

Colleen's Healing Journey¹

(Video's text)

*Susan Swim*²



Dr Swim: So, some of the things that we talked about in the last video after you guys left both David³ and I were amazed that the therapy and the services that you had gotten in the past were so void of you having a voice or your parents. And that, me being an educator for over three decades, I was really shocked but not surprised. Because I've heard similar stories, but to hear them, I think that we can both agree that it was sad. And this is why we have Now I See A Person Institute because we want to prevent this from occurring to other clients because it is our reality, our narrative, our perception that every client that enters into the ranch can heal and when you go to therapy it should be strength-based and help the client have hope on their journey instead of taking away hope. When you told me that you cried after sessions, I just was like my goodness, and when you told me that DCFS was after you, I was like these are just things that I guess I just, I think I had heard that DCFS was involved that I just didn't put all these things together and hear the magnitude of what happened. So, I don't know who would like to go first, but I guess we had two questions in addition to the questions that we had asked in the first video and you can hit just briefly on how you changed or how changed occurred for everyone, because I think everyone changed, and what helped that change occur.

Colleen: You go first.

Colleen's mother: Well for me change occurred but what you see is really me. What I couldn't do on the other side of the venue was I couldn't be free enough to speak because when I have so many eyes looking at me, they want to really intimidate me and they picked the wrong couple number one because we went to that juvenile court at least twenty times. I'm not kidding. And every time we went, the DCFS would always blame me or Adam. And it wasn't until the judge said 'Did you ever show the Chudnovsky's the file?' And this was on her background, and I mean it was, I'm not kidding it was this big [*holding arms from waist to above head*]. And the DCFS didn't like the fact that the judge was more supportive of us than the DCFS wanted them to be, or her to be. In knowing that, I don't know because you are working with the state, you are working with the government. And this is no plug-in [*laugh*] into how the government works, but you got to always be cognizant of big brother watching and with these children, especially this one, we were really cognizant of how we approach things. Now when we finally got to you, you were so welcoming. You didn't size us up. You didn't look at us as like 'Okay what are you people doing?' You wanted to know what you could in order to start healing the family unit. So what changed is you allowed me to be me, and not feel that I had to be someone other

¹ Transcript of the same title video.

² Dr Susan Swim, Now I See A Person

³ David Abramovich, Now I See A Person.

than myself and it was okay to kind of speak, so you get to know where we were coming from and our feelings. I mean that was the biggest change for me. Trying to get used to you was a huge change, huge. Because you're so, you're charismatic and you're so different. I mean you're human, I don't know what else to say. You're human. You don't go 'Hello my name is Dr. Susan Swim' [*holding out a hand for handshake*] you know. I'm not looking at a CV; I'm looking at a person, which obviously segways into Now I See A Person. That's what really was the change and the other change for me was, okay here is this person who is a PhD who really wants to help and not go 'Well here is my five-second review and if you go to the psychiatrist, I want you to fix you, you really tell him or her about this', and you weren't anything like that. So that learning curve was wonderful but scary for me at the same time. Because I've been so conditioned to go 'Wow, who's playing chess with whom now? And what pawn am I going to play when someone says checkmate?' I mean because that's how I think of the whole behavioral health society is someone is out to gain something and it won't be for your benefit. I mean that's how I look at it. And you are just, you are so out of the box that it's okay to be out of the box. Because people are out of the box and not one size fits all either and you're very good about knowing what size fits where and not shoving an attitude or a thought process that you have to adhere by. So knowing you has changed me in that respect, knowing you has opened up my eyes to many things personally and professionally. So yeah, I think change, yeah, I changed, but I only changed because of you. Otherwise, no, I'd be at a board meeting going 'Oh my god who is going to make what move and who wants to do to what go?' and I don't have that feeling here. And you know David, he was the first one we met, I always remember him. David was so laid back, [*inaudible*] because there wasn't any 'Welcome to my office, here is our literature.' You were very welcoming, and from that day forward I [*inaudible*]. Okay it's your turn.

Colleen: From the time, maybe going on two years I've been here. The day I came here I didn't want to come because my dad did not tell me anything. He was like I am going to go take you to this place and I'm like what place? And he's like wait until you see and then we pulled up to the ranch and I'm like what are we doing here? And he's like oh don't worry about it. I didn't know exactly what was going on when I came here but then when I first came I was very uncomfortable, not just the atmosphere I'd never seen horses, never been in that kind of environment especially with my parents not telling me exactly what's going on but I knew that my dad had mentioned it that I was hesitant, because I told him I don't really want to go to therapy because of all the stuff that happened prior to coming here. And then when I first started here I did have a lot of struggles within I would say the first year and I was calling her like non-stop because I didn't have anybody else to call and I didn't want to call the hotlines because they were hard they weren't going to listen to me, they were going to just send me right to the hospital and I didn't want that. But then as she got to know my parents, the way we do things, she guided my parents to not push me so hard, not to say 'Okay I'm taking you to the hospital right now this second because whatever you've done to yourself I'm worried about you so let's go, let's go.' And then months after that more trauma has happened but I was able to call her at like three in the morning, whenever I needed her, and she would answer me or David would answer me no matter what, even if it was hard to get them up [*smiling*] I'd still try over and over again because I didn't want to wake up my parents because I knew they would be mad, aggravated, don't know what to do and then when I got a hold of her she was be able to guide me through to be able to go tell my

parents what's going on. But she also would communicate with my parents all the time and was like, every day even if she's off her duty she'll call my parents and asks how I'm doing. It was like a constant check up on me and then a lot of things happened with me and her, we didn't have the best relationship at first but then we started building it. And then David of course, you know we didn't have the best connection because I didn't really know who you were. I didn't know anybody and I wasn't open as I should be because of the past, or the past people I'd been with I didn't know whether to trust Dr Swim or David and my parents were like 'Come on just give it a try' but I really didn't want to go through it. So then as I went to therapy two times or three times, whatever I needed. She never once sent me to the hospital. She always asked me if I wanted to go but I always said no and she always told my parents, 'Well you can take her if you'd like but I don't recommend it at all,' where in places bad things happen she would tell my parents but she guided my parents not to panic. That was the biggest thing because my parents would always panic. And then the year has come, I was going less and less to therapy because I didn't want to go because we didn't have the best relationship again, it was our ups and downs. But in order for me to make the change it wasn't all [pause] she was guiding me through it, but she wouldn't do all the work for me. She would make me find what would work for me rather than her telling me what to do. But then after that she tried to guide my parents to get me to go to college because she knew that I really wanted to go on my own, I want to be more independent. And the biggest thing was she wasn't looking at me like some crazy person, but the change that I made from the year I have been here has been so much different. Less suicidal thoughts, less being depressed, she got me off all of my medications on top of it. My mom knew as much as I hated to take them. But she was able to tell my mom that she doesn't need to be on all of these crazy, whack medications, maybe just one. She also helped our family be more connected rather than being disconnected, we weren't communicating, we weren't able to do the things we liked to do in the past year my parents were always paranoid for me to do things but when there was something wrong my parents and I were always able to rely on David or Dr Swim to answer the phones and then guide us through what to do rather than having my parents push me to the point where I do break she was able to guide my parents to not say the wrong things to me. Which is true, you're smiling over there so I know [laugh] But I got to say the biggest change was, like I said, being less depressed, less stressed, being able to go to college, that wasn't going to be possible without her and helping me be more me, not being this [using hands to signify quotation marks] depressed person and being labeled with all of these things.

Dr Swim: [Nodding and smiling] So, how do you see yourself differently now than you used to?

Colleen: I think more being with positive energy, not coming around in therapy being sad all the time sitting there not wanting to go. I've been wanting to go. And also [pause] breaking the cycle that I used to have. Of every three months, hospital go back, get out. Month later, two months later I'm back in the hospital. And then when I met you, you were able to break the cycle because the way I was approached with the therapy before they were always telling me 'Send her there, throw her there, that's the place to be for her' but with her you're able to not rely going on there because I was always stuck in my head okay I better go or you know I know my parents will want me to go, but she didn't want me to go nor did David want me to go to the hospital.

Dr Swim: So other than that, as a person who do you see yourself now?

Colleen: More happy.

Dr Swim: More happy.

Colleen: Yeah. Doing the things I'm able to do now that I wasn't able to do before, if that makes sense. Yeah.

Dr Swim: So, I have a term that I have come up with but I call it the extraordinarily normal or extraordinarily disordinary. Does that make sense? Devoid of a diagnosis, devoid of a label, devoid of a history. We are who we are, right now.

Colleen: [*Nodding and smiling*] Mhmm.

Dr Swim: You know I've always thought I wouldn't want to be judged on what I did in my adolescence, right? Or my young adulthood or maybe even what I did [*pause*] although I did a good job at things yesterday [*collective laughter*] but you know because that's not what defines me and so I think if I was just going to add into this a little bit I think that when we first met you, you were cemented in believing you were mentally ill. And...

Colleen: Like I was pinned to a wall too.

Dr Swim: Huh?

Colleen: Pinned to a wall.

Dr Swim: Yeah. And cemented that it would never get better. I don't think you really had hope to have that vision, dream, whatever that things were going to change and you were going to become a happy, extraordinarily normal person.

David: And if I could add a little bit, I think that you developed this idea that you had options. That you could go to college, that you could go on a road trip. That you were just like anybody else. I think once that clicked in you then the world became positive and everything was possible.

Dr Swim: I agree with you a hundred percent because when Colleen you were giving me too much credit for the change that occurred because I think that you and your family deserve all the credit, I was just there to help what I call journeying with you [*pause*] You know, if you would have said 'There's no way I ever want to go to college' I would have been fine. You know I wouldn't have fought you on that. Because there are so many people that make a lot more than I do that never went to college, so who am I to say that college is the answer to everything? But I think that from immediately David and I both saw somebody that had struggled. We saw your parents as people that had struggled and that we wanted very much for all of you guys to have a second chance. To like have a redo, and you want to talk a little bit about that, your such an eloquent [*pause*] he's so much better at speaking than I am.

David: I don't think so... I don't think that's true.

Dr Swim: That's because you're a lawyer though [*Collective laughter and smiling*]

David: And you know what I saw from day one with this family is that, first of all I saw that there was confusion like 'What do we do?' Right, because...

Dr Swim: There was crisis confusion.

David: Right, crisis confusion.

Colleen's mother: Right.

David: 'What do we do? We've gone through so many things, like is this going to work?'

Dr Swim: And we're still not out of the crisis.

David: Right, and so it was about getting out of that. And then once that happened you guys were able to transcend that crisis situation and really learn to accept each other for who you guys all were and the love shine through. And once that happened I believe that courage shined through. You were both, you and Adam were both very courageous in trusting Colleen to do certain things that you would never trust her to do before. And Colleen was very courageous in attempting to do those things. So I believe there was a lot of courage and a lot of faith and a lot of trust on both your ends to transcend the past and transcend the history that cemented you, that pinned you up against the wall. I thought that just being able to do that was remarkable. And I think all those elements coming together really were the key ingredients to where you guys are now.

Dr Swim: So, do you see where you blame us and we blame you? [*Collective laughter*].

Colleen: [*Smiling and laughing*] Yeah, yeah.

Dr Swim: You know because I was thinking about this this morning, and it's such an odd thing, but I was thinking about the psychiatrist you got. And how fortunate it was when you took the Ambien and had significant adverse effects and he asked me 'Do you think she needs to be on the medication?' And I could be quite honest and I said 'I'm worried about her being on the medication and you know we've had other young people come in being on multiple medications and they're actively more likely to make significant attempts rather than the clients that haven't.'

And so he was the one that said 'No medication.' Because I mean it's almost like there was a series of events that happened it was supposed to. I mean he wouldn't have taken you off of that medication if the Ambien hadn't had had such a problem reaction. Because I could have called him up every day and he would have been like 'Oh this woman is really crazy' and not been supportive. And he asked me 'Do you think it's PTSD or something else?' and I said 'Certainly you've known her, doesn't she have enough that it's been PTSD?' And so he was in agreement as well.

Colleen's mother: [*Mhmm throughout listening to Dr Swim's words*].

Dr Swim: I don't know if we ever tried to get you to actually do anything because I think that's one of the things David and I try not to do because we don't feel like we're God. You know, like 'Oh I've got this education up here that I know what to tell people to do and their going to get well.' But surely I think we saw the love that you had in your family, the goodness that everyone had and how can we pull that all together so that everybody's working together. And in some ways, for me, when you guys stopped seeing her and Colleen stopped seeing herself as somebody that was mentally ill. It was like a slippery slope, things just went so much better. Would you agree on that?

Colleen's mother: [*Mhmm throughout listening to Dr Swim's words*].

Colleen: [Nodding] Mhmm.

David: I think it was almost like, it illuminated all the goodness that you had in the family. It was like this label of mental illness sort of took away your...

Dr Swim: Humanness.

David: Your humanity. It stripped you of your humanity and it stripped you of your ability even though you loved each other tremendously but it sort of took that away. And then once that was lifted all the love came to surface and all the courage came to surface and all your intrinsic selves came to fruition.

Colleen's mother: Mhmm, I mean, I agree with you there. But again, like I said. Prior. I mean when you go through that system and all you have are people constantly, you know, telling you. And they were telling us. They weren't, like you just said you're not God you just gave the tools and how you do with the tools you're given is what your outcome is going to be versus them saying 'You must, you can and you have to. This is better, this is why.' I mean you weren't given options; you were just given like a to-do list. And looking for mental health, well that's what you got because everything was like boom, boom, boom, boom, boom. If she does this, do this, do that, do that, go, go, go to the hospital. And she was right and that's why coming here was such a different way of thinking [pause] allowing us to tell you what happened from the past in order to get to the present I mean that's been, that's been a long journey and we're still going through the journey, but it's a good journey.

Dr Swim: It's a good journey.

Colleen's mother: It's a very good journey. Very good.

David: And I think along with Colleen having PTSD the whole family unit had PTSD.

Colleen's mother: Oh my gosh yes.

David: You know, it wasn't just Colleen.

Colleen's mother: Oh no, no, no.

David: It was all of you.

Colleen's mother: Yeah!

Dr Swim: So, I got a call this morning from, no I got a text this morning from a client that we had seen [glancing at David] you know who this is. Which is another love story, a story of joy. This is why I call them stories of joy because it's story-full right? And I just saw, you know I was in my parking garage and I just scanned it for a second. And I thought that this kid had gotten arrested, okay. We hadn't seen this family in three or four years although we keep up with the parent and the child [pause] well young adult. And what it was is that they want to become a therapist and they want to volunteer this summer...

David: Wow.

Dr Swim: And they helped save somebody's life over the phone. And the father's crying to me on the phone recounting how his child was I guess in one of these gaming chat rooms and somebody was depressed and kind of talked and the guy in Texas was over the ledge. But we all remember the bad stories, right for a few

minutes? So because I had remembered some of the things from the past I was like...

Colleen's mother: Right.

Dr Swim: Oh my gosh maybe this eighteen-year-old ran off, or fourteen year old to Texas.

Colleen's mother: Right, right.

Dr Swim: And I told the father that, I said...

David: It's a knee jerk reaction, right?

Dr Swim: It's a knee jerk reaction.

Colleen's mother: Very much so.

Dr Swim: Because of the society that we live in, because the society does not support that people can get over mental illnesses.

Colleen's mother: No, no.

Dr Swim: And I was trained, of course, in the day that that's all we believed in.

Colleen's mother: Right.

Dr Swim: And there's still a large portion of the population here, but the large portion globally that believes this way and is funding huge amounts of money to work this way.

Colleen's mother: Right.

Dr Swim: And so, what you're getting is people not being chronically mentally ill.

Colleen's mother: Right.

Dr Swim: That means that they go through a hard time, they suffer, their families suffer, they get over it, they go back and they never revisit it.

Colleen's mother: Mhmm.

Dr Swim: But in this country, you know for me, it's a market...

Colleen's mother: Oh, very much so.

Dr Swim: I used to have a therapist friend that used to give people more problems when they started getting well. Let's say she had a full client coming in you don't get them well. It means you have cash coming in and you just throw out another problem because it's hard to say 'Bye, bye.'

Colleen's mother: And right, and you bring up a really good point because not just with mental health. But, you know, there's a lot of people that we encountered that wanted to give us different things to do which was coming in like three, four, maybe five times a week. And they would get mad saying that 'Well if you can't do that for her then what are you trying to do for her?'

Dr Swim: Wow.

Colleen's mother: And...

Dr Swim: Wow.

Colleen's mother: Uh huh.

Dr Swim: Like you were negligent because you had a job and you had to support the family.

Colleen's mother: Right, right, right. And they didn't like that. But I was supporting their overhead as well.

Dr Swim: Of course, you were.

Colleen's mother: Uh huh. So I just, I remember looking at this person and going 'You're way out of your league' and I just didn't go back. Because not only do they label the one who they think has an illness they label you in conjunction with them. And the whole...

Dr Swim: The whole lot of you.

Colleen's mother: Yes. Because we were the neglect. [*holding hands up to signify quotation marks*] Neglect. I heard that word once, I heard it a million times.

Dr Swim: Mhmm.

Colleen's mother: And it's like I don't know who you're trying to fool buddy, but it wasn't me. And there were times that I would push back. I had to. And at that point I really didn't care because it wasn't about me as it was about her. But sometimes you wouldn't get therapy because they would turn it around this way and then I felt oh my gosh I'm defending my whole existence...

Dr Swim: Right [*Nodding*].

Colleen's mother: And I'm just numb to that. But that [*pause*] I've lived it. So that I agree a hundred percent with what you've just said because it's true. It's out there, it lives and sometimes it breeds multiple times.

Dr Swim: Yes.

Colleen's mother: And if the client is not strong enough to push back you get swallowed by it.

Dr Swim: Yes, yes. And it lives in your mind.

Colleen's mother: Always, always.

Dr Swim: Because you know, we think that you are like, that both of you and Adam, and Rachel, are just normal people that went through difficult times. You know I never thought any differently than that. I think what helped our relationship was when you started to be able to trust me. And I think one of the ways that you learned to trust me was, and you can tell me if I'm wrong because I could be wrong, you know that. And you don't have to like patronize me, but when we had that long kidnapping.

Colleen: Mhmm [*Nodding*].

Dr Swim: And you know number one I felt very honored that you allowed me to be a part of that and reached out to me. And I think that that helped you see that I wasn't just somebody that was invested in getting you well but that I was somebody that

honestly cared as a human being and on a human basis. And I think that's what we are here is that we're all human beings.

Colleen's mother: Yeah.

Dr Swim: And issues arrive. And how do we all collectively find ways to be able to work with that? You know the title of both of the conferences that we are going to be presenting this tape at is about using community. So I just want to talk about that very quickly because we did work with a psychiatrist, we worked with Children's Hospital...

Colleen: Mhmm, I hated them.

David: We worked with your school counsellor, with your high school at some point.

Dr Swim: The woman that you liked so much.

Colleen: The counsellor.

David: The counsellor.

Dr Swim: The caretaker. So, if there is other people that have something to do with our family we're also in conversations with them so that collectively we're trying to go in the same direction to be of help. The psychiatrist...

David: And we've been like Colleen's friends, right?

Dr Swim: Yeah, remember?

Colleen: Yeah [*Smiling, collective laughter*]

Dr Swim: Yeah, that was nice.

Colleen's mother: Right, which makes you different because you want to collectively work with them and not at them. There's a big difference. Where you were generally concerned, well concerned is probably not the right word. But you genuinely wanted everyone to know her. Not who we thought she was but who she is and in order to do that we had to know her through therapy. I mean I had to get to know her. I mean I knew she was a loving girl, smart girl, funny. You know, but I didn't know her truly. I knew her as [*pause*] those characteristics were there but then I thought it was [*using hands to signify quotation marks*] a mask to mask what she truly felt, her emotions. And that was something that was, it was hard to let go and really holding on to faith that 'Okay you can let go because she is going to do what she is going to do.' And you know she still gets mad at me to this day.

Dr Swim: She gets what?

Colleen: Mad.

Dr Swim: Well of course. I mean like she's your daughter.

David: That's a normal relationship, right?

Colleen's mother: [*Laughing*] You know but I can laugh now because I know she knows her limits and she knows she's okay. I didn't laugh then because I felt like Roger Rabbit, like okay...

Dr Swim: Well, you were living on fear.

Colleen's mother: Yeah, I mean fear is really [pause] fear is such a liar. Fear is such a liar. However, fear is so easy to hold on to.

Dr Swim: Yes, of course.

David: Especially when the system perpetuates it.

Colleen's mother: Exactly and then you see it every day practically. And then it's just like...

Dr Swim: You know and you see what you believe is there.

Colleen's mother: Exactly. That's right on.

Dr Swim: If someone had told me that I was bipolar and that I had all these triggers, I would have not have trusted myself anymore. I wouldn't have seen me as still the quirky person that I am, that there is something wrong with me. [Collective laughter] And then I couldn't trust my own judgement, and the burden. Go ahead.

Colleen's mother: And you know what, you said it so eloquently. Because you forget that side that she constantly heard. I only surmised it because I wasn't in the room with her, if I was in the room it's because I was always fighting for her. But to see what she had to deal with on a daily basis. You know 'You are bipolar, you are this.' And when she got out of there I don't think Colleen knew who the heck she was. And I truly...

Dr Swim: Except that she was unhappy.

Colleen's mother: Exactly.

Dr Swim: And lonely.

Colleen's mother: Very lonely, very unhappy, very distraught. And what does she do with all of this? Because she's at a place theoretically that's supposed to help her with all of these emotions and yet it just built more and more and more. So much negativity. And that's the one part I still to this day don't understand. If therapy is to help you and you have to help yourself first, as you know, we already know that if you're willing to. Then why did she go through so much pain in order to find herself? I mean people go through pain [pause] but I'm not saying it correctly. But she went through so much that was so unnecessary [pause] that that's the part that I feel sorry for anyone going to any of those [pause] there not institutions...

Dr Swim: But they are.

Colleen's mother: But to those businesses who provide therapy in quotations and you come out not feeling any better or knowing how to feel better. You just come in as a bump on a log and you leave as a bump on a log and that's your therapy. And I don't understand why we allow that is I guess what I'm saying.

Dr Swim: And what were you saying, why is it allowed?

David: I think that it's allowed for many reasons. I think that number one, like you said, it's a business.

Colleen's mother: Right.

David: Right and people are making tons of money off of people being mentally ill.

Colleen's mother: Right.

David: Secondly, I believe that the universities in California aren't teaching people to do therapy, they're teaching people to diagnose.

Colleen's mother: Right.

David: And I think the victims in all of these stories are the people themselves that have not been given opportunity to heal. Have not been given the opportunity to be looked at as people, the opportunity to let their strengths be illuminated. I believe those people are the real victims and I believe that in order for the system to change that education about therapy and how it's done and what works, is to look at people through a lens of compassion and of caring and of kindness and understanding and...

Dr Swim: Of believing.

David: And believing and of hope and that people can change. And that certain things in life, yeah, we all get sad, we all get angry and that's okay but that doesn't mean that there's anything wrong with us. That just means that we're humans. And we're allowed to have those feelings, we're allowed to have those emotions, those things are okay.

Dr Swim: But you're not when you're diagnosed.

David: Exactly.

Colleen's mother: Right. I was just going to say that it's okay if you are [*holding hands up to signify quotation marks*] extremely ordinary but it is not okay if you are diagnosed.

David: Well, if we have too much of those emotions then we're diagnosed right?

Colleen's mother: Right.

David: So, we can have them to a certain level, right?

Dr Swim: It depends on who.

David: And it depends on who you are talking to, right?

Colleen's mother: Right.

David: So as Dr Swim said whatever we perceive is our reality, right? So they are perceiving people that are a particular way as being mentally ill. However I think that in order for this whole system to change, society's perceptions need to change. And that's a tall order.

Colleen's mother: That's a huge order because society, well especially here, isn't so open to the same sort of compassion and the same thought as they once were maybe thirty years ago. But I will say this anyone who doesn't get to see you is living in a world of hurt that doesn't need to. Wouldn't you agree?

Colleen: Mhmm.

Colleen's mother: I mean not to have the advantage to see you and not being able to express themselves as just a person, I believe is a crime. I really do. Because we were just lucky, we were really lucky that we found you because I know talking as a

parent and any parent that has been here knows how difficult it is to see your child struggle. And knowing that there is not a lot out there for them and it's great to give them this 'Oh you call this 1-800' but you know they're only good as whoever is on the other line and goodness knows who they employ. And it's almost like for mental people you get the quick fix of a card. Call the card and you know roll the dice and whatever you get, you get. And that's really sad that that's what we do. And we, again the [*holding hands up to signify quotation marks*] extremely normal don't even begin to know or understand the depths of despair and hurt and anger. I mean it's not like they want to be this way and yet we don't understand that they're trying to say something but can't because in the therapist's office where they go they're not allowed. And that's the real tragedy of this.

Dr Swim: So I'm going to end this off by asking you a question. So you know that one of the things that we do here is that we are a training institute, right? So we have our non-profit. So what would you want to tell new therapists?

Colleen: Tell who?

Dr Swim: New therapists.

Colleen: That come here? [*Smiling*]

David: Yeah, that train with us.

Dr Swim: What advice do you have that would prevent the things that had happened to you?

Colleen: Wherever you go next [*pause*] I'd say take all the experience you have with Dr Swim and David because I think that really what you learn in school you will be learned the wrong way not the right way.

Dr Swim: So if you had advice for somebody that is seventeen and struggling with wanting to kill themselves and not trusting their family and not trusting anybody, what would you tell them?

Colleen: In order to make the change you have to not let everybody else tell you what to do. You have to tell yourself what to do, you have to motivate yourself to be better, to want to get better and if no one else is working, like helping you out just keep yourself focused on what you are doing in the moment, not in the past or the future. Try to think about what's going on right now rather than wait until it is too late.

Dr Swim: And try to celebrate a little bit about this moment.

Colleen: Mhmm, yeah. Doing little things for yourself. Even though if it gets old doing the same thing every day just still do it. Find something new.

Dr Swim: Being kind to yourself.

Colleen: Treating yourself.

Dr Swim: I remember when I was a brand new therapist and I was sitting at a traffic light and I was probably in a hurry because I'm always in a hurry and I was telling myself all bad things 'You're going to be late...' and I was like oh my gosh I cannot believe all these bad things I'm telling myself. And so then I thought I'm the only one that knows myself well enough to be a cheerleader so I'm going to be my own cheerleader. I don't make mistakes, I might have a learning curve, like errors. So I

learned to even talk to myself differently because it's just those subtle things of telling yourself negative things that builds up.

Colleen's mother: Uh huh.

Colleen: And then you start to believe it.

Dr Swim: So, I can speak for both David and I it's been joyful this experience, it has.

Colleen's mother: Yeah, very joyful and we'll have more joy to come Colleen with you.

Dr Swim: I'm going to turn this off very quick.

Colleen: [*Laughing*] Smile at the camera.