this from these books that I'm like, oh, people are gonna be reading them and they're gonna be like, fixed. And that was that I was trying to be fixed. And even when I like look unfortunate, like yoga, like, I also had a yoga phase because it was all what I was, again, or what I was about where I did it every single day, like for multiple hours a day. And it was like, I was trying to fix myself and that that's what the industry wants you to think is possible. And that is some serious bullshit. But when we come from a mental health education, and then these types of conversations, that mental education is meant to be like, okay, you're not broken, a, but b here are, here's why. Here's maybe what's going on physically in your mind when you're having anxiety, like, here's actual the physical symptoms, or here's what anxiety means, how it manifests, all of these things that to know them is very empowering. When I, when I learned that anxiety was not just stuck in my mind, but there was actually chemical shit going on in my head, that resulted in physical sensations that was so empowering for me to learn. So when I'm in anxiety attacks, I can walk myself through it, because it's actually not this not daunting, my mind isn't breaking type of thing. But then the flip side, and what we're doing here and having people listening to these stories, is so powerful, because you know, you don't wish negativity or a mental health or mental illness on anyone. But you know, they have it and talking about it and hearing other people's seeing yourself in those stories, hearing yourself in those stories. That's what's powerful. And that's what's so magical. When we actually rather than pretending we have it all figured out. And one person has all the answers and we're just all like sitting listening to them, what we can do instead is, is just connect over those shared experiences. And that is literally what we're wired for, like wired for connection. And I think that's just so powerful. And like, again, I get wired up about the self help stuff, because it took so much from me, and made me so much worse, and then then pointed the finger at me like I did something wrong. And that's just not okay. And like, not regulated either. So yeah, a lot of problems with that, right.



Katy Weber 43:55

And so many fascinating parallels between that and the diet industry as well. Like a whole other



Sophie Gray 44:02

beast, like we didn't even, like that was my that was my background dye culture.

fatphobia like, I had no idea. And you know, I always think and like I was given a lot of space to figure those things out, because it was brought to my attention, that I was engaging in those behaviors and then encouraging them and other people and then I corrected with the support of other people calling me into it to know how negative and harmful that it was. But, you know, people just can continue to perpetuate it. And people are trying to like draw attention to these things and people are choosing to actively ignore them and ignore the harm that they're doing to themselves and to others and like I obviously have a problem with that. But yeah, like shit diet culture, again, it's so and I'm not sure like my ADHD journey has manifested through hyper focused on one area and then the other and then I just keep on moving on. I truly don't feel like I'm hyper focused in something right now. And I think That's because I can like burnt myself out from just hopping from one trend to the other. But then when you actually reconcile with yourself, like within the end, I think the ADHD comes into that, then it's kind of like helps you not hyper focus and latch on to things as much at least that's been my experience.



Katy Weber 45:19

Yeah, I'm curious, I'm always fascinated to talk to women who have were diagnosed like 20 years ago to sort of see like, what is the kind of timeline of your own self understanding over a long period of time, because I feel like, for me, it's just been this constant pattern of realizations, since my diagnosis of like, all these things that were happening in my life that I'm looking through with this new lens and I'm I am getting into the sense of just like a calmness, like you said, where I can kind of understand and harness things in a way that feels manageable to me and like, Am I ever going to come to a place of inner peace? Probably not, because ADHD, but but like, yeah, like, I can see the ways in which my sense of hyper focus changes, it's almost like, you know, like maturing in some in some ways, you know? But yeah, like that, just that overarching feeling of like, if something is not working for you, it must be you who's the failure not the system, I think applies in so many aspects of our life from diet culture to business to friendships, you know, and and that be the biggest mental shift is realizing that like no, by default should never be I am the failure with my default should be this system is not working for me. So let's change that. Absolutely. So, so looking back now, like, what are some things about the ADHD that you love the most? Or, or even like, What? How do you want it to be viewed, I guess, in the mental health realm? Because I think there are still so many misconceptions. And even just that idea of like, oh, people with ADHD, they're poorly behaved, or they're squirrels are, you know, all of these ways in which we just want to kind of pigeonhole it?



Sophie Gray 47:11

Yeah, I think, you know, I hear there's a lot of people that say, like, oh, ADHD is my superpower. And, you know, I would definitely align with aspects of that. But then I think that neglects the real struggle that so many people face, because there is, I there's different versions, and at least for my instance, like, I am a hyper focused person. And that is like, my number one symptom, I, I don't view myself as restless, I don't see myself as, like, just having so much energy that I can't sit still and I, I have so much sympathy for individuals facing that, that is very hard to navigate this, this world with, because it's not set up for you. So you know, I'm always mindful to say, like, I guess what I would want people to know is that everyone's experience of this is still so different. And being compassionate with yourself. That's like the, that was, what this journey has been for me, and what is something I've been focusing on before with the ADHD even happen, but is being compassionate and understanding of myself in my situation, and you know, doing the best when I can, but then being okay, when you know, I'm not able to do X, Y, and Zed. So, you know, I want to, for some, I just want to stress some people, and they get the kind of, I don't want to say the good end of the stick and if it ended this day. But it again, it manifests so differently, but then also we all respond to things differently. I would say I'm not the most resilient I hadn't, I haven't previously been the most resilient person. So a lot of trauma that I faced, you know, someone else being like, that's nothing like I had actual problems, air quote, but we all handled trauma differently. We all handle our ADHD differently, and just, you know, not not listening for absolutes, not listening to my story, or your story or the stories of other guests and being like, great, that is me. And that's it. And I'm going to listen, I'm going to follow this person and I'm going to know everything they've done. And maybe that's me knowing our ADHD tendencies that we we latch on to things so, you know, don't do that with other people. And what's most important is to connect with you and how you feel and experience this diagnosis. So but then, as an entrepreneur, when I explain why I've been successful, it's been because my ADHD I did a lot of mentorship. I do mention of all the time, but really last summer in particular, and I would explain people that go like what's your kind of like number one tip for success and I would explain I'd be like, okay, so when I want to learn something, let's say it is Google AdWords. I will Go into a borehole for two weeks, and then I will emerge and I will know everything. And that's what I was suggesting to these young people not knowing at all that that was like not normal behavior. This is my life. This is why like, I attribute that to my success in life that I haven't learned something, someone say something, I'll be like, okay, we'll be right back. And then two weeks later, I'll be like, so now I'm an expert. Because I just have 100 tabs open, I'm scanning every single thing, I'm buying 10 books on it, and then skimming them because I can't even concentrate on words I can't read. Because I can't look at individual words, I need to like scan and just go so quickly. So which is so funny when I like explain that to my therapist, she's not probably the healthiest behavior to be telling people and I like went back to all of them if you like, just by the way. Whoops. But as an entrepreneur, like I think they say, like 80%. And I don't actually I'm not

going to say a percentage, but a super high percentage of entrepreneurs are have ADHD. And it's just make sense, because we're just so difficult.



Katy Weber 51:07

Oh, I know what it was. Yeah, somebody forwarded that to me, with a last couple of months, like an Instagram post, it was like, did you know that? entrepreneurs are 10 times more likely to have ADHD or to suffer from ADHD and I was like, suffer?



Sophie Gray 51:26

suffering, it's much more suffering when you are in a nine to five situation like, right, exactly. That is that is the suffering because someone telling me that I have to work between those hours? No, that's not going to happen. For me at least again, everyone's different. So congrats, if you're able to do



Katy Weber 51:47

I know we're getting on in time. So did you come up with a different name? If you could rename ADHD to something?



Sophie Gray 51:53

Oh, yeah. I love that. I was thinking about it. And I was like, if I could name ADHD, something I don't know I want it's almost like something that you take. I'm almost say it's like, and then it like, shows your Oh, I don't know, I don't know what I was. Like, it's kind of like when you take if you were to take the drug, and then it just like, but it's like, what, what is the end goal going to be? I don't know. That's like me rambling? I don't know. What I do know is that if I were to describe a theme for people struggling with ADHD, I would say compassion. That would be self compassion, self compassion solution would be my ADHD name that you need to focus on. So I'm not answer to that question.



Katy Weber 52:44

I have no answer for that question. And I asked everyone else because I'm mostly just crowdsourcing and like, some, one of my guests was like, I don't know, what would you call it? And I was like, I haven't thought of it. Here, you ask my own question. Like, I couldn't possibly that's it. That's a meme of like, I can't even begin to start thinking about it. Otherwise, I will just ramble for two hours about all the different possibilities. So I'm not

even gonna go there.



Sophie Gray 53:08

Yeah, yeah, I can. I know, I just saw this thing that was like, okay, cool that it's a superpower for you. But it's not for me. So I've always just been so mindful, like, the way I discuss it, because, yeah, previously, I would have been like, Oh, it's a superpower. But no, I don't use that terminology anymore. Again, because everyone's just this interpretation of it's just so different. Right? Yeah. And I do you know, I



Katy Weber 53:30

do talk about my own sense of like, rebirth and feeling like my, my self talk is so different, and I just am so much more of a positive person, but I also I have an aversion to that, that term superpower and kind of, yeah, the way it can be so defensive. So then, so how what do you see? What's your vision for dive through? Next because uh, you know, I like to talk about how like six months in ADHD is like six years. So yeah, things happen really fast. And, and I feel like dive through is like, I know, it's not an overnight success, but it certainly feels like it is. There's so many places and so many directions you can take it in it must be dizzying. So what are what are your thoughts for what comes next?



Sophie Gray 54:19

Yeah, yeah, our internal kind of culture is like, one one week year for eyes. It's like, it's like a full month like we we move so quickly. And you know, maybe that's a little on my shoulders for being that type of person. But with dive through, I really I want us to be the place where anyone listening here can come and feel seen and heard and supported and, and gather the necessary education and tools to support themselves with her with her mental health. And I say that knowing you know, therapy medication, of course, like that's we we have so many resources about that. Exactly. To You know, empower you to make the decisions for yourself. So just really being that ultimate hub for people to turn to for their mental wellness. And a big aspect of that is programming. So having more in depth programs on different very various things in life from hood to just anxiety, depression, but just, again, more resources and places for you to connect and feel seen and heard.



Katy Weber 55:28

I love that. And I think it's so important to have like a trustworthy place where you a hub where you know, it's been curated, you know, where you can kind of trust that that

content is looking out for you and that it's not going to be, you're not going to get blindsided.



Sophie Gray 55:45

Totally, totally. And like we unhelpful, right? Like there we have, we work with licensed mental health professionals, all of our contents reviewed and approved by them. So really making sure that we're giving that helpful and licensed support and education, but still, therapy, if you can medication, if you need always like to really reinforce that we're not replacing that, that is an aspect where one part of the journey and multiple pieces come into play. So I would like to really stress that whenever I talk about it.



Katy Weber 56:21

Yeah, that is a good point. Also, well, thank you so much for spending this time with me and sharing your story I was. So looking forward to this and hearing more about you and what you're doing is just amazing. So thank you, Sophie,



Sophie Gray 56:36

thank you so much for having me and for everyone listening. So thank you