CASAT Podcast Network.

Hello and welcome to season four of CASAT Conversations.

I am your host, Heather Haslem.

This season we will explore the impact of trauma on those who work in human services.

You'll hear from researchers, authors, and people with lived experience.

We hope you enjoyed today's conversation today.

We welcome Nick Brown.

Nick is a firefighter paramedic veteran and peer support specialist.

Nick is here to share his own personal experience with us and so happy to have you here today.

Welcome Nick.

Thank you.

So as we begin, um I'd love for you to just share about yourself.

Sure.

Um well really the what's really in focus for me right now so much is this uh second chapter in life and in career that I'm in right now.

So I'm I'm working as a firefighter paramedic in Tahoe and I'm just starting at a new department just this year and I took a a two year break or a hiatus will say from the fire service after a 13 year career and then a five year career as a combat medic or a hospital Corman.

Um so through those, that initial phase of career, um you know, experienced a heavy amount of um you know, post traumatic stress that I didn't understand, didn't know how to deal with.

And I did a lot of that, a lot of the classic mistakes that I think a lot of first responders do, where I I took that home and I internalized it and I um you know, I isolated myself and just believed that I could figure it out on my own and that everybody else around me would just adapt around me.

Um but that didn't work out well for me.

So it was really, I went through a divorce in, at the end of 2019 with two young kids.

Um had my, my family relocate to a different area.

Um and I just numbed myself with alcohol in a massive way and uh, you know, I just continued to just put my uniform on, go to work and um, you know, pretend like, like everything was okay.

Um while I was, you know, putting together this public appearance.

Um, but at home I was, I was a mess and then, uh, you know, in my isolation, it just deepened this depression that I was going through.

So I left the fire service.

I resigned at the end of 2019.

Um I started a business and tried to do some consulting work for myself on the side, just just prior to the start of Covid.

And then, um, you know, I weathered through the storm of Covid that um that everybody went through and, and my experiences were, I was coming into it with some pretty dark emotional experience already.

So, it was, it was just a little extra challenging for me during that time of, um, you know, really not having the support group, I had the fire service and um, you know, not having my family around me and I just felt very alone.

So, some of the darkest times for me in my life for sure.

Um and then really what I what I started to go through was I hit rock bottom and then I started to try to build myself back up.

So um during that, that time I, you know, I went through everything, I went through, started on an ss ri, I was diagnosed with depression, I was treated for PTSD.

Um you know, I started regular therapy, I would find, you know, first responder veteran retreats that I could go to.

Um you know, I even so I established a meditation practice and started to, you know, find some healthier habits for myself and I was looking everywhere.

I even found an ayahuasca experience in a circle um that I attended in Oakland, that was, you know, that was really beneficial and um but the biggest thing that helped me throughout this whole process to really start to develop a better self awareness and a better understanding of this unchecked post traumatic stress and you know, these emotional experiences I was going through was this group called Man Alive and was a domestic violence group that I volunteered into.

That was recommended to me by my therapist.

Um so the group work that I got to do with those men over a 52 week period um was really profound and it really set the course now for me moving forward and working as a peer support specialist in my, my side work from the fire service.

Um you know, help to build a better understanding of where I'm at now.

So flash forward to where I'm at now to answer the initial question of who am I and what am I doing now?

And life is um I am in a very uh working for a very outstanding fire Department in the Tahoe area and I am coming to this career now with such a better understanding of who I am and um I've developed a really a relationship with my emotional experiences and and that's what I want to continue to to pass on to other men in this occupation and help them identify some of the things that I experienced in my relationships and really there's a lot of tools out there available, but there's not a lot available to discuss what we bring home to our family, our partners, our Children.

So that's um that's now my, my passion and my focus.

So I'm curious um you know, you talked about now, you're really aware of the emotional experience of the work that you do and prior, it was just sort of uh stuffing it or internalizing it and not acknowledging it until it sounds like it erupted um in some pretty significant ways in your life.

Um And I'm just curious from a cultural perspective if um in first responder organizations, military fire etc.

If you've seen a shift right?

So you started your career what 15 years ago?

And I am curious if you were taught basically that to internalize and what that looks like now.

Yeah, I've seen a dramatic shift over the years.

Absolutely.

Um I believe when I started that I wasn't taught, but I was set, there was an example set that um you know, in order to be successful in this career, there was no room for um you know, expression of emotion.

There was, it was to be, you know, you gotta keep it together, you got to manage the scene and you need to be able to clean up and put everything back together and do it again.

And you also, I believe that the mentors of the leaders in my early fire career or you know, time in the military, um they believed that they were showing leadership by being a strong man that did not show emotion and did not um you know, that kept it all together and you know, I have a suspicion that you know, every one of them was was dealing with their own um you know, moral injury in their own ways at home.

Um but the shift that I see now is I believe that there's much more of an emphasis in peer support in, you know, the fire service and in the first responder community and there's there's more of an emphasis in checking in with each other and making sure that everyone is, you know, is fit for duty and mentally is mentally prepared and um you know the critical incident stress management that kind of work after an incident occurred that was really graphic or traumatic, that's that's been in place for some time now.

And that's a wonderful program that I've been involved with.

Um you know, and what it doesn't address though is the accumulative um stress and told that the body takes um at home just by you know, this internalizing all of that and having that adrenal fatigue and not knowing how to really process it through just talk.

And um so I see now that many departments are reaching out and building peer support programs, they are, you know, showing that there can be a lot of strength and there absolutely is a lot of strength in leadership by improving your emotional intelligence and I'm I'm always excited about, you know, when a new leader is a chief or you know, a captain is a person that's helping to foster this kind of change.

And I'm seeing it a lot, especially where I'm not currently um you know, just a really incredible support system throughout my my department, my crew.

So what does it look like um to have emotional intelligence in the fire service for you?

Well, for me, the way I look at it is that I would respond to these calls and there were traumatic experiences and most of the time we're meeting with, I would be meeting with the public on maybe the worst day of their life.

And it was there was tragedy and death involved.

And I'm seeing the, the emotions of their families and you know, just that experience, I believed that for so long that it wasn't healthy for me to really analyze that and what it meant to me.

I needed to just separate it and make, I really needed to objectify that patient or that person or that family member as just isolated to a call to a specific incident.

And then afterwards I needed to move on and make room available for the next or I needed to not allow that to cloud my own life.

So I believe that I shut off that emotional experience completely.

I closed it off and what that, that direct effect was that, you know, it shut off my emotional experiences with, you know, my, my partner and my Children and it really numbed me in a major way.

Um, and I've always felt a lot more, you know, that I believe that I, that I've experienced from my peers from the interactions with patients and I've always internalized and and really felt sympathy and felt empathy towards those people that I was, you know, helping.

But I was got pretty good about closing it off and avoiding it.

Um, but I had this desire that I really wanted to feel those things and you know, there was a book that was really helpful for me that I remember that helped.

That was a turning point was iron john by robert Bly.

And it's really just a man's process and you know, development.

And the big message that I took was there was a distinction drawn between the wild man and the savage man and the savage man would, would suffer an injury wound and would um, you know, would not show emotion, would not show pain, would push on through that injury, would cover it up, wrap it up and it would just form a scar And that savage man would continue to move forward and not really learn anything from that scar or from that injury.

But the wild man really resembled more of a shaman and a person, a man that was in touch with nature and was analytical and that wild man would, you know, investigate that injury and really look into it and and start to identify, you know, what the choices were made that you know, led to that injury, what caused it and what that person, what that man learned from it.

And then it continued to just build and strengthen and it wouldn't scar, it would heal really nicely and it would develop into really a lesson.

And that wild man would be able to provide these cautionary tales to others.

So it was that was something that really stood out for me was it was the turning point for me that helped to rather than just suppressing all the emotions I was experiencing in these, you know, calls with patients and really start to look at what was, you know, what is the emotional experience that I'm currently having and to build a relationship with that.

And so how do you respond to incidents differently today?

In the second time in the fire surface versus prior?

Like what does that actually look like for you?

Oh, I think I just I'm able to offer its I'm offering a a very empathetic listener.

First off to the patient, I believe that my patient care has improved in a major way.

Um I'm not so focused on completing tasks.

I'm focused on the overall outcome of the patient, I'm focused on um, you know, what are their needs and you know, treating the patient um, you know, based on not just what the obvious thing is in front of me, which a lot of times the first responders will refer to as distracting injuries as you look at the big open femur fracture, as the distracting injury and may think to yourself that's that's all that's wrong here and that's the only thing that we need to address, but maybe, you know, what happened, um, you know, what, what do they need and then I think about, you know what that impact was to me and I process it and I do some self reflection afterwards and I think about um, you know, the suffering of the person or the suffering of the family member and I think about what, what that's going to do to me internally.

And I talk about it and I talk about it in, in a way that's not a traditional, um, you know, humorous way that's done back at the fire station in a way of like, wow, can you believe that?

You know, did you see that?

It's more of, I want to break it down and, and really think about what my emotional experiences.

So when I'm, when I'm excited about something or if I'm angry or I'm sad, I mean I think about that man alive group really helped me identify that there was, you know, two major emotional elements that are at play and that's either, you know, they funnel into either happy or into hurt and all of our, all of my basic emotional experiences can funnel into one of those two categories.

And I start to think about that when I'm sad, it may not be that it's why am I sad?

And, and understanding the definition of that and that sad means what it means is that it's my experience of hurt healing or if I'm angry, it's, it's my experience of separating from a hurt, you know, that I've, I've decided won't go away and then on the other spectrum when I, you know, analyze that I'm, I'm happy or I'm passionate, I'm excited.

It's, it's all of my experiences moving towards happiness or towards that like fulfillment or gain and that helps me so much just to think about it and, and build that.

Like I said, that relationship with my, my new emotional experiences, It also sounds like you allow yourself to feel the emotion.

And there's a researcher Jill Bolte Taylor who um, has looked at the physiological response of emotions and the, she says that the average emotion actually lasts about 90 seconds.

Um, and there's a lot of people who do emotional intelligence research and it's the only, I'm going to mess it up, but that we actually have to move through the emotion and in order to move through it, we have to feel it to get to the other side.

Um, and it sounds like you add making meaning of the emotion as well as you think about it.

Yeah, absolutely.

That's no, makes absolute sense.

So you've shared that you were in this 52 week program, man alive and how meaningful it was to you.

And so I'd love for you to share like what were some of the Big Aha moments or takeaways that you experienced.

Yeah, sure.

Um, yeah, this program was just incredible for me.

It was, you know, to give a little explanation about it.

It's a, uh, you know, it's essentially a domestic violence group that is majority of the occupants.

I mean, the participants are, um, they're court ordered.

I mean, there was, you know, an incident that occurred, maybe there was a rest that was happened that happened and you know, they're they're obligated to go through this program.

And then there is an option for some that have identified, you know, some violent behavior in their past and want to make a change.

And so I gave it a chance without knowing anything about it really.

And what it was for me, what was really so beautiful about it was that it was a weekly opportunity to check in with other men in a room.

You know, it was any given time, probably a dozen men in this room with their own stories and their own grief.

And it was an opportunity to check in weekly about just that week.

You know, what happened.

Um, you know what any kind of incidents that occurred that where I find I found that I was not acting as my authentic self, that I was doing something that was old behavior and give an opportunity to share that information.

Um, and then to give receive or to provide feedback to the other men and then Really just two.

And then there was an opportunity in each class where there was somewhat of a didactic lesson that was provided by the facilitator who was also a man that had a history of domestic violence and went through this program as a participant 30 years ago and has now just created a life of service to help other men identify this and make changes.

And and really make that change that's, that's, that's going to transpire into their Children's lives as well.

The big things that I took from that, that were the really aha moments we're learning about the male role belief system.

And I don't know, have you heard of that before a little bit, but I'd love for you to share more.

Sure.

So what this was, was it it was something that a male role belief system theory.

It's a theory that is that it's a socialized belief about how men are meant to behave and it's attached to traditional gender roles.

And it really revolves around an expectation of authority as a man and an expectation of service to a man.

And that there's a hierarchy, hierarchy that makes a man superior in a lot of ways, in his relationships.

And it stems from, you know, childhood and how inherently as boys, we are prone to this um structure in this hierarchy and believe that we're gonna present ourselves as a stronger candidate for leadership and, you know, if we are superior and dominant and that were very prone to violence as young as young men in that, in just the competitive nature that we're involved in, you know, in sports.

And then into, I mean, the military service, the, you know, in the fire service, there's all there's very much a chain of command and there is a um, you know, superiority, a superior officer.

And you may be an inferior and you're striving to get to that next place.

Um, and so in this male role belief system, it what what it does.

It's not to excuse any of this male behavior and say that.

Well, it's it was not my fault.

I was, you know, this was learned behavior from my dad or my grandfather or society at the time.

But it's just understand that it's not something that we're inherently born with, but it's learned behavior and it can be unlearned and we can change, I can change the shift, make the shift that on how I, how I approach my relationships and how I work with my partner in a relationship as of equal value to each other and and eliminating any kind of a hierarchy and breaking traditional gender roles and really just having, letting love prevail and letting you know my, um, my past, you know, examples that were set for me not dictate on how I'm going to behave as a man.

Um, so that was, that was pretty eye opening.

And just to understand that, uh, you know, there's there's one way of doing things and that you can make a choice on taking a different approach.

Um, the other thing that was really stood out in that group was understanding the definition of emotional violence and myself going into it.

I would hear the term domestic violence.

And I equated that to scenes that I had seen as a first responder and responding to domestic violence incidents.

So I equated it to heavy verbal and physical and sexual violence.

And I I didn't, I never believed that I was capable of anything like that.

But what's talked about with emotional and emotional violence is that it really is, it's less obvious than the other types of domestic violence, but it's almost more destructive because of how cumulative it is and how subtle it is.

And it's really just a constant undermining of my partner's self esteem and confidence.

And you know, what I learned about that was that emotional violence is done really just through direct manipulation of specific resources.

Like it's broken down into four categories of space, time, energy and matter.

So by manipulating the space around your in your household, I'm, I would, you know, Mikey, you know, elements would be, I was providing the silent treatment.

I would come home and I wanted everybody to just give me space.

I wanted to be left alone.

I wanted to just be treated normal and not felt like, oh God, guys, dad's home, let's give him, let's just, let's, you know, let's put some eggshells around, let's make sure that everybody that he's safe, that he gets some rest.

I wanted to just be treated normal.

And, but what I did was I was I was just not present for anybody around me.

I was still processing what I had experienced or my own, um my own stress and that I was controlling the space in the atmosphere around me.

Um with time, you know, that emotional violence would start to I was controlling the schedule as well.

I was just dictating how everything was going to go based on my needs and my work schedule.

And when we had conversations about something, I would monopolize the conversation.

It was a good example of just manipulating time um with the energy resource.

I mean, that was my go to with that was sulking, learning how to sulk and just making that last for days and leaving everyone in wonder, you know, of of what dad needs or what's really going on.

And is it is it my fault that dad's like this, or is it, you know, how come and leaving everybody in a powerless position that there are helpless position of not knowing how to help dad work through this.

Um, and then controlling matter was, you know, I find myself maintaining control over our accounts and our financial matters and our, you know, our household and our possessions and you know, and and for a lot of years I would forbid my partner to even go to work or you know, get a job or a career because you know, I believe that it was my responsibility to provide my, I learned through my male role belief system that if I'm not the provider, then I'm really of no use to this, this family unit and that I believed it.

I believed that it was my responsibility to protect and to um you know, put food on the table and um you know, it was just a number of these different things that I really believed just provided much more of a traumatic experience over a long period of time for my Children and my my partner at the time.

So those things that male role belief system and learning about emotional violence were a couple of really key lightbulb moments that went out for me.

That went, man, I mean, how did I just continue to let this happen time after time and year after year.

And and I believe was that I just didn't know that I was doing anything wrong and I believe that I when I went to work and put my uniform on, I was revered and I was put up on a pedestal and I didn't, I thought that my family needed to do some extra work to learn how to help me better.

And I just was so wrapped up in a selfish place and had no self awareness of, of really the impact that I was, you know, providing to everyone around me.

So from that self awareness perspective, um how did you contribute or what did it look like for your family to walk on eggshells just so that people have a sense of what that might look like.

Well just look like, you know, I would, well, it was based on reactions that came from me is how they started to develop, you know what not to do around dad.

So you know, I would come home and I would um you know want to just have a normal day at home.

Um and if my kids, I was just so not ready to parent when I came home and so not ready to didn't understand.

I was a young father in my, you know, my early thirties.

Um you know, I I just wanted to isolate myself and I wanted silence when I got home from work and so if the kids were loud or the or or you know, we had a busy schedule or my my wife was um you know, had some needs from me.

Um I I let them, you know, I was, if I was not ready to provide those needs or or facilitate or or parent or be loving to my Children or my wife um then I barked at them and I reacted.

And so after enough of those reactions, I believe that they they started to just do this on their own.

That when I came home, it was either they went out for a walk and they went away when I was there.

Um you know, they gave me this space, they didn't want dad to react, don't let dad get angry.

He it's this is, you know, he needs extra time and he's had a rough shift at work and um you know, so I I just dictated everything around on their behavior just to suit my needs.

And if I could have found a way to just really process that stuff and build that better self awareness, I could have um told them what my needs, what I needed from them and I could have explained, I could have created a much better atmosphere and that's really what I see now is that I'm I'm able to, you know, really give voice to my emotional experiences and let everyone around me know that I um hey, I just kinda had a rough time on this shift or right now, I'm not 100% there and I just need a little bit of a little bit of time here and give me that opportunity to maybe go exercise or to meditate and just, you know, really just get myself back on track so that I can be more present for you and how has this shifted your relationship with your family?

And or kind of a two part question here, that transition home because sometimes that's articulated by first responders is kind of, that most challenging time is just like transitioning back home.

So I'm curious how that shifted that for you.

Yeah, well there's a number of things that have changed that are a little different that I I used to have a five minute drive home from the fire station and lived in the community that I worked um and now I have about an hour and 15 minute drive, which absolutely, which offers me so much time to really reflect um on, you know what I have going this next day or this week or this, this four day time with my loved ones, um gives me a chance to prepare, gives me a chance to know, you know um you know what, what what am I bringing home with me?

And I used to use the analogy of just you know, the first responders will talk about, you never want to bring your your work boots home, you never wanna you wanna leave your work boots at at the station and you know, you don't walk in the house, I mean for the obvious reasons of just that there's maybe some just some, you know some some yuck that's on the boots, you don't want to bring that home with you, So if I think about that and in a way that like if I continue to bring these dirty boots home with me, I'm not allowing, I'm not given a chance to wash away what I just experienced and I'm just gonna track this through the house, so I think about that um in my mental space as well that I need to get those, take off those dirty boots and leave them at the station or make sure that I clean everything up before I get home so that I can be, I can be more present and it sounds like also like what you've been learning is how to integrate more of your experience into who you are.

So it sounds like before you were like here's my work self and here's my home self and they were separate, but there it caused some challenges for those two to be separate and now it's much more integrated.

Is that accurate?

Yeah, that is accurate.

That's really well put.

It's it's uh yeah, I like to think now that I have one consistent existence and it's not you know, separated or by like placing a uniform on or not.

Um that when I come home I like to share you know what my experiences were in in you know in a way that's you know more digestible for my my partner and now I'm I'm in you know, a really beautiful relationship with a wonderful woman um and my relationship with my kids is improving in a major way, but it's still a lot of work to do and there's a lot a lot of check in that I have to do with that I think is really necessary with with my kids and my my current partner um with her son as well who I'm now a male figure that I want to be a positive influence in his life as well.

So um yeah, I think the way that it's been integrated is that I I'm continuously now evaluating my emotional experience and then as it changes throughout the day and not just what I brought home from work.

Um and yeah, I think it's it's been really beneficial.

It makes me wonder about um you know, you talked about the male role belief system and there's lots of different terms, kind of thrown around around, like toxic masculinity or being too feminine as a male.

And I'm curious like, what your experience of masculinity is like now?

Well, I mean, I think that yeah, that that was a big topic in in um in that group man alive, was um that there was a big shift that, you know, in the sixties, seventies of just men, you know, identifying more with women, a really beautiful shift of just like, you know, softening in a major way and um you know, and I believe that my dad, the guy that I was raised by was, you know, a very intuitive person and very um you know, very, very uh passive in a lot of ways and was not a over domineering or aggressive male figure.

Um you know, there was, I think there's there's a balance that has to be maintained and like, the way I view masculinity is is uh is demonstrating strength in my vulnerability and demonstrating that I can be um a good positive influence to my son or to other men in my life by showing my strengths in um, you know, my confidence in being able to express how I feel, and I think that that's a shift that I've seen in a major way throughout the fire service as well, is um you know, men that are able to articulate truly how they feel and not believe that they have to maintain such a an appearance that is, you know, held together by um strong traditional masculinity.

It's, you know, showing much more, I think you're demonstrating yourself much more of a man when you can embrace the femininity in your life and understand all aspects of yourself and rather than just narrow it down to just how you believe a man is supposed to be behaving um the way you learned it.

Mhm.

I'm thinking of um like there's this image that I have of when first responders have to go into a situation, right, you're putting on your um armor, whatever that armor is for, depending on if you're in law enforcement or first responders, and um and it sounds like you find a way to take that armor off when you go home.

Yeah, absolutely, I mean, it's that's the dirty boots in my scenarios, you know, my my armor and um yeah, it's it's taking that off, it's it's it's leaving it where it's meant to be, it's it's it's that occupation is it's a role and that role is not necessary in uh in my in my home life, that role of being the person that fixes and is the responder and makes decisive decisions on how things are going to go.

Um you know, there's a time and place for that, that role and it's very important and it's uh you know, there's a a lot of you know, elements there that are, you know, very important to maintain while I'm on the job, but you know, when I get home it's uh I need to be emotionally available available to everyone around me and and I need to continue to, you know, that that term of self care, I need to maintain my self care.

Um and here we talked about all the time, just, you know, um you know, the oxygen mask on a plane, um it's just a mental image that I see all the time that really helps me that I I'm of no good to anyone else here if if I'm not maintaining my own mental health and you know, self awareness.

So um throughout a first responders career, um you know, as you mentioned, there's inherent exposure to other people's trauma and you know, you name some of your own personal experiences of what that looked like, but as a peer support specialist, um what are some of the impacts that you've seen happen um you mean in relation to um you know, patients that first responders see or from how does that, how does that impact their life or how does it leak into their life, I guess?

Well, I mean I try not to speculate on what I see from from others, but the the experiences that I've had and what people have shared with me and I can speak my own experiences um done um you know, over the last couple of years I've I've I've met with different first responders um and some veterans uh and allowed them to share their stories and you know, offered myself as an empathetic listener with some direct lived experience.

And you know what I've seen that it's very common experiences across the board that um you know, there's a helpless feeling of um you know, just not knowing people looking for a road map on how to fix this problem and just not finding that road map and and not just looking for someone to guide them along.

And it's a real, I just see a real common theme of just a lost person and which I was in a major way is that I was lost and I was walking around in the dark looking for um some help to get me to the place of recovery and I was just trying to open every door that I could find.

And um you know, some of those doors, they lead to something really beautiful that helped in some progress for myself.

Um you know, but a lot of them were dead end leads and and it was discouraging to, you know, to continue to go down a path and it takes a lot of work personally just to for me to to find that and to find the real open door, that was gonna be the one that was going to really help.

So I think what I've seen is that there's the men that I've spoken with is their wide open, ready for somebody to mentor or guide them along the path of how to get there.

But I have to, I had to learn and what I have to explain is that um this it's not just going to be available for you and and just it's not gonna be laid out really perfectly and spelled out that you go down this path and you will never feel what you're feeling again.

It's gonna be a lifelong process of deepening your own self awareness, understanding who you are and learning how to course correct um you know on the spot and knowing that there's it's never going to be perfect and it's there's there's always gonna be challenges that come up and that there's there's just so many resources available.

And just that analogy of just walking around in the darkness is um there's so many doors and there's so much light available that you just have to surround yourself in a community of people that are making that change and that are making themselves available and you'll find what you're looking for, like I did.

Yeah, and it sounds like, you know, there is one thing um that really change the way that you think in pretty significant ways over the course of this year long program and that there's other tools that you've kind of gathered along the way.

I think we're always looking for like this one thing that's going to fix it, right?

Like the magic pill and uh you know, they're really oftentimes is not one thing, it's kind of that cumulative effect of the trauma across, you know, of experiencing other people's trauma.

I think of some of these wellness self care techniques um really is that same like accumulation, but just in a different direction.

Does that make sense?

Yeah, necessary ingredients really.

Mhm.

Build that that holistic approach and that, you know, there isn't one right way to heal and it's going to look different for every one of us and that we need each other along the way.

I think that's the thing that continues to come out of most of these conversations this season, is the need for connection with other people.

Yeah, definitely just building a community that's so important and that's what I'm seeing so much more now, like we mentioned, the shift and change and um is that there's a community that's being built, I mean that I'm just so happy to hear and learn about, you know, the resiliency center and the group that you're involved with and in Reno that it's just, you know, I think it's just such a wonderful resource.

And it it's it's beautiful to see that.

And um apartment is really looking at really looking forward to getting involved and and building um using some of the resources and tools that you guys have put together and setting up a really nice foundation for our own department as well.

Thank you.

Yes, I will make sure to connect to the Nevada peer support network to through our our show notes if anyone's curious about that.

Um, so, you know, as we get ready to wrap up here, I'd love for you, Is there anything else that you want our listeners to know or understand today?

Yeah, I think, um, but I think what's important is just understanding that, you know, that like the different types of violence and that emotional East where it's, you know, it's not as obvious, but it's something that just to maybe consider if that is something that's happening in in your life.

I mean, it was just very profound to me to consider that it was happening and realize that it was happening in my life and um to encourage others to to continue to open other doors, knock on doors and find other sources that can really build and strengthen your, your community with others.

And um, you know, the things that helped me the most were just to focus on nurturing my relationships rather than controlling them.

Um just understand that I have a I have an absolute choice.

I have agency in every decision that comes my way about rather whether to to respond.

Um as you know, my authentic self and as someone that is carefully thought this out versus reacting, um you know, to this, do I think I would like to encourage other men specifically to to start to educate themselves on nonviolent communication and emotional intelligence and to seek out local resources that are around you and start to understand that it is a demonstration of strength to um to be vulnerable and to check in and to understand themselves in a much better way, and to be much more of the wild man versus the savage man.

And um I think that, you know, I'm really excited about what's to come for me and that I'm just gonna continue to be a lifelong learner in this um in this pursuit and always reevaluating constantly reevaluating the, you know, the my progress.

And I just believe that I'm I'm setting up my Children to have a much healthier life and just to um really encourage that, you know, communication and and understanding themselves.

Um Yeah, I think that uh there's a lot out there a lot available.

So consider the consider the group work and finding other peers that you can share your experiences with and and and learn from.

Oh, thank you, nick for joining us today and for sharing really your own personal experience with us.

Um and the wealth of resources will make sure to include all of those two in the show notes.

So thanks for your time today and for being here.

I really appreciate it.

Thank you.

I appreciate it as well.

And thank you for what you're doing.

I look forward to working with you more in the future.

Alright, have a good time.

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