

Shining with ADHD by The Childhood Collective

Episode #151: Growing Up with Undiagnosed ADHD with Therapist Holly Blanc Moses

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Katie: Hi there. We are The Childhood Collective, and we have helped thousands of overwhelmed parents find joy and confidence in raising their child with ADHD. I'm Katie, a speech language pathologist.

Lori: And I'm Lori.

Mallory: And I'm Mallory. And we're both child psychologists.

Lori: As busy mamas ourselves, we are on a mission to support ADHD parents on this beautiful and chaotic parenting journey.

Mallory: If you are looking for honest ADHD parenting stories, a dose of empathy with a side of humor and practical tools, you are in the right place.

Katie: Let's help your family shine with ADHD.

Mallory: I once worked with a family who was frustrated over their ADHD child's Jekyll and Hyde personality. Most of the time, their child was a sweet, happy kid, but at the smallest request, he could flip to an hour-long meltdown. After walking on eggshells for years, the whole family was super stressed, and his parents found themselves arguing constantly about how to best discipline him.

Katie: If you can relate to this family's situation, you are not alone.

Lori: That's why we created our online course, *Creating Calm*, to give you practical strategies to address challenging behaviors that are incredibly common in ADHD.

Mallory: And as a bonus, these tools will help the whole family get on the same page so

there's less arguing in your home.

Katie: Here's what Kate had to say after taking the course: "Creating calm has helped me really understand ADHD and given me so many practical tools to support my son and make our days not such a battle. I've read so many books, but they just didn't give real life examples and tools. This course has been so worth the investment and something I'll keep coming back to revisit."

Lori: A year from now, you're going to wish you had started today. Head to thechildhoodcollective.com/yes and enter the exclusive code PODCAST to get 10% off our course when you enroll today. You can also grab the link and code in the show notes.

Katie: Today, Mallory and I are so excited to interview our friend Holly Blanc Moses. Holly is a neurodivergent therapist, course creator, and celebrated speaker devoted to supporting neurodivergent children, teens, adults, and their families.

Mallory: Over the last 23 years, she has provided specialized evaluations and support services addressing emotion regulation, anxiety, social success, and school performance in her North Carolina private practice.

Katie: Holly is the host of the popular podcast the Autism ADHD podcast. She's also the mother of two neurodivergent children. Holly, welcome. We are so thrilled to have you on today.

Holly: Thank you both for having me on. I am a super fan of you guys, so I'm excited to be here.

Mallory: Oh, thank you so much.

Katie: It's definitely mutual. And I was thinking about this before we started today. I remember coming on your podcast, and I'm pretty sure it was still the first time we came on it was, I think at the end of COVID and I was working from home, and I remember getting on, and I was, like in a hoodie, and I had my hair all crazy, I don't think I had a stitch of makeup and you're like, I think this is going to go on YouTube. I was like, I don't always look like this, Holly, I promise.

Holly: No, no, you. I think what's the coolest thing ever is when we just keep it real.

Katie: Yes. That is. It was very very real.

Holly: I'm, probably gonna wear this tomorrow and even the next day, so there you go.

Katie: I love it.

Holly: It's all good.

Katie: Well, let's be honest, I'm still wearing a hoodie, but at least I did comb my hair a little bit, so. Yeah. But I remember that first, that first episode with you and ever since then, we've just been fast friends, so we're really glad to be chatting with you today.

Holly: I know. I love it.

Mallory: I'm a little jealous, Holly, that you live in North Carolina and I'll tell you why. Because anytime I'm on Pinterest or, like scrolling Instagram and there's, like a beautiful yard, just like tons of greenery, beautiful grass, the background or like the backyard surrounded by trees. I'm like, where is that? It's always North Carolina.

Holly: Is it?

Mallory: Every time!

Holly: I can't personally grow anything. Cause I can't even remember what to do. There's one plant. I don't even know what it's called that I'm like I can grow. But you're right. Like, there's a lot for people who can do that. Oh, it's fabulous. Like, there's tons of trees all over the place, and it's very beautiful. My yard, not so much, but definitely that's true.

Katie: But there's potential.

Holly: I don't know. I don't know if there is, maybe if I hired it out.

Mallory: Katie has a green thumb. She would have a beautiful North Carolina yard, but I would probably be in the same boat as you, Holly. I have a black thumb. I'd have to hire out,

but I really, maybe someday I'll have a beautiful North Carolina backyard. Well, we're so excited to chat with you today. We have a lot to talk about. We can't wait for you to share your story with our listeners. So, to start us off, why don't you tell us a little bit about your ADHD diagnosis? What was it like to be diagnosed with ADHD as an adult?

Holly: Wow. I, you know, it's hard to figure out exactly how to describe it, but I think I would say relieved. Like, I was so relieved to finally understand why I had struggled so much and why I was different, and it was probably one of the best moments of my entire life.

Katie: I love that. So tell us a little bit more. Like, backing up. When were you diagnosed? How? What? Tell us more about it.

Holly: Oh, girl, it was at 48.

Katie: Okay.

Holly: So that's a lot of life.

Mallory: mm-hmm.

Holly: To live without knowing why you are built the way you are. But it is never, ever too late. So I'm super excited that I pursued that evaluation, and I just feel so much better now.

Mallory: I love that. And kind of your description of feeling relief. I mean, we hear that even from kids, they get relief from the diagnosis and understanding their brain at you know, ten years-old, so to be 48, yeah, that's a long, it's long time coming, right? It's a long time not really understanding why some things are easier, why some things are harder. So I feel like you're speaking to that emotion that even kids feel when they get that diagnosis, but certainly as an adult, after all those years.

Holly: Absolutely. Yeah. Because then I think about, if you don't have a reason, if you don't have an explanation as to why you feel the way you do, you take on what the world will give you as the explanation, which is often not a good one.

Katie: Absolutely.

Holly: Yeah. And you take that on, and it weighs heavy. And so, you know, to be able to step back and say, wait a minute, that wasn't true. These things that I thought about myself. It's really been a life changing situation for me.

Katie: I love that. And I love that you're sharing that, you know, you were 48 when you got diagnosed. And for parents who are listening, I know so many parents are on their own journey as their kids get a diagnosis, but it's never too late to really understand yourself better. And I think a lot of us might have the idea, like, oh, I, you know, that's something for kids or it's, you know, I've lived this long, like, I don't really need to figure this out, but it is really helpful. And I've had my own experiences with this where going back and almost like revisiting some of those early memories and being like, oh, I can almost watch that movie from a different lens now and release a lot of that shame of those labels or those self-thoughts that you give yourself. And I think that's so, that's just so powerful for, even for us in our thirties, forties, fifties, like, it doesn't, it can always be so helpful to understand ourselves better.

Holly: It's so true. You know, I really feel like self-awareness and that understanding is just so crucial. And that's why I think, you know, getting a diagnosis as early as you can, but at the same time, like you said, it's never too late.

Mallory: mm-hmm. What do you think it was that, you know, made the final push for you to get evaluated and get the diagnosis?

Holly: Yeah, that's a good question. I for the longest time I thought that I was different, but I didn't quite understand how and what's so funny is this is my specialty, you know, autism and ADHD, So hello, Holly! You know, I think, I think us psychologists sometimes where you don't have the best, you know, self-awareness. We're so concerned about everyone else and so, you know, for girls, I think especially, you know, that can be difficult.

Mallory: mm-hmm.

Holly: Really, being ready almost, if that makes sense. I had done an ADHD summit, an international summit, which I was so honored to do and host. And I was speaking to two women who were both therapists who were diagnosed with ADHD later in life. And, you

know, it was interesting, we were having this conversation before I hit record and one of them said, you know, oh, yeah, this is my experience. And I thought, you know, it sounds a lot like me. Like, that sounds, kind of like me. And the first thing she said was, which one of your parents has ADHD? And before I could even think about it, I said my dad.

Mallory: mm-hmm.

Holly: He is not diagnosed.

Katie: Right.

Holly: But it was amazing how that just came pouring out. Because he didn't have like a regular job like other dads. Like, he was always starting businesses and he'd never sit and he was constantly tinkering and doing all these things and having big feelings. And I was like, oh, oh my goodness. Wait a second, I need to check this out. This would explain a lot of things for me.

Katie: Yeah.

Mallory: Uh-huh. So looking back, it seems like you can kind of see some of those signs in your dad. What were some of those early signs for you now looking back, like Katie kind of said, you're watching a movie, you're replaying life through a different lens. Now, looking back, what were some of those early signs for you that you can reflect on now?

Holly: There are so many. I mean, so many. So I remember not being able to remember my locker number, and it seemed like all the other kids could, like this wasn't an issue. And if there was even a three-day weekend, I was in the office in the morning having to ask for them to give me my locker number. I could not remember. And they would say, Holly, I don't understand. Everyone else can do this. You know, you should. I hate that word. You should be able to.

Katie: Yeah.

Holly: And they'd write it down and of course I'd lose it. You know, they're like, here, write it down. You won't lose it. Yeah, I lost it.

Katie: Yeah I'm gonna need that tattooed somewhere because literally, and don't do it upside down because I need to be able to read it from wherever I'm looking at it. Yeah.

Holly: Yes. That's so true. And so things, you know, I remember really looking around a lot at what the other students were doing, and I always thought, like, how do they know what to do? How do they remember what the teacher said? And that's a lot of the cues that I got. Like, I would have to really catch up. Like, I was always catching up is what it felt like. And it seemed like I couldn't remember things other people could as far as not just the locker number, but people's names.

Katie: Yeah.

Holly: And that's one of the things that you would say initially when you'd meet someone. It's gone. Like, it is. It is as though it never was told to me.

Katie: Yeah.

Holly: And people, you know, that can defend them. Like, you know, you don't remember my name. I must not be important. It's not that at all. Like, it's literally is gone. Dates, I don't remember. Time is really, really hard for me. I was always late. I always felt like either there wasn't enough time or I have plenty of time to do three more extra tasks. And I still struggle with that to this day. Like the, my car is so old. I have one of these, you know, clocks you have to manually do and all the things. And it's 25 minutes, you know ahead at all times. So there are things that I really look back and think, oh, my goodness, this makes so much sense.

Mallory: What was your explanation at the time? Like, what was your self-talk about why these things were harder? What were you telling yourself at that point?

Holly: Right. So I think what ends up happening is we get all these messages from the environment, right, that really impact our mental health. And I think we all have a little bit of I'm not good enough story. You know, we all have something like that. And for me, what I would be told is, you know, pay attention. You're not trying hard enough. You should be able to do this. Everyone else can do this. You're lazy, you're messy, you know, all those things,

and it just soaks in and forms really your foundation of yourself.

Katie: Yeah.

Holly: And so when you don't have an explanation, again, about why you struggle in certain ways, you believe what people tell you and that becomes your story. So I thought I was bad, I thought I wasn't smart. I thought I wasn't good enough.

Mallory: I think we have a lot of listeners who can relate to that feeling, who are now getting their diagnoses. A lot of moms, really. Yeah.

Katie: And I think it's especially true for women on that same vein. Because a lot of the things that are really difficult with ADHD are things that women traditionally are expected to be good at, right. So being able to keep yourself more organized, like when little boys are so messy, there's this tendency across society to say, like, oh, he's just being a boy. But for girls and women who struggle, like, to manage their household as adults, and, you know, a lot of times people get an ADHD diagnosis in adulthood after a big life transition. So they started their dream job, but it was just more than they could handle. And all of a sudden, it kind of tipped the scale. So they've maybe dealt with these feelings and these experiences throughout their life, but then they have a baby or a second or third baby or, something big happens and all of a sudden it's like I can't cope. And I with think that as women, it's like we're expected in some ways to have that emotional regulation and organizational strategies, all those executive functions, and we can say, oh, you know, all the jokes, you know, my husband, he's so late, he's so disorganized, you know, but when we ourselves experience that, that's incredibly shameful because it's like, I should be able to do this. I look at my friends, and I'm like, they can manage it. Why am I struggling so much?

Holly: It's true. And it starts young. I mean, you think about, you know, I remember being even in elementary school, and teachers and, you know, this isn't against teachers, all of you lovely teachers that are listening, I'm just giving it an example.

Katie: I love the disclaimer. We do love teachers. But it's okay. This is your story. It's all right.

Holly: Yeah, we love them. But, I do remember there were teachers in particular who would

be really praising kids for sitting still in their seats and listening and turning their work in on time. You know, all these things that I just kept thinking over and over again, I'm never gonna measure up. I am never gonna meet their expectations. So what does that mean about me?

Katie: Right.

Holly: You know, and you just kind of take this on. Yeah.

Katie: Yeah. You're not gonna think the system isn't designed to support me, right.

Holly: No.

Katie: As a kid, you're not going, wow the way they've set up this educational system seems inappropriate. You're thinking, it's me. There's clearly something with me, and that can be...

Holly: Well, and often we're told it's us.

Katie: Absolutely.

Holly: You know, there was not long ago where a kid was telling me, well, they told me that it reminded me twice so I should be able to do it. Now I should remember. And then, you know, again, it's still, as an adult woman, you know, it can feel that way. Like you were saying, you should be able to keep your house organized, and you should.

Katie: Yeah. You should be able to meal plan and prep and not be tired after you have to do the dishes. Like, I'm over here. Like, I cannot.

Lori: Over the past year, my oldest has really struggled with anxiety, especially at night. As soon as it was time for sleep, she'd be crying for me to stay and worrying about all the things. I was talking to another therapist about our bedtime battles and she said the Zenimal, a screen free meditation device, had been a game changer for her daughter with ADHD and anxiety. I immediately purchased the Zenimal and can confidently say it was the best tool to help my daughter get better sleep. She was able to fall asleep an hour earlier using it.

Katie: Yes, it's actually really helped my kids to be able to calm their busy bodies at night.

Mallory: What we love about the Zenimal is that it combines two of our favorite bedtime recommendations, using a relaxation strategy and removing screens from the bedroom.

Katie: The Zenimal is an adorable screen free turtle with nine guided meditations your kids can choose from. And our absolute favorite part of the Zenimal is that every meditation ends with the most important message, 'you're a good kid.'

Lori: To grab your own Zenimal and get your child and yourself some better sleep, head to [Zenimals.com](https://zenimals.com) and use our code: TCC for a discount. You can also find the link in the show notes.

For my kids, the last thing they want to do when they get home from school is homework.

Katie: Totally and the last thing I want to do after a long day of work is deal with the stress of meal planning, grocery shopping, cooking, and cleaning up the kitchen.

Lori: Same here. We tried Hungryroot grocery service to help us eat balanced meals while saving time and money every week. It's been a game changer for our weekly meals and snacks, and I love that you can customize groceries based on your kids or your family's dietary restrictions.

Katie: Yes! My husband eats gluten free and I love that I can customize groceries based on our family's needs. And not only can I get complete meals delivered, but I can also order my weekly groceries through them. And I'm always amazed at how my kids will try new things just because they came out of our Hungryroot box.

Lori: Yes! It's easy to customize your box each week and you can skip weeks whenever you want. For a limited time, Hungryroot is offering our listeners 40% off your first box, which is amazing. Just be sure to use the code: `CHILDHOODCOLLECTIVE40` so you can get the discount.

Katie: We also have the link and the code in the show notes, so you can try Hungryroot today.

Well, thinking back to on either in childhood or even now, how do you feel like ADHD has impacted friendships? Again, as a women, this is such an important part of our lives. So have you seen an impact on your relationships as you look back?

Holly: I would say that's one of the most healing parts of getting a diagnosis for me. Well, I am, I'll be 50 this year.

Katie: Wahoo. That's a big one!

Holly: It is a big one.

Katie: I'm almost gonna be 40, so I'm right there. I'm like, new decade, new me.

Holly: Yeah, exactly. And so back in the day and things haven't changed, there is this idea for girls that, you know, the way to be good at friendship is to be a part of a group. To have lots of friends. Like, how many friends do you have? Kind of thing. And I just fell short all the time is what I felt like, because I would make myself, you know, I'd be kind of this instant part of a group, and then all of a sudden, I'd find out they were meeting without me and or they weren't calling me anymore. And so I didn't have a lot of friends. I was kind of didn't really know what to say and when sometimes, and I would say goofball things, it seemed really awkward things, you know.

Katie: Yes, it's so hard.

Holly: Things you might say it in your head and not out loud. Well, I just said it out loud. So, you know, it really was hard to navigate those things because I just didn't fit in this idea of what I thought friendship was supposed to look like. And that's really depressing, especially when you feel like friendship is everything at those ages.

Katie: Absolutely.

Holl: Yeah. And it's really, you feel left out, lonely, you know, no one's asking you to do anything. And then, of course, you take that on yourself, right. Something's wrong with me because I'm being socially rejected. It's tough.

Mallory: Has having the diagnosis now as an adult kind of changed your friendships, your social interactions? Has having that knowledge changed the social landscape for you?

Holly: Oh, my goodness, yes. I am so thankful. I figured out, and this is the lovely thing, and I teach social skills. I do all these things. I have courses on this stuff, right. I do presenting on these things. I think of it very much about what works for you, what works for you. It's not about this idea of what it should be, because if we think this is the only way to do it, we don't even enjoy ourselves. Like, I've tried that. I've been a part of groups. I'm like, oh, get me out of here. You know, not that they weren't lovely, but it doesn't work for me. Like, I'm not comfortable. I can't enjoy that. And so really thinking about being around people that have similar interests, I am one-on-one person it turns out. That's much easier for me to manage, and I enjoy it. I really enjoy talking with other neurodivergent women. That's where I can enjoy those social interactions. And I think with my kids, too, and I think a lot of parents are going to identify with this, this really impacts you socially as well. Like, there's not a lot of people who can manage sort of being around our family.

Katie: Absolutely.

Holly: You know, socially. So, you know, we have, I have just a couple friends, and I usually see them one-on-one, and that's, that's okay.

Katie: Yeah. As you were talking, it made me think about growing up, you know, in that, in our generation and how friendship was portrayed, thinking about all the books that I would read, like *The Baby-Sitters Club*. And all these girls, they get together every week, and they hang out, and there's all these different personalities. There's, like, the really smart one, and then there's the fashionable one. And I remember dressing up with my friends as *The Baby Sitters Club*, and the idea of, like, I'm gonna be the Stacy or whatever it was, and I'm probably, like, telling on myself I'm like, I wanted to be the Stacy. But if you read the BSC, you know who Stacy was. She was from New York. She was very cosmopolitan, as I obviously am, too. But you, it was, and I see that with my daughter, who's nine, and she is always like, hey, I want to make a club, and I want to do this because she also reads *The Baby-Sitters Club* and also a bunch of other books that have girl groups. And you're right, that isn't how everyone makes friends. And, when I think about parents who are listening, and

maybe you're, you've thought, hey, I want my kid to be a part of a big group, and maybe that will work out. But oftentimes, to your point, Holly, what we really want is for our kids to have a couple really good friends, even one friend that they can talk to and connect with and relate with, and that in some ways can feel kind of disappointing, I think, because, again, going back to, like, our own childhood, we have these expectations, but when we can release those expectations and realize, like, wow, my child actually is the one that gets really overstimulated at a huge birthday party. So, yes, I would love that invite, but I also know how hard that is. So instead, you know, let's get together with, like, one kid and plan something that they both really enjoy.

Holly: I think so, too, because this idea of we think, or we've been kind of programmed to believe it should be this certain way, it really doesn't. Like, no one gets to decide that for us unless we let them.

Katie: Absolutely.

Holly: And it's easy to fall into that. I was kind of like that. Like, I want my kids to have friends, and then I thought, wait a minute, what do they want?

Katie: Yeah.

Holly: You know, what works for them.

Katie: Absolutely.

Holly: Yeah. So I hear you. I think that's so lovely. And to have that conversation and being aware of, you know, are we feeling pressured to have our kids, maybe have friends and whatever that looks like, whatever is neurotypical but just doesn't work for them. And like I said, that's okay. You know, we don't want them to be miserable. They're supposed to enjoy themselves, be their authentic selves. We don't want them to mask and pretend to be someone else that they're not so they can be in a group that they're not having fun in.

Mallory: Yeah. So it sounds like the diagnosis kind of gave you the freedom to just approach friendships and social situations differently, and we shouldn't really need a diagnosis to do that anyway, right. But it is hard when you have an expectation of how something is going to

go, but the diagnosis gives you a little freedom to say, like, okay, this needs to look different, and I understand why it needs to look different. And another huge thing we hear from our listeners kind of along this vein is their child is struggling, but they, maybe there's a friend, but the parents don't get it. Or so, like, finding that family. It sounds like maybe Holly you have a couple of these families who the kids get each other and the parents get each other, and the parents get each other's kids. Like, understand them, right. That's gold, but that's something that we hear a lot from our listeners that they're really struggling to find.

Holly: It's really hard, and I do want to speak to that. We did have a family they moved. I'm like, no, we finally found you. You don't judge us!

Katie: That's so hard.

Holly: Yeah, they did move. But you never know. I mean, maybe another one will come down the line, and maybe it won't, and that's okay. You know, again, we're not a Pinterest family, and that's all right, you know, and that wouldn't be us anyway.

Katie: Yeah. I think something that has helped me in my own parenting, just if parents are listening and are like, I need a strategy, though. I try to be a little more open about my own journey with my kids. So I might say before we even get together, you know, oh, man, my son has been really struggling when it's time to go. So just a heads up, you know, this is what it might look like. And what I've found even when I say, like, oh, I'm going to therapy or anything that I share, people are so much more likely to reciprocate that and say, oh, we're really struggling with bedtime.

Holly: Right. And I do think that having permission, you know, certainly from your kid before you share anything is really important. But also, like you were saying, it's important we know as adults to be with people who get us, who aren't, who are understanding and accept us for the, the people we are. We want that for our kids, too. And if that narrows it down, I would rather it to be a very small amount or one person who my kid can be authentically himself with than a bunch of people that he's scared to be around because he might say or do something that, you know, they might reject him for.

Katie: Absolutely. I completely agree. So I know that for so many people with ADHD, kids and adults, the journey through mental health is a huge part of that experience. So talk with

us a little bit about your own experience with mental health and maybe specifically what has helped you.

Holly: Yeah, that is, that's a really big one. You know, it's interesting, Facebook is so funny. We have this, like, high school Facebook group. I don't know, I'm like, never on there. There was a girl named girl, she's a woman, obviously. There's this, she's a big girl, this girl named Elisa and she sets really interesting to me and almost like, teared up. I might just, right now, she said, you always look so sad and I wish I would have said something or asked you about it. And like this. I mean, how many years ago was that, right? And this idea was, I really wish you would have because no one did. And it's hard. It's really, really hard to manage these everyday life things that everyone else seems like they can just do. Like I mentioned earlier, the should and if you can't do what everyone else can do in the way they do it, you think you're wrong or broken. And it's not true. There's so many lovely things about people with ADHD. We are like the most creative, interesting people you'll ever meet. I mean, we are. So going from, this is so wrong about me. I wish I could be like other people, too. Wow. Okay. So lots of therapy, which has a lot to do with also raising two kids that I call it extreme parenting, right.

Katie: I like that.

Holly: So we've got, you know, I've got autism and ADHD in our house. So, you know, mental health is so important. Obviously, just being a psychologist, certainly I'm going to think that. But just for ourselves, right, as parents, we still struggle. Like you were mentioning, too, you add on things. It was one thing when, you know, I was in grad school, it was just me. And then you add on marriage, and then you're managing that person.

Katie: Yep.

Holly: And then you add on kids. And if you've got kids who need something different, that is a different experience as a parent, right. It's not the same. And so you feel like, I kind of think of it as I've got, you know, skates on and I'm balancing, like, these trays full of, like, marbles, or something is what it kind of feels like. And sometimes you have to let go, and sometimes that house is messy and mine is and what up? You know, it's like, that's fine. You know, I feel like it's, if we don't really start intervening when we hear our kids, I mean,

they're saying this out loud, I'm stupid, I'm bad, I'm this, I'm that, I don't do anything right. Think about how often they say it in their heads that they're not saying it out loud. So therapy from a good therapist who gets neurodivergent kids and teens, I just think it's essential, you know, that we do this. And like I said, I have, therapy myself. And I think that's really important because, you know, this is hard. And your default strategy really kind of goes back, or your default thought goes back to, I'm bad, I'm dumb, no matter how old you are. And I do really struggle with that still. Really what it spiraled out to you for me, like, I was super anxious and certainly, you know, struggled with sadness as well, ran into, and I see this a lot, especially with girls with ADHD, is you have to prove that you're good enough. So if you're constantly being told that you're not, then you have to prove it. You have to prove that you're good. You have to prove that you can do this. You have to prove, prove, prove. Because if you prove it, then maybe you'll be worthy, right. And sort of spirals in, like I said, this perfectionist deal where I'm like, well, if I get great grades, if I get high a's, if I am the honor, the president of the honor society in college, you know, if I graduate first in my class, if I do all these things, which I did all those things, then I'll be good enough, right? So it was this idea where, you know, that's not healthy either, but people are telling you that it's good.

Katie: Exactly.

Holly: So you go from you're bad, you can't handle anything, you're a mess, to wow, look at you. You've won all of these things. You've done all of these things. But, at a really big price.

Katie: So the main thing that's helped you to work through a lot of that has been therapy.

Holly: Therapy and really self-discovery and time and allowing myself to recognize that I have a thought that comes in, but a lot of like, I'm a big fan of acceptance and commitment therapy. That's kind of my jam. And really recognizing the thought, not trying to distract myself. Like I would get busy, busy, busy, so I wouldn't have to think these tough thoughts, right. Is recognizing they come in, I know where they come from. I understand that. And looking at them in a way where it doesn't have to weigh so heavy on me anymore and I don't have to prove my worth, so people think I'm good enough anymore. And that's a really nice place to be. I mean, it takes daily work, but I'm doing it.

Mallory: Yeah. So kind of along those lines, just thinking about a lot of our listeners are

parents to kids with ADHD. They either have an ADHD diagnosis or parents suspect that their child might have ADHD and, probably a good handful of these parents going through that diagnostic process for their child might start wondering if they also have ADHD. What advice, kind of, how would you guide these parents who have gone through this process with their child or going to, and now they're questioning it for themselves? What advice would you give these parents?

Holly: I'd say go do it, go do it. Do not walk, run. So, you know, here's a thing, too. I think when you are parenting kids that need extra things, then you put yourself last, right? Like there's appointments and there's school and oh my goodness, the school's calling again. You know, all these things, it really stretches you and your bandwidth. And not that I say do an extra thing, go do your own evaluation, but if you can, when you can, I strongly, strongly recommend that you do because you can not only finally get yourself, but also really have a better understanding as a parent. To be able to share this with your kids. Like this is hard, I believe you. What can I do to help and support you instead of telling you, you should do it? I'm sick of reminding you, all those things, right. I think it puts us in a much better place to support their mental health and our own.

Katie: I agree. And helping them to not feel alone in that, you know, their experience. And this is something that in our family, even when our kids were really small, nobody had a diagnosis, but we would talk about our brains. And I think it's coming from my background in speech, right, as a speech therapist. And I would be like, oh, my brain really struggles, like, to stand still in the line at Costco or whatever it was or my brain really needs quiet in the car right now. And we would talk about that. And so I think normalizing the experience for our kids is so important for anything. Whether you have an anxious kid, a kid with ADHD, you know, a kid who struggles with social stuff or sensory, like, body regulation, whatever it is, you know, it's, you can call that out and talk about it, and it doesn't have to be this stigma. I think a lot of parents are afraid to talk about the areas where something might be hard for their child because they don't want to affect their self-esteem. But as we've talked about today, the opposite is often true. When it's not discussed and it's not brought to light and it's not normalized, that's when we actually see more shame and more feelings of, like, there's something wrong with me.

Holly: I love that you said that. It is absolutely the opposite. I wouldn't, it's not about being afraid to talk about it. You need to be afraid not to talk about it.

Katie: Yes.

Holly: Is really what it is. You see that, you know, being my age and how hard this still is, right. What if I could have had that?

Katie: Yeah.

Holly: What would that have been different for me. You know, so I just, you know, all your lovely parents that are listening, what a game changer that we can be what we needed as kids. We can be that for our kids. We can be safe people for them.

Katie: I love that message. And Holly, thank you so much. I mean, honestly, this has been incredible. And I think a lot of people are definitely going to relate and I think they're going to want to stay in touch and continue to learn from you. So what's the best way for them to do that? Where can they find you?

Holly: Yes, I love that question because I, oh, my goodness, of course, having ADHD, here's the thing. I do lots and lots of things.

Katie: Okay.

Holly: Right. That's so beautiful about having ADHD a lot of people don't think about, like, we have such creative brains. So you mentioned that I do have a private practice in North Carolina where we support neurodivergent kids, and teens and adults by the way, we dream more and more adult diagnoses, which is so beautiful.

Katie: Do you see people out of state as well or is it only in your state?

Holly: We can see people out of state, but the evaluation has to happen in state since that's where we're licensed. So I've got lots of freebies. I've got a social skills guide for free. I've got a behavior detective guide for free. You mentioned the Autism ADHD podcast that I'm like obsessed with that you guys have been on. I love it. We cover so many great topics on

that podcast. I, and this is very exciting you guys are some of the first people to know, I just got approved to provide continuing education for therapists. I have such a big heart for helping therapists understand these kids even more. So I'm going to roll out trainings and a new membership is coming in the next few weeks, so I'm super excited about that. But yeah, lots and lots of cool stuff. I've got a social skills course for parents that teach you step-by-step on how to support your child with social interaction. So lots of loveliness for you.

Katie: Okay, I love it. We'll make sure to link all that in the show notes so that people can easily find it. But yes, we loved being on your podcast and I think we do get a lot of questions specifically about autism as well, which we don't really cover here. And so if you are someone who has a dual diagnosis or you're questioning if your child might be autistic, this is a great resource. And Holly is, the go to. Well, Holly, thanks again. We really appreciate you.

Holly: It was great to see you guys.

Katie: Thanks for listening to Shining with ADHD by your hosts, Lori, Katie, and Mallory of The Childhood Collective.

Mallory: If you enjoyed this episode, please leave us a review and hit subscribe so you can be the first to know when a new episode airs.

Lori: If you are looking for links and resources mentioned in this episode, you can always find those in the show notes. See you next time!