

0130 When You Love Working With a Few Populations with Natalie Coriell

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Guys, I'm here with Natalie Coriell, you can check her out at nataliecoriell.com. Natalie, how can I help?

Natalie: So, I know that you spend a lot of time and you give us a ton of resources on building our niche and really getting that ironed out. and I have just felt just resistance to figuring out exactly what that is. I feel like there's some pressure around making sure it's right or something in my own head. So, I've been filling out the worksheets and I just can't get there. I just need some help with narrowing it down. The language around it. So...

Allison: Perfect. The last call I was on was niche based, too. So, I'm like on a niche roll. I love it.

Natalie: Yeah. it's just one of those things.

Allison: I think it's one of my favorite things to work on. So, I'm excited. Talk to me about what's up in the air. Like, who is it that you're considering as your possible niche, and we'll see where we can go from there.

Natalie: Sure. So, its teens and young adults are my age range, in women, [unknown] and adults. And then, I'm an art therapist, so I don't know if that's actually part of the niche or not. And then, I'm really comfortable working with people who have experienced trauma. Because I also do EMDR. But, then relationship issues, life transition. So, I just have so much, that I think its also just the idea of I know you won't work with just that population, but I love working with so many different things that its hard to say I only do this really specific thing.

Allison: Yeah. yeah. it makes sense. So, I'm thinking about, you said trauma and you said dating. And I'm like same thing. like, I think there's a lot of small t trauma and sometimes large T trauma that goes on in dating and relationships. And I'm wondering if there's a way to kind of tie those things in together. And also, with transitions. So, I wonder if there's a way to fuse that while still being specific? And I'm thinking about symptoms. How it feels for people going through each of these things that's similar. So, you could maybe say, I work with teens and young adult women who are realizing that life is a lot harder than it expected it to be. And to kind of start coming up with the really specific things that seem to be shared among your

favorite clients. So that its not exclusionary like now you're going to have an entirely trauma-based practice, which I really just don't think most of us are built for that. its just so hard. But you'll still get that, because certainly some of what you would describe of somebody going through a really hard relationship problem, is going to sound familiar to somebody who's had a trauma.

Natalie: Yeah, that makes sense. Okay. And that really touches on, the young adult piece, when they transition into like being an adult, living on their own, or graduating college. And that's, I think, is such a great, I love working with that population, too. And that kind of speaks sometimes that transition period of whoa, life is harder than I thought it would be, or something.

Allison: Yeah. and I'm thinking about the questions that we ask ourselves; would it probably feel less salient than that for your clients? But, that question of am I good enough transcends all these things. It's a through-line.

Natalie: Yeah. for sure. And I think, when you say that, I think of multiple clients who that's kind of the core of it. Not necessarily are they all dealing with the exact same thing, but that core of as women, are we good enough? We get the message of to do more. You know what I mean? Just kind of those social pressures as well. A lot of that gurgles up from anxiety, you know, in different ways.

Allison: Yeah.

Natalie: Because a lot of times, anxiety is kind of like what they are coming in for. Maybe they know it, maybe they don't. but it seems like that is almost in every one of my clients in some form or another.

Allison: Got it.

Natalie: So, that was the other pieces I was trying to think of how that would tie in. Because you don't want to just say anxiety. Because not everybody always knows what that is or wants to say they have that. you know? But it comes in different things.

Allison: Totally. Yeah. and few people want to stand up on a chair and be like I don't feel good enough most days! But, if they see it written down, they'll be like, oh damn, that's definitely what I've been feeling.

Natalie: And even like [audio broke 5:35] in school, where they feel like, you know, there's a lot of peer pressure to be the best student, even. With grade-wise and everything. I'm seeing that a lot in some of my teen clients. Just the pressure of getting the best grade and getting into the AP class. And all of this stuff.

Allison: Yeah. and does your ideal client, are they seeking out art therapy? Or is it something you introduce to them and they are like, oh, this is awesome!

Natalie: Yeah. so, I found that a lot of people have been seeking me out for specifically art therapy. It's just, there's quite a few of us in St. Louis. And there's quite a few of us here. but I don't know, somehow, I don't really know SEO that well, but I tried my hardest. And like, I come pretty high on the list when it comes to art therapy in St. Louis. So, I felt okay, well that's

working. So then, I don't have to do art therapy with every client. But, when I find those clients calling me, I'll ask, how they found me, that kind of thing. and they'll say, just Googling art therapy near me and it coming up.

Allison: That's so cool. I love that people are seeking out art therapy!

Natalie: yeah, me, too. And that they know how to do that, right? Like that it's something that comes up. Yeah.

Allison: Very cool. So, let's see. So, we've got a little bit clearer on how you can communicate with your niche. So, the next hurdle is the ideal client. Which makes it easier to write everything. Which, by nature is exclusionary of everyone else, except for this one person. And I know that for people who have a hard time niching, the idea of an ideal client is dude, I just narrowed it down. Do I have to do more? And the answer is no, you don't have to do more. You don't have to have an ideal client. It just makes it easier. So, I don't know if you want to go there right now, or if you want to kind of sit and be with this as it stands, or what?

Natalie: No, I think we should go there. Because I keep hitting that wall, and I just want to get there.

Allison: So, let's imagine that this ideal client is just going to make up a certain percentage of your practice. It's certainly not going to be most of it. Maybe slightly most of it, but like 60% most of it, not 90%.

Natalie: Yeah. Okay.

Allison: So, what age?

Natalie: I really like working with the teens and young adults. And then, I think I was bringing in the young adults a little bit more. Because of the hours that I want to work. And I didn't know if that was just my own nervousness about getting clients and during the hours I want to work. So, I really like the older teens, young adults' area I feel would really {audio broke 8:10}.

Allison: That college transition age.

Natalie: Yeah.

Allison: Okay. So, we'll call that 19, maybe or 17 is the real {8:21 audio broke} 17. So, at 17, are most of your clients in that age range, is it their parents finding you, or is it them finding you?

Natalie: It's the parents mostly.

Allison: So, here's where it gets a little sticky. Is that I find that most 19-year old's that might be looking for their own therapist, don't want to see somebody who specializes in teenagers. Because those are like, I'm an adult now.

Natalie: Oh, right.

Allison: You know what I mean? So, there's a certain, I think it would need to definitely have a tab just for young adults.

Natalie: Okay.

Allison: I always wonder like what are people calling themselves? Some people use transitioning adults. But, I have never in my life heard a 19-year-old say I'm a transitioning adult. Or like, I work with young women who....and I'm like, who is a young woman? I don't know what that age is. I think I've aged out of young woman, personally. But I don't know if that's 16 or if that's 20?

Natalie: Its like what section do I buy my clothes in at the store, right?

Allison: Right! Yeah. I've long since aged out of juniors. But.

Natalie: Right. I don't want to call myself a misses.

Allison: Right, exactly! So, lets figure out, I feel like most teenagers call themselves teenagers.

Natalie: Yeah.

Allison: But they are not the ones looking, their parents are. But teenagers lands for them, too. But what are your young adult clients that you're enjoying calling themselves?

Natalie: Well, and I don't know that they really label it like that. Because they are just saying what they are doing, which is a lot of finishing high school, finding a college. Or maybe just starting college. They don't even really say college student unless they've already like started that. but, a lot of them are in that transition out of high school, soon to college.

Allison: So, I wonder if you had different tabs. Because I want to focus on the 17-year-old who is going to be there soon. But I think because it is so exclusionary for so many 19-year old to work with a teen therapist, I want you to have a tab. So, it could be college aged. Could just be called college aged. And I think that would land for most people.

Natalie: Yeah.

Allison: And then it's not excluding people who aren't in college, because you're saying college-aged, not college students.

Natalie: That's true. Okay.

Allison: So, the 17-year old's, the parents are finding you. So, what are they concerned about? That they are brining their kid to therapy, your ideal, idea.

Natalie: Okay. Well, typically its something about they've seen a change in behavior because of what ends up being as anxiety. So, maybe not going out as much. Getting nervous about doing things. You know, so just kind of those tall tell signs of anxiety.

Allison: Yeah. and do the parents recognize it as anxiety? Or is that something they realize as you are working with their kid?

Natalie: Most of the time, they see it as a behavioral change. Like, they'll see them [unknown 11:17] go to their room, that kind of thing. and they'll notice the change in behavior. Maybe they know its anxiety. Maybe they don't. but its most their change in behavior.

Allison: Okay. Great. So, talking about behavior changes and outlining what some of those look like, so that you're getting the behavior changes you want to work with and not, they are starting to kill animals or something. You know?

Natalie: Yep. I've worked with that population before, I'm kind of over that.

Allison: Yeah. yeah. This is what the beauty of specificity comes in. So being really clear about the kinds of behavior changes and making sure its written in such a way that it really like gets them in the gut like yes! Like, she used to be so fine with going out with her friends. And now, all of a sudden, she's just turning it down. And I don't know what to do. So, figuring out the language that they are using when they have that initial call with you, and they are describing what's going on.

Natalie: Yeah, and I think that's where I need to be more mindful during those calls, or something. Because then, when I sit back and I try to think about what it was that they originally said, or like trying to remember like a quote or something that I could pull from, that's where my mind goes blank and I'm like, I don't know. what did they say? What was the.... I mean, to be able to quote them in some way, so that it sounds like, wow, you're really speaking my language. You know, I see myself getting a little caught in that spot of the language.

Allison: Yeah. and maybe you keep a scrap paper everywhere that you answer the phone. That way you can just jot it down as you're going. And then, transfer that to a Google doc or something.

Natalie: Yeah. that's a good idea.

Allison: So, I'm hearing, life is hard for these kids. They are changing. Their parents are worried. The kid is struggling. What is it that's caused the behavior change in your ideal client? Like, why is the anxiety happening now?

Natalie: A lot of it has been school pressure. A lot of its been performance based, based off of peer pressure and/or parent pressure. Yeah, so that's been a lot of it.

Allison: Yeah. and that's an interesting thing because the parents are coming to you because they are seeing a behavior change, that they may or may not be complacent with the root cause of. So, you probably don't want to be like, most of my clients have parents who pressure them around their grades. And you should stop. Because they'll be like, I was just trying to be supportive of her future.

Natalie: yeah. or they are okay with it. Some of the parents are okay with putting the pressure on, because they think that is what will make their child succeed.

Allison: Right.

Natalie: A little tricky.

Allison: Yeah. and juicy. Like there's so much great work that can be done there with all the projection that's going on with the parents. Juicy, juicy! But yeah. So, there's this performance-based pressure. So, I might talk about, in your list of behavior changes, either a significant increase or decrease in studying. More worry around grades than they were

previously showing. Or competing with people that they are friends with for grades or achievement based, it might be sport or extra-curricular situation. Okay, so she's really starting to shape up in my head. In your ideal situation are the parents like, babe, stop putting so much pressure on yourself? Or are they like, study just another 30 minutes and I'm sure you'll make an A?

Natalie: Right. My ideal is when the parents are like, wow, I can't believe I was putting this pressure on, let me back off.

Allison: Awesome. Cool. So, they are flexible, and willing to look at their role in it. But they have been, accidentally, making things worse for their kid. So, I might speak some to, you want what's best for your kid, in always. And you want to support them in every way. But lately they haven't been accepting that support. Or, lately they've been more needy than usual and its starting to feel regressive.

Natalie: Yeah, that does really speak to it. And sometimes, the parents are a little bit teetering on wanting to push a little bit, but trying to back off a little bit, too. So, they are kind of a little stuck in their ways, to some extent, but trying to be open to helping and changing.

Allison: So, it sounds like, from this ideal client that we're constructing, you work with overachieving teen girls who are putting too much pressure on themselves and life is feeling really hard.

Natalie: Yeah. That's it! Okay. Because that really does speak to who I am thinking about. Those clients, really. Because that ends up being the underlying, like oh yeah, here we are again. Like, I'll be in session and I'll think to myself, oh, wait, here we are again! The moment of, yeah, feeling so much pressure and you can't do enough, be enough. And all those moments emerge.

Allison: and I think about how for so many overachievers, trauma is a root issue for that. So, you'll still get some trauma. And how, certainly if you're an overachiever, its likely to mess with your relationships in some way. Even if its you're trying to be the best girlfriend you could ever be.

Natalie: Right! Right!

Allison: And its definitely impacting the parent/child dynamic. And friendships, if you're feeling kind of competitive and overachieving. So, you kind of get to check all those boxes that I wrote down of trauma and dating and relationships and transition, certainly they are trying to set themselves up for the most smooth transition later. Which, we can't really do. We're all working for this future, but how likely is it that its going to go the way we expect?

Natalie: Exactly. Trying to control something that's not even in the realm of control at that moment? Yeah! So, would you use that word, overachiever? Is that something that....

Allison: well, how do your client's parents see them? Do they see them as overachievers? Or do they see them like, well you're doing what you're supposed to be doing?

Natalie: Most often, it's you're doing what you're supposed to be doing.

Allison: So, I might label them as bright. Parents love bright. So, maybe bright girls who are putting too much pressure on themselves or who aren't responding well to the pressures of their academic life or their social life.

Natalie: Yeah.

Allison: Because I think that what, I don't even work with teenagers. But occasionally I'll have a parent call to work with one of my employees who specializes in teens. And they are like, here's what's going on with my kid. She's really bright. Its like, they want to be like, but she's not a total F-up.

Natalie: No, that's so true!

Allison: Yeah. So, I think speaking to that, I see your kid as a great kid who has a great future ahead of her. We just want to get her on the path where she can manage that future.

Natalie: No, exactly. Even as I hear you say that, I'm like yeah, I want to work with that teen. Like, yeah, that's the one that I want to work with!

Allison: Yeah! Absolutely!

Natalie: That's really helpful.

Allison: So, she seems really clear to me, I have former clients that I'm like, oh yeah, she was totally...or even a couple current clients who are adults. As a teenager, I am sure. I mean, I think I was probably that kid. Mine was all like, in terms of motivation, my parents were like B's are fine, Allison. I was like B's are not fine! So yeah. My poor parents. So, I think there's....

Natalie: So, when I align that, when I throw that out there, that's really being specific to those teens. So, do you think that will capture any of the young adults that would be part of that?

Allison: So, I would phrase it differently. Because the young adults are more likely to be looking for themselves. Depending on how independent they are. Like some of their parents are still looking, too. And they still see them as teenagers, because they are 19 or 21. And they are like close enough. So, the parents won't necessarily be put off. But the young adults, if they are looking, they are likely to want to see their own experience reflected. So, I would make your whole website towards teenagers. Then, have a tab that says college aged. And then, to describe their specific pain. Like, they did well all through high school. And they got through college, and they thought they set themselves up in the best possible way by doing well. So that they could go to the school they wanted to, or their second choice or something. And then, this new life is so much harder than they thought it was going to be. When I worked in college mental health, something that I swear at least 25% of my clients over those five years said was, I keep being told these are the best years of my life. And it sucks. Like my life sucks. And its like if this is the best it's going to get, like where do I go from there? Because that's another form of [unknown 20:29] right? You're 18, live it up. It's all downhill from here.

Natalie: It's like when you have little babies and everybody's like this is the best time. Remember every moment. And you're like, I don't know, I'm just trying to figure this out!

Allison: Right! I'm not sleeping and I'm kind of hating everything. Yeah. So, speaking some to that pressure. And when you think about your young adult clients, and I think probably your young adult clients are maybe more independently interested in art therapy. Because it's cool and it's different. And you can talk about, I can do traditional talk therapy, but we can also do this other thing that can access things that you might not have words for right now. And to describe it in a way that's, when I say that I'm like, ooh, I want to access things I don't have words for. You know?

Natalie: Yeah. Right. So, do you think that I should have all of that, so my main page would be all about kind of the teen experience. A tab for college-age. And then, on each of those pages, relate it to art therapy in some way? Or should I have a whole other page of what is art therapy and that kind of?

Allison: I think I would talk about it on each page a little bit. Just on this very broad way. Because most of the time, if somebody's looking for art therapy, they will see that you do it, it will check the box. If they aren't looking for art therapy and they are like, I don't know, that sounds a little weird. And they are the kind of person who would warm up to it once they realize you're not like, splatter the plate. It will make more sense to them when it's explained in person. Probably.

Natalie: That's true. Okay. That makes sense. Because I really had my website set up where it's like almost all on the same page. Like when you come in, I just wanted you to see it all. So, you're not missing anything.

Allison: Right. I remember that. I love one-pagers, too. That's the hard thing. but, then the tabs, can you have tabs that then take you farther down the page?

Natalie: Yep. So, I'll play around with the tabs a little bit more then. That will be helpful.

Allison: Cool. Awesome! Yay!

Natalie: Thank you so much! I am so grateful for you, and I really feel like this has been such a blessing to me, the Party and just like I feel like it really sets people apart. This work, when we engage in what you taught us. I think it's amazing. So, thank you so much!

Allison: Thank you! I love that so much! Thanks!

Natalie: I appreciate your time.

Allison: Sure. Yeah, I'll see you around the Party!

Natalie: Okay! Thanks!

Allison: Bye.

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