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Everything Zen

Dr. Spada and staff offer a uniquely modern approach to therapy

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Dr. Spada and staff offer a uniquely modern approach to therapy

BY GENA ANSELL-LANDE



There is a lovely quote by the author Pema Chodron that says, “Nothing ever goes away until it has taught us what we need to know.” Whether a person is dealing with repetitive issues that cause negativity in life or is simply looking for an emotional tune up, psychotherapist Dr. Dana Spada can help make sense of it. With offices in Colts Neck, Little Silver, Sea Girt, and Hazlet, LEAF by Dr. Dana Spada offers psychotherapy in a setting reminiscent of a tranquil spa, or something one might find on a Pinterest board of beautiful spaces.

Anyone who has ever been to therapy knows that one of the most challenging aspects of beginning therapy is finding someone you personally vibe with. At LEAF, each of the therapists has their own individual style and strengths, which makes for a vast number of options within a truly well-rounded space.

The philosophy behind Dr. Spada’s practice is to provide holistic and evidence-based care that is respectful of the values of her patients. This individualized approach to patient

care is what helps motivate them to live their best life with balance.

“We never make our clients feel like they are ‘sick’ or that our space is a place to get better,” says Dr. Spada.

Dr. Spada knew from an early age that she wanted to pursue a career in therapy. “I was always curious about human nature and why people did the things they did. I am highly intuitive and connect well with people; something that is innate and can’t be learned in school. Being a therapist comes naturally to me,” she says.

There are a myriad of reasons to begin therapy. Some patients view therapy with a preventative mindset so they can continue their well-being, whereas others might be dealing with a very specific issue. “Sometimes it’s an unhappy relationship, or feelings of anxiety or depression that bring them in. For others, it’s a feeling of unfulfillment and not knowing why. As they progress through the therapeutic process, they come

to love it so much and find the process rewarding on a whole other level. Usually, they fold it right into their lives as an on-going activity," Spada says.

Having an objective person help navigate your life is a gift and a privilege. Spada believes the magic happens when she is able to assist her patients make otherwise dormant connections in order to spark new solutions to issues they are struggling with. Many of these folks will get what they need and leave and then come back at a later time if necessary for additional support.

One area she loves is working with couples. "When doing marital therapy, I always schedule individual sessions with each partner. This helps to establish relationships with each of them and build trust, which is key," she explains. This makes the overall process more effective when they do come together as a group.

When working with children, she loves to implement play therapy, which is a modality that meets children at their own level. All of this is done with the goal of bringing about healing. In fact, play is considered the most natural form of communication for a child. Dr. Spada also works with the parents in a separate session to achieve the best results.

Recently, Dr. Spada has been seeing a great deal of folks dealing with issues with emotional homeostasis. She explains, "This is a mindset that is familiar and known. We notice how some clients unconsciously find ways to maintain it." Emotional homeostasis is a state of mind that allows a person to make a highly efficient decision by becoming aware of any factors that could disturb your ability to reason. It allows you to remain mindful of your high or low moods and individual emotions, as these will have an impact on the rationale behind a decision that is being made.

"Take anxiety as a state of mind for example. If you are used to feeling anxious even when there isn't anything to actually be anxious about, you find things [to be anxious about] because that's the patterned and habitual way of being. This is a highly unconscious process that we bring into awareness," she says.



Sometimes, when her clients are really struggling, they can come to therapy more than once a week. This is known as "therapy camp." She adds, "We cannot control the therapeutic process, but we can control the cadence. Therapy camp has worked wonders for our clients and all ages are welcome."

As someone who is highly intuitive, Dr. Spada is mindful about staying grounded in her life and avoiding becoming overwhelmed. She loves to practice hot yoga and spend time in nature recharging her mental battery. She derives tremendous satisfaction from her practice and most importantly, believes it is a privilege to be on the inside of people's transformations. It is this passion that has continued to be her driving force for more than 22 years.

More than anything else, Spada would like the stigma that is often associated with therapy to disappear. Her motto is that there isn't a person in the world who would not experience some type of growth after a few therapy sessions. "Every once in a while, a male client will come in and say, if Tony Soprano can have a therapist, I can too."

For more information, visit www.danaspada.com