

Izzie Chea: ADHD & mental health in Latino culture

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SPEAKERS

Katy Weber, Izzie Chea



Izzie Chea 00:00


You know, the popular song we don't talk about Bruno? Well, I sort of look at Bruno as a metaphor for mental health in the Latino culture. We don't talk about Bruno because Bruno is bad. Bruno is someone we put away. We don't talk about these things in our culture. And the stigma is still there today.




Katy Weber 00:27

Hello, and welcome to the women and ADHD podcast. I'm your host, Katy Weber. I was diagnosed with ADHD at the age of 45. And it completely turned my world upside down. I've been looking back at so much of my life, school, jobs, my relationships, all of it with this new lens. And it has been nothing short of overwhelming. I quickly discovered I was not the only woman to have this experience. And now I interview other women who like me discovered in adulthood, they have ADHD, and are finally feeling like they understand who they are and how to best lean into their strengths, both professionally and personally. Before we get started, I would like to share with you this review from listener cookie mom 67 on the Apple podcast platform, it's called I found my people. I came across Katie's podcast at a time when I was realizing how much my ADHD affected my life in ways I had never attributed to ADHD, validation of my feelings and fears by other women who were experiencing the same things was exactly what I needed to hear. Thank you, cookie, Mom, you're my kind of mom. You know, when we think of the 1000s and 1000s of negative messages we've heard in our childhood to try harder or get organized or just be better, it makes sense why validation and approval are so important to us in adulthood. So I'm so glad these conversations and interviews are helping to do that and make all of us feel less alone in this ADHD journey. And as a woman with ADHD, I know just how much it takes to remember to stop and log into your podcast app and scroll to the review section. And then try to articulate what you're feeling and put it into words. So I truly appreciate the effort it takes to write a review. And I keep asking for them because it really helps so much in getting this podcast noticed and found by the other women who could really benefit from hearing these interviews. So if you're a listener of this podcast, and you've been


helped by these conversations, a really lovely way to say thank you is to take a moment and leave a review or even just go hit those five stars. It really makes a big difference. Okay, here we are at episode 93. In which I interview Izzy Chia is a Chia is a Dominican, Mexican American creative music educator, storyteller and mental health advocate. After a late diagnosis of ADHD at the age of 35, she took her talent for content creation to Instagram where she has experienced tremendous growth through reels expressing with incredible relatability and honesty what it is like to be a newly diagnosed neurodivergent woman as a music educator is he operates a very successful YouTube channel providing engaging virtual piano lessons to all she is currently pursuing her alternative certification to teach music in Texas Public Schools is he and I talk all about the stigma around mental health in the Latino culture, as well as the concept of masking in society, the workplace and around our families. We also talk about the power of social media and the importance of creating communities for ADHD women where they can be their weird, wonderful selves together without any feelings of shame or guilt. Without further ado, enjoy.

 Izzie Chea 03:30


I'm so glad to have you here.

 Katy Weber 03:32


I've been waiting for this for a while I'm really excited to finally get to hear your story because I feel like I know you so well. It's so funny how we have these relationships with people via Instagram and social media where I'm like, I feel like I know you but I also kind of, I'm really excited to get a chance to just sit down with you for an hour and really, definitely talk and pick your brain.

 Izzie Chea 03:53

Yes, I'm excited to it's a long time coming. A lot of your podcast has really helped navigate my ADHD journey. So I'm really grateful to finally be on the podcast. Oh, wonderful. Okay,

 Katy Weber 04:06

cool. Okay, so let's get started. I'm going to ask you, first of all, how long ago you were diagnosed and what was happening in your life that you started putting those started connecting the dots and thinking I really should Irish really should look into this.

 Izzie Chea 04:24

Yeah, so I received my diagnosis in October of last year. So that's 2021. So I'm a new diagnosis. I think it's been about what, six or seven months now. And yeah, my story that led up to my diagnosis is not uncommon. I will say that I was a pandemic diagnosis. But I initially had sought out mental health services because of extreme burnouts and anxiety. And I didn't quite understand what it led to having so many problems as a result of the pandemic. I mean, it was,

you know, a complete, you know, House of Cards falling, when the pandemic hit with both of my boys going from being in school, and then being home immediately, my husband not going into the office anymore. And then I had to shift my business completely. I'm a piano teacher and a music educator, I would be considered back then your friendly neighborhood piano teacher, that all the kids would ride their bikes to my house and have piano after school. But that all changed. And, you know, it really just left a gaping hole in what systems I had in place to manage daily life here in our home. So with that, I was falling and falling further and further away from what I was comfortable with. I wasn't seeing people as often, as you know, with like social isolation due to the pandemic and things like that. A lot of the uncertainty also gave me tons of anxiety, you know, trying to avoid getting sick and things like that, and keeping our elderly family members from getting sick. So, so many things just compounded and having to shift my business from completely in person to completely online, just added to the amount of stress and almost like a double edged sword, like I got to use so much of my creativity. But it was also so much pressure to keep it going. Because I had such a dramatic loss of income at that time. So yeah, you know, it just kept going and kept going all through 2020 school year and summer 2020. Once I got into the fall of 2020, my husband and I made the decision to pull both of our children out of public school, and homeschool them full time. So you can imagine how that compounded with everything else just added to that giant pile of responsibilities and roles and things that I had to be in charge of during that time. And little by little, like I said, I kept falling lower and lower and deeper and deeper into that hole. And things just hit a breaking point in May of 2021, where I was experiencing extreme burnout, to the point where I was having crying spells daily, just unimaginable depression, I had fear of doing regular things like running errands to the grocery store, I was afraid that if I got on the highway, this was going to be it an 18 Wheeler was going to hit us and we were just going to die, every little thing that I was doing. It was just putting me in a state of panic constantly. So with that, I made the decision to seek out mental health services. So I went to my primary care provider who's a lovely doctor, very, very affirming and listens and does a wonderful job. And I just told her how I felt, you know, I took a couple battery tests and things like that. And she you know, determined Okay, well, you have severe anxiety and depression as well. So she went ahead and prescribed me some an antidepressant, anti anxiety medicine. And I had never taken anything for my mental health before. So I had that, you know, internalized stigma, and feeling like oh my gosh, I'm a failure because I have to take medicine now. So trying to just get over that mountain was a struggle enough. So two weeks after I had gotten my prescription, I finally decided, Okay, I will try this. So I tried the medicine and nothing happened. Nothing happened. I, I almost felt worse. It wasn't the right medicines. And I told myself, okay, I'll give myself two months to try this. And if nothing's working, then I'm gonna go back to my doctor and tell her I need help. This is still not helping me. And at that point in time, I think it was closing in on like the first month of taking medicine. I was like, if this isn't working and I'm still having problems, then what the heck could this possibly be? I had no idea where to turn or begin. So I just started typing my Symptoms and trying to research on my own. And I had seen a few things on social media that were resonating. And I did have a couple of Facebook friends of mine who have ADHD. And they post regularly about their experiences, I started to relate to one of my Facebook friends posts. She's also a music teacher as well. And she was, you know, talking about her experience through the pandemic as well. And I was just resonating with a lot of what she was saying. So I figured, okay, well, this is random. But let me just look up a little bit more about ADHD. I had no idea that it could be diagnosed as an adult, I had no idea that there was such a stark contrast and diagnoses in boys versus girls and women. I didn't know any of this, I had no knowledge of this before. So as I, you know, dove deeper into ADHD, and realizing that maybe perhaps this is what I'm dealing with instead. That's when I finally mentioned it to my primary care provider at my follow up. And she was very curious, and didn't necessarily have ADHD on her radar for me, because she had seen so many women dealing with anxiety and

depression heightened during the pandemic. So she really appreciated the fact that I did some research, I did my own journaling and things like that, just to have a more retrospective view of how ADHD may have been presenting itself in my past. And she went ahead and decided, you know, I may not be the best person to diagnose and treat you for ADHD, but I know someone who can. So she sent me to a PhD behavioral nurse practitioner, who was also an ADHD specialist. So once I finally saw that doctor, she was phenomenal. And I actually shouldn't use past tense, she is phenomenal, because I'm still seeing her. It's incredible to be able to have neuro affirming providers that listen, and that really care for their patients. And the fact that she never ever took anything that I said and tossed it aside, she took what I said, she looked at my journal, she listened. She took everything that I presented to her as evidence for her reports, and figuring out my diagnoses. So after three months of working with her on various appointments, and interviews and journaling, she did come to the conclusion that I had inattentive type ADHD, which made perfect sense. Everything that I had gone through ADHD provided a textbook clinical answer to what I was going through. So that's my very long and colorful journey to my diagnoses.



Katy Weber 13:29

I'm so glad you had a positive experience I did as well. And it wasn't until I started this podcast and really heard from other women about their own experiences of being minimized in the doctor's office, how rampant not only how rampant it is, but also just that, that cycle of being dismissed as being depressed and anxious. And that's it, you know, and being turned away and how that level of dismissal is so damaging when you have ADHD, right? And how it's so important for clinicians to realize how curious they need to be, I guess, or you know, like how damaging it can be to sort of decide on on behalf of the patient what they have done. You know what I mean? Like, yes,



Izzie Chea 14:18

absolutely. I agree with you there. I think that providers have a ton of power in really transforming that doctor patient relationship, when they actually take the time to listen and affirm their patients. As a patient, you know, we're coming to them in a vulnerable position, wanting their expert opinion on what we're going through and listening to stories of patients. We should be listening, and really understanding that these are our experiences our lives To experiences and they're 100% valid, we may not fit the criteria for your ADHD textbook, young, hyperactive boy, we may not. We're women, we're complex and beautiful creatures that are experiencing life through a different lens and just being able to understand and accept that, you know, we may not be the typical presentation will help keep us going on that ADHD journey, hopefully a positive journey.



Katy Weber 15:34

Right? Yeah. Now you have a you have a graduate degree in Psych in psychology, right?



Izzie Chea 15:39

I do. Actually. It's funny. Yeah, my bachelor's degree is in psychology and human development

100. Actually, it's family. Yeah, my bachelor's degree is in psychology and human development and family studies. And my master's degree is in industrial, organizational, psycho psychology. So it's a little different. It's like psychology of the workplace psychology of organizations, as a whole. So you could tell the elements of like, human behavior has always been of interest to me. But when deciding my graduate degree, you know, I wasn't totally sure if I wanted to become a clinician myself. So I figured it may make more sense for me to be able to apply, you know, my studies of human behavior to a larger setting. So I got to practice that in my, my work when I did work. Not as an entrepreneur, I worked in employee training. I also worked in leadership. So you know, just trying to apply my expertise and my knowledge to organizations was, was an asset to my organization when I was working there. So yeah.



Katy Weber 16:59

Is it surprising to you, with your background, how little is known or talked about in the medical profession about ADHD, and neurodiversity?



Izzie Chea 17:10

You know, it's something that, definitely, I feel like there's just a big hole in the literature and the research, especially when it pertains to women and our experiences, you know, something of interest that I know many, many people have talked about before is experiences of neurodiverse women in the workplace, and in corporate America, and things like that, it's their, their experiences, you know, a lot of times they can be written off as too emotional, or too bombastic or too impulsive, in when it comes to working in that corporate environment, that patriarchal corporate environment, that's that's perpetuated across the, you know, actually across the world. I know my experience in working, I absolutely was written off as the to emotional one. And called out it was actually very, a very damaging experience to me as a professional. Because all I did at that time was point out weaknesses in one of our programs, right? But I managed to do it in an environment full of men, that they were just not happy with the fact that I had the guts to point this out, even though that was my job. They just didn't like to be called out. But part of that I'm sure my delivery was full of lovely emotional words and things like that. But, you know, with ADHD, and undiagnosed ADHD at that point, I had no filter when it came to finding these weaknesses and presenting them because I thought, Okay, this is exactly what they want me to do. I'm telling them exactly what the issue is, how to solve it. But they weren't comfortable with it. So it's just, it's funny how those things work out.



Katy Weber 19:22

I know, right? And that's why I get so I feel like a broken record when I talk about this on the podcast about you know, what are what are we even talking about with ADHD? Because so much of it seems like it only affects you negatively when you're in these environments where you have a failure to kind of stay in your place and conform and and go with the flow and you know, all of these ways in which we like I you know, I talked about I love the newspaper industry, I felt like it was perfect for my brain. It makes so much sense why I was a journalist and how much I loved about it, but I often would leave a newspaper every two years because of some outburst or some conflict. With a boss, you know who and I would just like couldn't handle it anymore. So much incompetence here or there, you know, and it was a lot of that, like you said, that impulsivity and the inability to not authentically share my thoughts about things. And

but a lot of the time it is, you know, when you look back and you think about like children and the classroom and then being in workplace environments, where it's like these, the it's the inability to kind of stay in line a lot of the time, right, and then we ended up being labeled with a with a disorder as a result.

I Izzie Chea 20:34

Right. Yeah, you know, and a lot of it's, I felt was, that was my attempt at the time to unmask in an environment where I felt that my expertise and my professionalism was valued. When it was a, you know, a ruse, right? They, they didn't provide that, that environment where it was safe for me to unmask, even though I perceived it as a place like that. So after an incident like that, of course, as an ADHD, or you are afraid to unmask, then, so you just you put it on even tighter, and you just say, Okay, that was a bad idea, I'm not doing that anymore. And then you fade into the background again. And, you know, you know, your potential to help so many different things. But if you're not comfortable in your own skin, it's really hard to just be yourself. And it's unfortunate that many, many workplaces don't provide a safe space, to unmask and to be your full, authentic self,



Katy Weber 21:52

and why so many of us end up becoming self employed. I'd like to take a moment to thank better help for sponsoring this podcast. If you're a regular listener of this podcast, you know, I am a big proponent of therapy therapy provides me the best opportunity for verbal processing something that is so important for my kind of brain and my sense of self. What I love about BetterHelp is that it's not a crisis line, it's not self help. It is professional therapy that's done securely online, from the comfort of your home, they assess your needs, and match you with your own licensed professional therapist, and it's available for clients worldwide. So you get access to a broad range of expertise that might not be available to you locally. It also tends to be more affordable than traditional offline therapy and financial aid is available. If you visit their website and read their testimonials. There are actually quite a few reviews that specifically reference help with ADHD has a special offer for listeners of the women and ADHD podcast, you'll get 10% off your first month, simply sign up at [betterhelp.com/women ADHD](https://betterhelp.com/women-ADHD), that's BetterHelp help.com/women. ADHD, and there's a link in the show notes. This podcast is sponsored by BetterHelp. With your background in music, and I know you come from a very musical family, like it must have been so fascinating to you after your diagnosis to go over your the, you know, the go over your whole life the way we do with this new lens. And so I'm curious, not only you know, what are some of the things that you look back at and think Oh, my goodness, the signs were there all along. But also, you know, looking at your family members, like how have you talked about it with your family? And what has their reaction been? Because I'm sure it's probably all over the place in your family as if you come from musicians. But yeah, look at what are some of them? What are some of the things where you look back and you're like, oh, yeah, the signs were there all

I Izzie Chea 23:40

along? Yeah. You know, the growing up in a very traditional Latino Catholic family. It was very hard to express any sort of issues with emotion, mental health, any sort of differences that you may be dealing with a lot of times, you know, there's there's a couple sayings in Spanish, you

know, that, you know, they perpetuate in our culture, and one of my friends, Andrea recently reminded me of a very popular one it's called Gaia. Lita is moss Bonita and Gaia. Lita means silence. And Bonita is pretty right so Gaia the that is Moscone. If you're silent, you'll be prettier. Right? It's like the ability to be yourself is not necessarily something that is encouraged in Latino culture. They want you to work they want you to keep a perfect house. They want you to do everything you can to keep a good family life and Anything that goes beyond that, or outside of the norm for our culture is, is completely dismissed or put away. I like the movie and Kanto for this reason, you know, the popular song, we don't talk about Bruno? Well, I sort of look at Bruno as a metaphor for mental health in the Latino culture. We don't talk about Bruno, because Bruno is bad, Bruno is someone we put away, we don't talk about these things in our culture. And the stigma is still there today. Even now, like, there are families out there that they don't even want to think of the idea that their child might be different, or outside of what is acceptable in our culture. So it makes it very hard to be yourself to be an authentic person in our family even and that's really hard. You know, in my family, in particular, mental health was not something that was ever talked about, ever, right. So, you know, when I was starting to deal with all of the issues that I had, as a teen, you know, all of my emotional outbursts, I had terrible emotional dysregulation, I was going through disordered eating. You know, really, lots of trouble with rejection sensitive dysphoria, I just was having such a hard time. You know, it was chalked up to Oh, it's hormones, and she needs to go to church. So you could probably imagine that, you know, my relationship with the Catholic Church is not really there anymore, because it just I just have such a negative association with what they represent, at this point in time, but our culture is, is a beautiful culture. I will say that, you know, we're very loving, like fiercely loyal people. But a lot of times, you know, the stigma and the heaviness of mental health issues. You know, if that loving, safe, supportive environment was there for something like mental health to have that that trusting relationship between children and their parents or their grandparents, I feel like we would be doing so much more healing. Before you know, things get to a point where it explodes. Right. So that's definitely something that was prevalent in, in my background, probably one of the most telling signs for me for ADHD. Growing up was the fact that I went to three different universities and changed my major, like seven times. I started out as a music major, of course, with my background in music, I began piano when I was four years old. My mother was my first teacher. And I, I would be considered a third generation piano teacher at this point. But even though I started as a music major, I could not decide what in music to do. So I started out and auditioned as a flute, major flute performance. And then I decided, okay, I don't want to do flute performance anymore. I'm going to switch to vocal performance. I said, Okay, well, I auditioned and I made that I got into the vocal performance program. And then I said, Wait a second. This is gonna be really hard to sustain. So let me switch to music ed, music education. So I switched. And then I just could not figure it out. I couldn't decide. I ended up leaving that university and moving back home switch to another university. I figured, okay, well, what about something like Spanish? I can do Spanish business Spanish or something of the sort, right. So I started doing coursework in Spanish. And you know, I did fine but I was not happy. At that point in time. I took a sabbatical of course like because what Who doesn't take a sabbatical when you are as indecisive as an ADHD are in college. So I took a year off and I moved to Mexico. I lived in quote Nevada, in the state of Morelos, which is about an hour south of Mexico City. And I taught English and I loved teaching, I realized that I had a natural affinity for educating I just really was very highly invested in the student, the learner. I love the process of teaching. And I really enjoyed seeing them light up when they had Cheap, something that was like, the best feeling in the world. So with that experience teaching English in Mexico, and after I ran out of money, I took a one way ticket back home and I decided, okay, well, I have no idea what I want to be still. But I know I want to help people. That was like the general umbrella. I want to help people. And I'm pretty good at this teaching thing. So with all the colorful courses and coming from all different universities, I

ended up at the University of Houston. And I opted for a psychology degree with a minor in Human Development and Family Studies, which I thought was actually appropriate because I was again, fascinated by human behavior, the brain, I loved my abnormal psych classes, personality, Psych. I just had a really good time. Developmental psych, I learned about twice exceptionality. I learned about ADHD, I learned about autism was very fascinating things. So with that bachelor's degree that I finally earned, you know, I felt like I was in a good spot in terms of the degree. Now in terms of a job, I still had no clue. Well, my first job out of college was quite interesting. I was actually a rehabilitation specialist for the blind and visually impaired. So I worked at the lighthouse of Houston. And I, I loved that that approach, working one on one with a visually impaired or blind person at a client would come in needing some training on assistive technology or screen reading technology. And I would help them learn the the keystrokes and the patterns and everything that they needed to do for vocational training or work in school to do their schoolwork. So that was something that was very rewarding. I could go into all the different jobs that I've done, but But yeah, they it continues on from there. That's when I finally made the switch over two, working in human resources and employee training, and then pursuing my master's degree, so



Katy Weber 32:31

So are you still homeschooling because you have to How old are your little ones? They're pretty small still, right?



Izzie Chea 32:37

Yeah, my youngest just turned six, and my oldest is about to be nine. And they are not homeschooling anymore. After my burnout last summer, my husband and I made the good decision to put them back into public school, which I think was timely and appropriate. They have blossomed tremendously in school, they love their teachers, they've made some good friends, which is what I was mostly concerned about, was making sure that they had that exposure and the chance to, to have friends and to have disagreements with friends and and see what it's like working with teachers that are not your mom. So they're thriving, they're doing very well.



Katy Weber 33:28

So I'm curious, do you think either of them have ADHD? I know what because you know, so many women come to their diagnosis through their kids. I wasn't one of those women, neither are you. So I'm like an all I do is watch my kids be like, is it isn't it? Is it?



Izzie Chea 33:42

Yeah. So after I received my diagnosis, and I started hyper focusing on ADHD and learning all I could about it. My husband and I both recognized lots and lots of traits in our eldest son, specifically in a ton of traits, not keeping focus, daydreaming constantly. executive dysfunction, we tried to give him chores and tasks broken down into micro steps to try and get him to complete those tasks, taking abnormally long time to complete certain things. And so that sort

of sparked his diagnosis journey. And we talked with his pediatrician first. And I mentioned my diagnosis, which she was fascinated about and seeing how my diagnosis sort of led to us journaling and figuring out that he was also presenting as inattentive type as well. So that's sort of led into pursuing a 504 for him in school. His teacher also completed her part of the assess Meant for ADHD, the Vanderbilt assessment. And she agreed wholeheartedly with that same conclusion. She's a 25 year veteran teacher, and she immediately knew, she says, I am so happy that you are pursuing these things for him, because this is only going to help him in the future. So good on you, Mom and Dad for working hard to support and advocate for him. So she was a wonderful second grade teacher to work with. And she absolutely with our 504 meetings, was able to work on making those accommodations necessary for him in his class. He's not medicated, we don't have plans to medicate him until it's absolutely necessary. And I think that's the right decision, since we're just now getting our feet wet in the ADHD world for him, so Oh, and for me, too. But, you know, for him, especially as a child, he's still figuring things out trying to find what strategies are working for him when it comes to schoolwork and social life and things like that. So but you know, it's fluid we're working, and with his pediatrician, and probably his third grade teacher coming up, just to make sure that he's got everything that he needs to succeed. So



Katy Weber 36:26

yeah, I know, right? So much of this is advocating and teaching them self advocacy and right, yes. When I was diagnosed with ADHD, it completely turned my world upside down. I looked back at so much of my life, my grades in school, my multiple careers and hobbies, my friendships, my marriage, motherhood, my relationship with food, and my body, like all of this with a new lens. And it was overwhelming to say the least, if you've been diagnosed with ADHD, and you're feeling blown away by this new insight into your brain and how it operates, I totally understand I can help you begin to sort through this chaos, explore who you are and how your brain operates. So you can finally start to lean into your strengths and begin to use them to your advantage moving forward. Together, we can work to identify what obstacles you've been facing, and create strategies to help you start living a more fulfilling gratifying life, head over to women and adhd.com/coaching to book a 30 minute initial consult with me. So we can figure out if my brand of one on one coaching is right for you. Again, that's women and adhd.com/coaching. And you can find that link in the episode show notes. Okay, so let's talk about your Instagram account. Because, you know, I sort of feel like you've said to me in the past that you sort you started it as just like a way to, for you to do research, right. And I kind of relate to that, because this podcast was the same way I started this podcast, because I was like, I want to learn about ADHD, and I want to find out other people's experiences. And then I was like, Oh, my goodness, people are actually listening to this. And, and so I feel like it must be fascinating to you to kind of have this platform now from this journey of self discovery, self realization, and now becoming this voice. For other women. It's,



Izzie Chea 38:17

it's, it's quite cool. It was never the intention, as you very well know, I started that my Instagram account is D and ADHD. As a purely research based Journal of digital journal, if you if you say, to document what I've learned, and sort of treat it as like a, like, I'm an ADHD school or something, right? I love little projects, I you know, I'm one of those forever student types. If I could be a professional student, I would, I would just go to classes and just write papers, like


that's just how my brain operates and things like that. So when I started this account, it was being treated as such. So anytime I would learn something, I would say okay, well, the best way for me to show that I've learned something is to present it in a fashion form or fashion. And in this case, my chosen medium was the reel. So 15 to 30 seconds, I would record something. And I would just write those strategies or those tips or those things that I had learned about that specific chosen topic and present it in a way that was catchy, easy to remember, and may help in the future, right so I could reference it later. Well, apparently the way I have constructed these reels is also very helpful for other People Surprise, surprise. So my reels caught on very quickly. I mean, my account is only six months old. And you know, I had some good growth at the beginning. That was consistence. Very a nice little climb, right. And then when I got to, I think it was the month of February, or maybe it was March, I think it was March, I had explosive growth, exponential something like, you know, my reach was going from, like, 200,000 to 2 million. It was just something I had never had before, right? I was I kept telling myself like, oh, this would be great if it was on my actual business page. You know, I was like, every now and then I'll type in like, go like, my, my actual business. So but every now and then, you know, people pop in, they're like, oh, you're a piano teacher. That's awesome. And then they'll go over there. But yeah, you know that the ADHD account was never meant to be the platform that it has become, but just realizing that the way I present this information, and my personal experiences with ADHD and symptoms, it's so relatable, that I've found it almost to be a responsibility to keep it going. Because we learn new things every single day about ourselves, we have experiences that we wonder, Oh, is someone else going through something similar as me, and you want to be able to honestly present that in a way that another person could find solace could feel less alone. And with the creative explosion of something like reels, it reaches so many people who may be looking exactly for the type of creator that I am. I'm a no frills, Texas entrepreneurial, ADHD, mom, Latina. And I don't hide any of who I am. What you see is what you get. And, you know, just keeping the authenticity going, I feel is, is important, just to give people the courage to be authentic themselves, and embrace what newly diagnosed neurodivergent feels like, you know, you want to be able to wholly accept who you are, you know, without any sort of doubt. So, I just tried to communicate that, to the best of my ability.




Katy Weber 42:48

It is so empowering and freeing, right? I mean, first of all, it makes sense to me, as a teacher that you have sort of used this medium as your motivation to learn, you use teaching as your motivation to learn, right, which is so fascinating. And I kind of relate to that, too, with as a journalist, one thing I always loved about interviewing people and writing about a topic was that like, I had to learn as much as possible in a very short period of time about something. And then I had to be able to explain it to somebody who maybe had never heard of it before. So I had to be like, really kind of get to like, what is the meat of this topic? What's the hook, what's really the most interesting part and I loved, I loved everything about it. And it was an excuse for me to learn random things. So I love the fact that that's kind of your motivation, because that's also something I talk about with my coaching clients a lot, which is, like, you know, getting in touch with what's going to motivate you. And I always use the example of the time lapse cleaning videos where I'm like, you know, people use time lapse cleaning videos to clean their kitchen, and then they post them as though it's a service to other people to watch them clean and being like, watch me clean. And it's like, I mean, great, it's interesting and fascinating that you're cleaning, but good for you for figuring out a way to clean your own kitchen, which is like I don't want to clean my kitchen. But if I turn it into a real and a production and make a caption and all this stuff, it's gonna get me to do that thing. And so I'm like, whatever works, right? Just figure out how you're going to tap into whatever motivation you need to do those

things. And so, but it's also but like you said that then people are relating to that authenticity, which I think can be so empowering like I just when you felt your whole life like like a hot mess and then you talk openly about what a hot mess you are and people relate to that it's so I just feel like it's like everybody benefits right? I know a lot of people do get kind of negative comments and trolls I'm always surprised at how few I get but then I've also kind of put up like I don't let people comment on my stuff anymore unless they follow me because I'm so tired of all of that bullshit love like the you know, all of those comments of ADHD isn't real and all that stupid stuff. So I don't I like put up a lot of boundary His, my content, but I think like, for the most part, it's been it's like it's hard to it's so rewarding right? To be able to share these parts of yourself that you might have otherwise hid for a long time and shame and to be able to help other people to feel better about themselves. Like it's yeah, it's it's incredible.

 Izzie Chea 45:21


Yes. Yeah, you know the the trolls exist. But I have experience with trolls from my YouTube channel and teaching piano. Really? Yes, surprisingly, you know, they, they find a way I had to stop doing live streams on YouTube because I had people in a children's piano lesson coming in and like putting middle finger emojis and curse words, I'm like, this is a kids class, like, please go away. So I stopped doing live streams. But I was like, Yeah, I need to put up some very firm boundaries for my content. And, you know, with my ADHD page and my ADHD content, I think that's why a lot of times the comments and things like that are just like, roll off of me, because I'm just like, okay, and I took the opportunity, I think a couple months back to get some of like, the golden nuggets of like troll comments, and made a very funny reel about it. And, you know, it's like, if you're gonna send me that stuff, I'm gonna use it. And the more you engage with it, the more people see my stuff. So it's a win win for me. It sent me all you want, if you want, I mean, it either gets deleted or blocked, or I make something funny about it. So yeah, yeah, I

 Katy Weber 46:45

know, I usually delete them immediately. And then I'm, then I'm very grateful for poor working memory, because I don't spend, like, I don't spend any time thinking about if I delete it immediately. It's only when I like try to think about how I would respond to that, that it kind of like, I don't know, like, imprints on me. And then I ruminate about it forever. And so I'm like, my way of dealing with that is just like, nope, immediate immediately gone. immediately gone.

 Izzie Chea 47:09

immediately gone, immediately. Got it. And it's like, if you delete it fast enough, it's like it didn't exist,

 Katy Weber 47:15

right? I think so. Yeah, that's fine. It's like the five second rule was,

 Izzie Chea 47:21

there you go. We call it the five minute Instagram rule. If it's if the notification comes in, and it's something trashy, if within five minutes, if you delete, it didn't exist.



Katy Weber 47:31

I love that. It makes sense. So in addition to your creativity with this account, and I mean, it's sort of launching you you're doing, you're gonna, you've started a community, and are you doing some coaching, like what's changed for you this really is sort of, you're on this whole new path now as an ADHD educator and advocate. Right.



Izzie Chea 47:55

Yeah, you know, it's, it's been interesting, you know, since it's so new. And since I have experience and building communities, I have my very robust virtual piano learning community. I love discord, because it's off of your big social media platforms. If I can get it nice and cutesy and a little bit strange and fun, it just feels like home in terms of a digital place for me, so I did launch that community. It's sort of like a small membership program to I'm not offering any sort of coaching. I don't have any certifications for coaching or anything like that. But I am happy to refer people to very successful coaches that are out there. But my membership program is basically to help keep the community running, and to be able to incorporate guest speakers for my highest level members. So every month, I'm paying to get a speaker to come in and do a presentation and a q&a for an hour for my members on topics that may be of really big interest to them. And to have the access to that expert in that field is just something that gosh, it's it's really helpful. So that's sort of the motivation behind the membership program. as a whole. It's it's to create community, but then also to give access to some good resources in experts out there. So you know, it's less about me making money. It's really not it's just to run our community and more about getting them the resources that they need.




Katy Weber 49:47

So yeah, and you know, I talked about that all the time on the podcast about finding finding your community and finding your people is such a huge part of our journey in our in our treatment. And, you know, yeah, that's when I started, I started my online community for the same reason where it was like I'm meeting all of these incredible women, and realizing how that connection, even if it's fleeting, even if it's just like a one hour conversation, it's so healing, you know, just because we speak this language, and we share in a way that is, so we just like cut through the small talk. And we get right to like the trauma. And I just feel like I just want everybody to meet each other, right? Like, I just kind of want to would be able to sort of facilitate, even though ADHD women are often like herding cats. It's also like, I just, I just want to be able to facilitate a way in which people can come together and find those resources and have those moments of like, oh, my god, does anybody else experiences or you know, these like moments of panic. And I felt like, when I first was diagnosed, I joined like, every Facebook group I could think of, and was like, a, you know, always in there, and, you know, reading all of these things, and how realizing how much of my own learning was coming from those conversations, and not from like, reading articles in attitude magazine. I mean, attitude magazine is incredibly helpful resource. There's a lot there. But usually, it was like, you know, going down these rabbit holes and finding these conversations, and this shared how important


it is to feel like you said, like, we're not alone in these experiences. And we're not crazy. And wouldn't that. So it was only realizing, through my own experience after my diagnosis and all the things I sought out having to like, sit and think about, like, why I sought those particular learning resources out as opposed to, you know, I mean, I listened to a lot of audiobooks, too, and find the like, the Tracy Atsuko podcast was so formative for me in the beginning. But yeah, you start to learn, like, why are these certain resources more effective than others? Right? When and how am I as a learner? And yeah, anyway, so that's awesome. So um, it's fantastic that so much good has come from this diagnosis, right? Because I, I always say like, nobody, nobody comes to their ADHD diagnosis being like, my life is great. I wish I had a name for this superpower of mine. Right? Like, it's like

 Izzie Chea 52:19


that meme. It's like the dog sitting in the chair. But the house is on fire. And he's got the coffee mug, it says everything's fine. Like, it's like, clearly it's not. I know, right? Yeah.

 Katy Weber 52:31


Like, usually we're at where you did word of word, like a state of crisis or something. Yeah. So it is so amazing to see how this diagnosis can completely transform our view of ourselves, and, you know, even just sort of our next path or next, you know, where we go with that. So, I love to ask, you know, what, if you could rename ADHD to something that's a little less confusing, would you? Would you call it something else?

 Izzie Chea 53:00

Yeah, you know, I thought about this one a lot. Because all the acronyms and names that I came up with, were so long, and I was like, No, I can't, it's too long. I got to shorten it. So what I came up with was a tension and emotion regulation disorder. So the reason being, obviously, is attention regulation. A lot of times it's hard to prioritize our attention on the things that absolutely need our attention at that certain point in time, right? Same thing with Miss perception of time, right? I'm on a mission also to as an aside to change the term time blindness, because I find it ablest we're co-opting the term blindness from the blind community, and I don't think it's appropriate. So I like to use misperception of time. So when I refer to it in my reels and my posts, I always use misperception of time. I really

 Katy Weber 54:05

appreciate that clarification. I don't think it's something I would have picked up on. But yeah, I really haven't given your experience that's really important to know. And I really appreciate you bringing that up.

 Izzie Chea 54:15

Yeah, absolutely. With my history, working with the blind and visually impaired, I just want to make sure that I'm honoring that community. So go back to the naming, yes, emotion

make sure that I'm honoring that community. So so back to the naming, yes, emotion regulation. I like to include that too, because I feel like a lot of the bigger issues like RSD really are not given the focus in the name as much as it should have.



Katy Weber 54:45

There's nothing in the DSM about emotions.



Izzie Chea 54:47

I know. So I think it's important to name that because many ADHD, ADHD ears are dealing with such emotional dysregulation and rejection sensitivity it's such a big part in why many of us are people pleasers, why we have such terrible boundaries. They're all interconnected. So I felt that it was important to include emotion regulation as well. And then the term hyperactive we all know that hyperactivity can be external or internal. But I don't necessarily feel like it's as prominent in needing to be in the title as something like a 10. Attention and emotion. So that's my own interpretation. But



Katy Weber 55:37

yeah, no, I agree with all of that. And then the disorder part some, some people, women I've interviewed really want to keep the term disorder because of how helpful it is in terms of getting accommodations and sort of taking this seriously as something that can be incredibly debilitating when not treated, but at the same, but then there's the other side of the coin and which is like, this isn't a disorder, like this is just, you know, this is a neuro divergent brain. And, you know, why are we why are we pathologizing? Our weird and wonderfulness? So? I can't I see both sides.



Izzie Chea 56:16

me specifically, I think that keeping the word disorder is important. On the accommodation side, in the DSM, you know, I don't see things like phenomenon, or, you know, condition, like there's reasons why there are clinical terms in there is so that we are able to get the help and accommodations that we need. I don't take a big issue with the word disorder. It's the opposite of order. Right, you know, so as long as we are able to get the accommodations that are necessary for us to function in daily life, then I think that that's okay with me. So



Katy Weber 57:01

I agree. Yeah. Okay, so are you still teaching? How can people find you and work with you? And we've I'll put a link to your Instagram, obviously, in your community. But do you? Are you still taking new students?



Izzie Chea 57:15

Yeah, so how my virtual piano lessons work is I operate a Patreon page, you can search patreon.com/izzy_chia, and you'll find my programs that I teach from, I teach four different programs for very young children, children, seven to 12, and adults and teens. And I also have an intermediate series. And all of those lessons are connected to my YouTube channel, and my Discord server for virtual piano. So in terms of private students, I'm not taking new private students because I have a waiting list 75 people deep. So if you want private lessons with me, it might be around two to two and a half years before you can start, you're free to still be added to the waiting list. And I have people that are still actively pursuing that. But it might be a while. So the best thing to do if you want to experience my neurodivergent brain, my music education, passion is to find me on YouTube.



Katy Weber 58:24

That's fantastic. Gives new meaning to the friendly neighborhood. piano teacher right.



Izzie Chea 58:29

It's like my neighborhood has gotten so much bigger now. So still friendly.



Katy Weber 58:36

Oh my goodness. Yeah, I watched the video your introduction video on your music page about seeing all the kids at the end saying like we love you Misty. Yeah, thank



58:47

you. It was so nervous. It misses you. I love it. It



Katy Weber 58:50

was it was so sweet. It was really I mean you have I can see why they love you and why you are such a great teacher. You just have this such a relatable, friendly energy about you that is contagious. And it definitely comes out in your reels but in sort of all the all the different medium that you do. It's so it was very touching.



Izzie Chea 59:16

Thanks so much. Yeah, they, they're the reason why I do what I do, you know, seeing seeing their faces light up when they play through a song that they've had so much trouble with. And they just like, oh, they just burst with excitement. We have one second parties, we celebrate all the little wins that we have in our music. I've carried over one second parties to executive function issues here with ADHD. Like I started mentioning all that to my followers too. And they're like, oh, what does that tell me about a one second party? So I explained it in the

context of like, homework help for my ADHD son. You know, we incorporate these little tears and wins and have like the Cha Cha We have the jalapeno silly little things, but, but it helps you know, celebrating little wins is a big reason why we can be successful.



Katy Weber 1:00:12

Yeah. Ah, I love that. Well thank you so much for for sharing your story with me as I was so glad to be able to interview thank you



Izzie Chea 1:00:20

you so much.



Katy Weber 1:00:27

And there you have it. Thank you for listening. And I really hope you enjoyed this episode of the women and ADHD podcast. Also, you know, we ADHD ears crave feedback, and I would really appreciate hearing from you the listener, if you're a fan of the podcast, please take a moment to leave me a review on Apple podcasts or audible. And if that feels like too much, and I get it, then just take a few seconds right now to give me a five star rating or share this episode on your own social media to help reach more women who maybe have yet to discover and lean into this gift of neuro divergence assay, and they may still be struggling and don't even know why. And if you'd like to find out more about me and my one on one coaching for women with ADHD, head over to [women and adhd.com/coaching](https://www.womenandadhd.com/coaching) and you can always find that link in the show notes. I'll see you next week when I interview another amazing woman who discovered that she is not lazy or crazy or broken. But she has ADHD and she is now on the path to understanding her neurodiversity and finally using this gift to her advantage. Take care till then