



BEYOND THE BRAND

Dr. Dana Spada Psychotherapist

By LiliAnn Paras

Dr. Dana Spada has an established psychotherapy practice in Colts Neck. Like Dr. Spada herself, the practice is very vibrant, incorporating a great deal of energy and creativity to treat all ages and a range of conditions. She has genuine appreciation for her patients' journeys and their trust in her, and shared the many facets of therapy she incorporates in her practice.

CM: What style of therapy do you provide?

Dr. Spada: I would describe it as psychodynamic. Therapy with me is very interactive; I'm not sitting there like a statue. I pull in many different therapy modalities, including cognitive behavioral therapy, a humanistic approach, meditation if needed, breath work – whatever need is presented is where I go.

CM: What type of issues do you treat?

Dr. Spada: I treat children, teens, and adults with issues ranging from serious, severe disorders, to some who just need per-

sonal growth, or have a particular issue in parenting, or at work, or school.

CM: When did you first realize that psychology was a calling?

Dr. Spada: Ever since middle school I loved psychology, even though I didn't know the word for it. I was always curious as to why people did what they did. As I got older, my interest grew. I came to appreciate that there is a level of reciprocity in this work. While other people are growing in therapy, I'm growing too. It's a parallel process and it keeps me grounded and aware of how hard it is to come out of one's comfort zone.

CM: What has surprised you about being a therapist?

Dr. Spada: I was surprised as to how much I enjoy practicing, and the relationships I develop with my clients. Couples counseling in particular speaks to me. I love the dynamic and that people have the ability to work through things right there in the moment. In some cases, the couple cannot get

further away from each other on the couch when they begin. The therapeutic process helps them to understand each other, communicate, and receive each other. I sometimes witness the transformation from anger and hurt to a couple who comes out in a different, better place.

CM: What have you found to be satisfying?

Dr. Spada: It is great to see patients begin to self-actualize, and to be a part of their journey and growth. It is wonderful to experience them discover things about themselves in therapy and see them apply this new knowledge to their lives. It seems that right before my very eyes, people begin to live richer and more fulfilling lives as they achieve the goals they set for themselves.

CM: What is often misunderstood about psychotherapy?

Dr. Spada: Therapy and "needing help" can have a negative connotation and can lead to a misunderstanding that "I can't do this", that "something is 'wrong' with me." Therapy is an investment in yourself. Any human being can undergo therapy and grow; it isn't only about treating severe issues. Treatment can be focused on a temporary troubling aspect of one's life, or a place to grow. The process is sometimes painful and may take courage, but it also can be one of the most rewarding and impactful processes one can experience. What is more important than one's own state of mind? Also, it is not the same as speaking to a friend. Seeing a professional is an experience with an objective person, with no agenda, who is there for you and helps process your experiences.

CM: Can you give a general mental health/therapy tip to our readers?

Dr. Spada: Recognize that everything starts with yourself- the way you treat yourself, the things you tell yourself. This self-relation is projected onto the world all the time. A lot of what we do stems from unconscious motivation. Therapy helps unpack and deconstruct the layers of our minds. When we make a commitment to ourselves and to therapy, the commitment leads toward health. And sometimes people experience joy and we even have some fun!