Episode 128: Mish

Hi and welcome to Social Work Spotlight, where I showcase different areas of the profession each episode. I'm your host, Yasmine Loupis, and today's guest is Mish, who lives, learns, loves, and supports community on the unceded lands of the Woiwurrung Wurundjeri and Bunuroung Peoples of the Kulin Nation. Mish is a plural system that is non-binary, queer, disabled, and neurodivergent. As a social worker of colour, their practice is grounded in identity affirming anti-colonial and anti-oppressive practices from which they have built their skillset of supporting people through a range of therapeutic modalities. Mish is the chair of The Iceberg Foundation, a mental health charity for BIPOC, queer and neurodivergent humans and is the principal practitioner at Niram, a BIPOC focussed EMDR practice. Mish's favourite part of working at TIF is being with community and supporting people and staff to engage with their favourite selves. Mish is the 2024 Australian Social Worker of the Year which they attribute to their community's support and will be using as a call to action to continue to loudly advocate for and engage in active allyship with indigenous struggles around the world, including Palestine, Sudan and Congo.

Yasmine Thank you so much, Mish, for meeting with me today. I'm looking forward to having a chat with you about your social work experience so far.

Mish No worries at all, and thank you for having me. It's a privilege to be able to talk about social work and the ways we do it. I want to note that I'm on the lands of the Wurundjeri people here, the Kulin Nation, and just wanting to pay my respects to elders past and present and just the ties to Indigenous kind of practices that we all benefit from as settlers. And just want to say that, yeah, land was never ceded. Always was, always will be.

Yasmine I always ask firstly, what got you into social work? When did you get started and what brought you to the profession?

Mish It's a really, I think, an interesting question, because my first career was actually as a tennis player. And so when I was quite a young person I used to play tennis as a profession, I used to travel, and through that I realised that I really loved working with people, I loved interacting with people, sitting with people. And I made a decision at 18 to become in fact a welfare worker. So it was a Bachelor of Rural Social Welfare back then. I didn't really want to be a social worker. I didn't really want to be a psychologist, but I really wanted to work with community. So I did all of that and then after a while realised just the power of the social work profession and what we can do for community. And yeah, that really solidified how I came to social work.

Yasmine And I understand that you did some other study, you trained as a nurse as well, and you did some study in social policy. So there's a little bit more to that background, I think.

Mish Yeah. So the nursing started and then I didn't end up completing, just because the medical model didn't quite sit well with me. But also as a non-binary queer person, it was quite difficult to be in a sector that treated us the way, you know, it does. And not to say that social work is perfect and not to say we get it right all the time, but yeah, it just didn't sit well with me within that medical model. So it's not something that I finished, but the Master's of Social Policy I did finish, because I had a vision of working to change systems within systems. And I

learnt very quickly that it wasn't for me. I much preferred the kind of direct practice work. And you know, I also say to people that it's a very different pace and change can be infinitesimal, but I think when you're sitting with people and their stories and their lives, I have much more patience for that than for the slower policy kind of cycles and changes. So yes, did other study, but very, very passionate about being a social worker. And this is the one that continues to fill my cup, and I'm sure there'll be further study in the future as well.

Yasmine Yeah. Were there specific systems you were interested in or things that you had exposure through your placement that fueled that passion for you?

Mish Yeah, so all of my degrees had placements, which is a lot of placement to have done, but especially the Master's of Social Work placement. I did it in a drug and alcohol agency, and I actually did a small research project on supervision, and I wrote my thesis on supervision. And I keep coming back to the power of supervision. I keep coming back to the power of we can do so much if we're well supported. And I wholly believe that burnout is when systems fail people and, you know, it's when it's not created or it's not maintained. And I'm talking about systems in a way that people can be human beings and work with human beings and continue to address issues within the system. So I have always been really passionate about supervision within that, but it definitely compounded, I suppose, my passion, that placement. But other placements I've done, especially in youth work, and I did a very short stint in child protection and I learnt very quickly that I couldn't be a child protection worker. I had to kind of pause that placement halfway through, and community work placement, just because again, it was me just figuring out the system, my body, you know, as a person of colour, as a non-binary person, as a queer person, as a neurodivergent person, as someone with a disability, what are the systems I can be safe in to continue the work? And yeah, so in answer to your question, there were some that worked out, and I spent a long time in drug and alcohol and loved kind of being within that and working towards addressing issues in that, but then there are other systems I was in that I went, I can't keep my passion and keep my human rights perspective, anti-colonial, anti-capitalist perspectives in. And I think they were just as valuable for me to learn to step out of them.

Yasmine That just speaks to integrity, really. I just, I feel like at that young age, I probably wouldn't have had the insight or bravery to say, this isn't working for me, I need a change. It's quite scary to say, I can't continue this placement, give me something else, with no reassurance that there is something else waiting for you. And, you know, the clock's ticking, there's so many other pressures. How did you determine and what support did you receive around that?

Mish It's a really interesting question, because I don't think any of the decisions I made as a young person were these innately really courageous or deeply wise choices. But I think, I wholly believe that there were ancestors I was connected with. I so believe in intergenerational kind of connection and traditions that so many of the decisions I made, they were guiding and they were supporting and, you know, from, it might sound woo woo, but from an attachment point of view, also the attachment to family figures and some of the sense of self identity played a huge role in that. So I think it's all well and good to kind of go, oh yes, there was wisdom there at that time. Or, oh yes, I knew what, but I didn't know what was happening as an 18 year old. But I just, I wholly knew that there were some decisions that where I come from, you know, it was made out of that, rather than just Mish, an 18 year old within this colonial systems. Was it scary? Absolutely, but I remember, even one of the biggest decisions I made was when, at that point when it was rural social welfare, they asked us now, do you want to specialise in psych or mental health? Do you want to specialise in policy? And they'd asked, there were three fields and human behaviour was one. And I literally remember going, there was an auditorium full of

people and you have to decide there and then. And I remember being like, no, like, and I was in Ballarat. I had nobody around me. I was living in a very dicey share house situation, and I didn't know anyone. And I remember being like, I don't know what to write. And I wrote human behaviour on there, and I chose my, but I remember being like, I don't know where this is coming from but someone's telling me to go down this road. And I come back to one of my favourite poets who says that poetry comes to her as entities, and she captures them and, you know, she writes them down. And I think my ancestral wisdom and my connection to my ancestors kind of come in that way, and so when I've made some of these decisions it hasn't just been me but it's been a connection to my lineage as well.

Yasmine And when you talk about lineage and ancestry, what is your family background and culture, and I guess, their understanding or context of social work? How do you sit within that and the Australian world?

Mish Yeah, there's such a long history of my family being social workers, but not in the white context of being social workers. So I'm a very proud South Indian human. I am what's called, I'm half Malayali and I'm half Kannadiga, which are parts, you know, and places and language groups in the South of India. And my grandmother was someone who worked in community, someone who supported people who didn't have food, someone who would take medicine out to community, would meet people, sit with people, and for me that's social work. And she didn't have the role or title of social work, but she was definitely a community leader. And when I look at even my mother, my mother's a teacher in a school, but the way she does it, the connections she has to young people, the joy she brings into the attachments of young people to say, I care about you. And some days we're going to have some really tough conversations because I care about you. But then some days I'm going to celebrate you with everything I have. And to me, that's also being a social worker without the role or title. And knowing so many generations of people who have been say in different roles, but have brought that sense of community and sitting with people and offering support has been such a long history throughout my lineage. And so I think even channeling that. Because one of the things I remember when I was deciding do I keep being a tennis player, do I stop and be something else, was the thing of, it just was calling. I can just say it was calling to me. I think most of it is I didn't want to run 10ks a day and, you know, gym for five hours and do all of that. So I think maybe there might have been some of that as well, given I do not do any physical activity really right now. But I do think it was that sense of this is what we do, this is who we are. And it's a big pride and privilege and honour for me to continue those family traditions.

Yasmine Amazing. So given the introduction to social work and the experiences that you had as a student, what has led to this point? What were your first roles? What happened once you left uni?

Mish Yeah, so my first role was back before reform in 2014, my first job was an outreach drug and alcohol youth counsellor. I think there was a better name title than that. I think I've completely butchered that title. But essentially, that's what I used to do when there was outreach kind of counselling offered to young people. And I did it around my hometowns of Broadmeadows in Glenroy and Jacana and Roxburgh Park in the north west of Melbourne, kind of those lands. And I loved that. I freaking loved that. I know that I still miss that, because reforms then happened and that was no longer a role. And I hated full time work, so I went back, I actually went to India and I used to be part of running a home for girls and women who had been rescued from the trafficking trade for a while. But that first bit here was really around supporting young people with their substance use, and very punished substance use, I must say. And so that was my first role. I ended up getting a job from that placement and I had a

brilliant, brilliant supervisor who really taught me how, you know, to come to this work and really deal with transference, counter transferrence, unconditional positive hope, all of that stuff which was really important. And then I went to India and did that work for about a year and worked with community there before coming back and working within drug and alcohol and homelessness. So did that for a little bit, and then continued to stay in drug and alcohol outreach. So kind of always did outreach in the drug and alcohol sector but in different ways. And followed that all the way through to COVID where I used to program coordinate, so I was a program coordinator for outreach programs with Odyssey House Victoria during COVID, which was a really interesting time and a very interesting way of doing outreach for people using substances to cope with the world and with lives, and to navigate through some stuff. So that was, yeah, a long kind of, long time of being in drug and alcohol and working within different roles, but within the sector. And I think drug and alcohol workers are incredible people. Not to say that workers in other sectors are not, but I have deep, deep love for people who work in the drug and alcohol sector. And it just made my 10 years just a privilege and a joy to be in that sector. So I was pretty lucky to have some great teams and people I worked with.

Yasmine Yeah. How did you find the transition from student to practitioner professional within the same organisation. Were the pressures different? Did you find that the dynamics changed? What was that like for you? Cause I know a lot of people do end up having a placement, final placement that becomes their first role. And I feel like it's not talked often enough, about how do you actually make that transition possible.

Mish Yeah, really good point. We, even at The Iceberg Foundation, we've had a couple of people who after placement have secured a position. And so it's, you know, part of kind of how I support people through as well. And what's so different is, I remember being like, it can't be me. Like, I still feel like a baby. I have no idea. You know, what do you mean?

Yasmine Imposter syndrome?

Mish Yeah, but I think it's more than imposter syndrome, so much as, what do you mean this person's life? You know, we have this weird sense, or maybe instead of saying we, I have this weird sense of I have to fix it or I have to know what to do or I have to, I put a lot of pressure on myself. And also navigating case notes and navigating talking to people and finding, especially because a lot of it was case management as well as counselling, how do I keep good records of things? How do I remember to case note in every damn detail? So I was learning a lot, and what happened when it kind of switched over into a worker role, I remember feeling like, oh god, this is it. It's the big world and holy shit, you know, you jumped off a cliff and either fly or you fall, and it was a really scary few months. But even to how I dressed. I remember back in the day, I used to dress in a lot of Dangerfield kind of clothes, and going from placement to work of being, I remember being, someone calling me into their office and being like, hey, that's not quite appropriate workwear for your job. And me being like oh, but it was fine placement? Like, what does it, you know, like all of those things. And also as a neurodivergent person, and back then I didn't know I was neurodivergent, being like, why can't I get the social things correct? Why do I say the wrong thing? Why don't I understand this, the social kind of dance that everyone plays? I found the participants I worked with to be wonderful, understood each other. There was, you know, all of that, but the agency side of things and the social kind of scripts and all of that, I didn't understand. And then years later I was like oh, I'm autistic. Turns out that that's what was happening there. And always feeling like an outsider and always feeling like I just wasn't, you know, saying the right things, doing it right, dressing right. All of that stuff. So even on top of the change to role, there was this change of culture that I didn't quite get. And like most neurodivergent people, I built a mask. I learned how to mask really well at work. I

learned how to do that. And then spent a long time unlearning that after kind of my late diagnosis and all that. But definitely that transition is well, for me, it was really hard, because I couldn't just go to my supervisor and be like, I don't know, help. What would you do? You know, as soon as money was being exchanged, I was like, oh shit, I'm supposed to know what to do now. When literally last week, I could have been like, help, you know.

Yasmine Why isn't someone checking my notes before they're finalised?

Mish And assessments. And because my first role was in drug and alcohol assessments. So it was like, I don't know, am I doing the right thing? Am I putting enough information in? In fact, as autistic and what I call VAST, so variable attention stimulus trait, AKA ADHDer, I put far too much in and then they'd come back and be like, that's far too much. And I'm like, ah, but it seemed okay on placement. You know, you get your tick boxes or your HDs for, hey, well done. You're putting a lot of information there. You're really understanding, to the next week, people being like, now throw all of that out the window and please just put a couple of sentences in. And you're like, oh okay. So yeah, it was a really interesting time. I don't think that's the word I would have used at the time, but it's what I'm using now.

Yasmine Sounds really disheartening, of thinking like you just got it together and you understood what was expected of you, and then someone throws that on its head. That's hard.

Mish Yeah, absolutely. But like I said before, I had a brilliant supervisor. And Gabby really set the foundations of my practice that I still use, you know, of how do you do supervision? How do you come to supervision? How do you think of things? Why are you impacted by certain things? And I think that really took me a long way. So even that, I was able to take into supervision and be like, I don't understand. And she would talk me through every single point, which is why I come back to supervision is always so important. You know, not only to graduates and new social workers, but also all the way through our career spans. Yeah. I think that's how I really navigated those first few years well, is because I had brilliant supervision.

Yasmine And how did things shift during COVID? What was that period like for you? How did your work have to change?

Mish It was a really interesting time, because lockdowns happened and I went from team leader to programs coordinator and started managing a few programs during COVID. And really interesting, because you know, you're learning, you're meeting your teams for the first time, you're doing all of that, but you couldn't, and it was all on the phone. And for anyone who has worked with teams or has been a team member trying to form connection to your program's coordinator or the person you report to, it's bloody hard if you're not seeing them every day, if it's phone calls, if you're out in the community. And so I think that was a really challenging time, because one of my favorite things to do is manage people, build teams that are joyous, that love the work, that are, I use resilient, but I use that with many grains of salt, or more adaptive. And that's the word I'm trying to use, that are adaptive and all of that. And so that was the hard bit during COVID, was connecting with teams. And, you know, when you're the person who takes quote unquote, takes over, people always have assumptions they make, they always have ways of connecting. And that was taken out from under us a little bit. So that was definitely difficult. But the other thing that changed, was also we were still doing outreach. So we were part of the cohort of people that were essential workers. And so we all still did our outreach, but it just looked so different. Because what happened over that time is where you would go on outreach, you'd come back and people would just pop into my office and say, oh yeah, outreach went well, or, oh, that was a tough one, or they'll have a phone call or whatever that is an assessment.

They had to do all that over the phone. And when everything was happening on the phone, I was far less available. And the difference between, because I was in this little fishbowl of an office, so it was all glass, you could see in, there's a difference between coming in and I wave and I can do a thumbs up, thumbs down, or a little wavy hand to be like mmm, and they can give me those nonverbal signals even if I was on a meeting, you know, or a phone call or anything like that. But there was nothing. So people would come back from outreach and just have to sit with. And what I noticed was a lot of people would talk themselves out of calling to check in or calling to ask for support or calling to connect, because they would go, they're probably busy. Or I wouldn't pick up because I was on other calls, or Zoom meetings became, you know, part of our lives. And so I couldn't just be available as kind of I would if I was in the lunchroom or anything like that. And so even us connecting as a team and staying connected as a team was super important. And work really, I found over that time, became like almost this perfect capitalist machine, and not because any of us wanted it to, but essentially because all you talk about was work. I didn't know anymore, you know, about someone's dog or their partner or their children, everything. And so we had to put processes in place and we implemented like a chat around pets and a chat around kids and, you know, one just to talk shit. We'd get on twice a week just to chat about random things. But that casual interaction and that peer supervision was lost, so we had to shift and adapt and do a lot of things during COVID. And also the risk was so much higher that people were sitting with. You're going in cars, the person might test positive, it's in close contact, people had young kids. I remember one of my senior clinicians had babies and, you know, it was, there was that added risk on top. And then people were using more, you know, and who didn't have eyes on them, who didn't have appointments. So everything was escalating and everything was, was harder in some senses. But I think it really, for me, developed those skills of connection within my team so much more than if we hadn't gone through that experience. And how to hear what they were going through in their voice very quickly within the first 10 seconds of a phone call and things like that. So there was a lot of shifts and a lot of changes and a lot of different processes that had to get put in place.

Yasmine Yeah, so you had to be really much more in tune with your team and, but that's exhausting for you, right? Because you're having to take that much more time and effort to make sure you're not missing anything. It's a lot of responsibility.

Mish You know, and this is where I come to different people love different things. Like, I couldn't be a kindergarten teacher or a primary school teacher, because it's not in my bones, right? It's just absolutely not in my bones. Doesn't make sense to me, but I love that. I loved the holding space, and I've always loved the holding space. Because the more I can hold space and create an environment in which a social worker can thrive, the more they can thrive, be proud of the work they do, support community and add these outcomes that they can be proud of in their own practice. And so it was a challenge, but it was one that I really wanted to do well. It was, I was really committed and continue to be committed to the wellbeing of my team. And that comes above all else. And around that time, I had a work colleague who, you know, really supported me and I was going through some bullying in the organisation, which was, that was the toughest thing to deal with, not the COVID and the teams and you know, the COVID and the teams are something I love doing day in and day out. But the bullying, that was the bit that was hard. But just having one person I could call and be like, this is rubbish or this is what happened, or whatever. Having someone who would commit to solidarity and show up constantly and again, great supervision really supported me through that.

Yasmine And how did you know that it was the time to move on from the drug and alcohol space?

Mish It was just the bullying, that I went, it's not worth it. Actually I found, I went into hospital and I was the SSDTA coordinator for a while, which is the Severe Substance Disorder Treatment Act. There's one bed in Victoria, there was at that point. and the team was managed at St Vincent's within the addiction medicine department. So I worked with them for about six months and then went hmm, this, my body is not, no, this is not for me. This is not where I kind of belong. And then I realised, especially in that role, how much the queer neurodivergent communities are just left out of that conversation. And which is where kind of The Iceberg Foundation was born. And it's not so much I wanted to leave drug and alcohol so much as I wanted to create a space where queer neurodivergent people could address their needs with people who were also queer and neurodivergent. Because I was just seeing so many people were using substances to navigate through their neurodivergent traits and characteristics and, you know, life kind of identities. Yeah, so I didn't really want to step out. It kind of happened that way. And I stepped into mental health and into mental health and not-for-profit space. But I would say it was me also being like, I think it's time, my body's telling me it's time.

Yasmine It's so sad when people burn out not because of the nature of the work, which is what you think would happen, but because of the internal dynamics. And it just kind of baffles me, because you think you should all be here for the right reasons and this is so not the right reason for, for someone to have to move on. It just, yeah, it's such a shame. And that's, you know, it's a loss of good staff. It's a retention issue across the board. Yeah. Sorry you had to go through that, but it sounds like it built into something new and something that has meant a lot to you, anyway.

Mish Absolutely. And, you know, I think at that time, the burnout, as you said, it was not around the work, and I think what's interesting, even as a supervisor, so I very early on, not like extremely early on, but early on in my career decided I wanted to offer really great supervision to people, and was really passionate about that space. And so I went and did training. And even through that, to be able to say to people you are as well equipped as you can be as a social worker when you come out of your degree for social work. We're not well equipped for office politics. That's not the degree I did, at least. You know, I kind of sometimes wish there was a component of that. And I know there's a component in social work around org stuff and all of that. But not really, you know, not politics and who to talk to and this person and personality stuff and all of this. And the people often go oh, it's not the work. And I go, because we're well-prepped for the work and your eyes are wide open and you have supervision, but what we're not often well-prepped for is all of the other human stuff of humans working with humans. You know, it's still at the end of the day, we're human beings who have our opinions and have our needs and our wants. And I know for my situation, the bullying was definitely around a few isms, even to be able to, after a while, come back to, that actually wasn't about me. But it's so hard in that space to not take it that it's about you, right? And years later I had my supervisor came back and say to me, I now see what you were talking about. You know, I, I get it. And even that in itself was validating to be like, thank you. Someone sees it, because before that was just my wife hearing about it constantly. And that's one of the things we don't talk about, is the impacts of all of that on our partners and our childrens and our friends on our polycules. On, you know, all of the relationships in our lives who then it cascades onto. So I think, yeah, it can have that burnout stuff, and bullying that happens so often in our sectors has these ripple effects all through a social worker's life, that sometimes never gets seen.

Yasmine Did you already start exploring the accredited mental health social work world before moving to Iceberg or did that develop afterwards?

Mish I don't know if I can give you a definite answer, because I don't know if I remember so clearly. When I was in the drug and alcohol sector very early on, I wanted to do EMDR, which is the modality I use a lot at the moment. And there wasn't really funding because it's quite an expensive modality to train in. So there wasn't really funding to do that. But one of the things in the EMDR, which is the EMDR Association of Australia, one of the things was to be a mental health social worker or have two years of practice in the mental health sector as a social worker. And I remember reading that, being like, okay, mental, what's that? You know, what's mental health social worker? And so that's where it really started. But that was quite early in my career. And I remember looking at that being like, oh, no, I don't want to be a mental health, like I had this thing of like, I'm going to be a drug and alcohol worker for the rest of my life. And so I put that on hold. But the more I worked in that intersection of drug and alcohol, homelessness, family violence, mental health, the more I went right, okay, I see the importance of this for people just to be able to, sure there's the Medicare stuff, but also to be able to get to a point where I can do EMDR and provide support, deeper support that addresses some of those mental health issues that people face. So kind of started very early on in my career, but I didn't really pick it up until I was eligible for EMDR and to do stuff like that.

Yasmine Which is probably a good way of doing it, instead of feeling pressure to get it all done in a particular way for a specific role, right? You could take your time.

Mish Which is what I see now. We have two placement students a year at The Iceberg Foundation, and I see people in their placement talk about wanting to be mental health social workers. And I sometimes think, right, like, amazing, it's great that you know. And, you know, and at the same time, I think, oof, I wish you had the time I had, to just kind of meander a little bit and see where you wanna be and come to it slowly. But I do also understand the climate that we're in is very different to when I started working back and 2012 or 13. And it is, yeah, it is very different now, but many more people are kind of saying, I wanna graduate and then go to mental health social work straight away. Which is great for some people, and then I think for other people, it's a lot of pressure and they feel like they're not legitimate. Maybe that's the word that fits the most, they're not legitimate until they're a mental health social worker. And to be honest, the way that other sectors shit on us, I don't blame them for feeling that way. Because if you look within the NDIS or you look within community or any of that, people will go, social workers don't do therapy, social workers don't do this, social workers don't do that. And when you can say, well, I can do the same thing a psychologist does in Medicare, people go, oh, okay. You know, so I understand also people needing to work within a really broken system.

Yasmine Yeah. In addition to the role that you were working in in India, I saw that you've also done some volunteering. Can you tell me about Joining the Dots and how that all came about?

Mish Ah, ooh, you've done your research. I was like, what is?

Yasmine I may have gently stalked you, yes.

Mish It took me a minute, I was like what was that role? Oh yes, the welcome dinners, god that was such a joyful role. So there's this beautiful, beautiful organisation that did welcome dinners and welcome lunches. And do you know the premise of them? Have you come across them before?

Yasmine But I'm interested in volunteering in any capacity, so I think it's, and I also worked with new arrivals in my first role out of uni, so that's yeah, a passion for me as well.

Mish Yeah, it's such a beautiful thing where they looked at the research that said that if you want to say the outcomes, quote unquote, of people who are newly arrived to Australia are much better when they're connected to community. This is one of those things you go, well duh, obviously, you know.

Yasmine Then why is there no funding for it?

Mish Yeah, and then research takes like 10 years to catch up and you're like, we were there 20 years ago. And so the welcome dinners were this beautiful thing where there were newly arrived Australians and what they would call established Australians together in a room. So there would be the same number of newly arrived Australians and the same number of established Australians within that community. So within that suburb or sometimes it was within the three streets or the community centre or whatever that was, and would get people in a room and they would bring a dish from either their culture or that means something to them. And oh, I used to, so I used to facilitate them. They were just these beautiful, beautiful moments of connection, and some that you don't often get, to just being able to connect with other people. And I remember the founder's story. One of the things she said is, she was working with nearly arrived Australians, and one of the participants who she was working with said, I've been in this country for six years and I've never been inside the home of an Australian before. And she said, what do you mean? And the person said, well, who's inviting me in? And then there's that stuff as a social worker, you can't really invite your participants into your home. It's against our code of ethics and you know, all of that. And how do you still build community while upholding those codes? And for me, this was a way I could do that. So I volunteered with them, yeah, for a while. And I used to facilitate both the intimate dinners, so in people's homes, very like six and six, kind of 12 people, but also the community ones. So I facilitated a few community dinners where it would be at a community centre and again, the same, but it would be maybe 30 or 40 newly arrived people and 30 or 40 established people. And then just being like, what do you like doing? I love gardening. And you'd have little stickers, like name badges or stickers, and you would write sure your name, but also what you're interested in on there. And again, just that nervousness and anxiety around, I don't know what to talk to this person about, but you could point and be like, oh cool, you like gardening, tell me more. What does that mean for you? You know, and I remember once writing on there poetry, and this incredible human being came up and said, I'm a poet. And I said, oh my god, that's so amazing. They were from Afghanistan and they read some poetry and it was so moving and beautiful. And they said, I never talk to people about my poetry. You know, I never know how to bring it up. It seems like most Australians think poetry is this kind of silly or not cool thing. And I was like, you just need to find your people. Have you heard of Fitzroy and Collingwood? You know, I was like, I just feel like there's a scene. But even that being able to connect with people, it just reduced those barriers and in ways where people can externalise a little bit and feel like it's not about their story, because there were three rules from memory. One was you could not ask someone how they got to Australia. Again, it was that acknowledgement that people come to this continent, to these unceded lands in different ways. And so that was one of the things. You couldn't ask people what they did for work. Again, the privilege of being able to work and to have a career that's recognised here, because so many people are community workers and healers and leaders and architects and doctors and whatever, in different countries that's just not recognised here. So that took that power dynamic away.

Yasmine Which is hard, because in so many cultures that's small talk, right? What do you do for work is the first thing they might ask.

Mish But what it meant was you have to really think about how to connect with this person outside of capitalism. You have to really think about, which is where those name badges were really good, of like, tell me about what do you mean reading? Because I know my reading is very different to, you know, people who read like incredible books and things like that. And so it removed that. And the third thing that we couldn't do was talk about the sense of family. So obviously, you could talk about people's family, we removed the sense of talking about the nuclear family, of we wouldn't ask parents and whatever, you'd just be able to ask more broadly around community. And I think having those three there to structure the conversation meant that connection could happen outside of those capitalist spaces or outside of those identities that we're so used to kind of going, what do you do for work? And if someone says accountants, you know, being like, oh gosh. Or I say social worker and people are like, social worker? And you're like, oh god, okay, here we go. I have to explain what I do, you know? But it was around my passion. This is how I find joy in life. This is the walks I go to. Do you have a pet? All of those kind of connections were much more available to people in those conversations through that framework. So yeah, it was a really beautiful, beautiful volunteering role I had for a while. Thanks for bringing that up. It's been a while since I've talked about it.

Yasmine How did they find funding? Was there funding, was it completely peer-led? What happened there?

Mish It was, I think, all volunteer-led apart from the really top kind of bits of it. I couldn't tell you about their funding structure much more than that, but I just know that all of us were volunteers. And there were some incredibly, incredibly compassionate volunteers and passionate people that were part of that project. So from memory, there wasn't really funding. It was volunteer led, but I could be very wrong. But I just know that all of us just tried to do the best we could with what we have, essentially, you know, and then COVID came.

Yasmine That's community work.

Mish Of course it is. Absolutely. And that's mutual aid work. And that's, you know, supporting each other and sticking in it with each other. But I remember, yeah, that ceased for me anyway, during COVID, where I just kind of couldn't do it. I had a young family at the time and it wouldn't, it just didn't work in terms of exposure and community and all of that stuff that was happening at that time.

Yasmine Yeah, absolutely. Funding in community is a tricky thing, and I remember when I was in community, partnerships were more important sometimes than funding. It was that networking, it was finding your people. I had a cooking group that I'd started that had no funding, but it was peer-led in the sense that each time we met one person in the group would, they'd take turns, basically, to say okay, this is my turn to cook something and show you my culture. And then the next person, that was their turn next. But it meant that you're partnering with Housing to get some space, like a community centre that was within a housing complex to actually run the group and use the kitchen. It meant partnering with a local domestic and family violence service to provide some child-minding so that these women could feel free to come to this space and not have to worry about their kids being looked after. And sometimes that's where the real connection happens, where you don't have a formal thing where you have to meet, and you have to find outcomes and objectives and measure things because how do you measure connection? That's really hard.

Mish Which is where we see a lot of funding getting cut, is even not even funding, but very recently the NDIS have decided that expressive therapies such as art therapy, music

therapy, dance therapy are not therapies. And very similar to what you're talking about, there's that sense of, you can't measure. And I remember years and years and years ago in the drug and alcohol sector, they cut funding for community groups, for expressive arts groups, because there was that sense of, yeah, the same thing, how do you measure that? I think because we are so quantitatively aligned with research and that's where we get a lot of our outcome measures and frameworks from, a lot of times we lose the humanity and what connection can actually look like and we lose the humanistic kind of outcomes, if you want to use that word, in some of these. So you know, there's a long line of us having funding cut but also therapies de-prioritised, maybe that's the word, because it's not seen as getting an outcome. But six CBT sessions, of course.

Yasmine Gold Standard.

Mish Gold standard, all fine, you know. But it just blows my mind and makes me quite angry actually, so much so I've forgotten your question.

Yasmine I didn't even think there was a question, I just took us down a fun rabbit hole. I should come back to The Iceberg Foundation. Tell me about how you got involved and what you do.

Mish Yeah, so currently I'm the chair of The Iceberg Foundation, which is a mental health charity. We actually only just got our charity status a week ago, so still reeling from that. But a mental health charity for neurodivergent and queer humans. Again, it's that intersectional kind of lens of looking at something. And it's a wonderful team of really passionate people. Almost, I think everyone is neurodivergent in the team and most people are queer in the team. And one of the things that I love about The Iceberg Foundation is, there's BIPOC kind of leadership throughout all the levels. So we found that in organisations, the board or the CEOs and that kind of C-suite of people and then the managers would all be kind of white people, and then the workers would be people of colour. And inherently the power dynamics within that or the lack of understanding or the lack of holding space, and it was really unsafe for a lot of people of colour. And at The Iceberg Foundation the board is all people of colour, the leadership is all people of colour. The admin team, interesting, is all people of colour. Because admin is your frontline, right? Frontline workers is admin, because they're picking up the phone and really supporting people to navigate through a system. And I think if you call admin and you don't have a good experience, you're not likely to continue accessing support. And then there's a couple of people who are not people of colour in the team, but really we've set it up in a way where leadership is seen through the lens of anti-colonial, anti-capitalist frameworks. And it's just a brilliant team. I love going into work. I love being able to sit with the team and talk about how we can better support our communities. And so the Iceberg Foundation does four things. One is the therapeutic, we call them tentacles. Or maybe I call them tentacles rather than service streams. But the one tentacle is the therapeutic one, which is, so you see your trauma therapy, counselling, psychosocial support, which is outreach work. And everyone does outreach to some extent, because again, I started my career and a lot of my career was in outreach. And just seeing the barriers that are removed when you're able to go to someone's community. So even our counsellors and everyone can offer outreach. So that's the therapeutic kind of arm. We then have a program called the Manaya Pride Program, which is just a really beautiful program that's run by volunteers. And it's a free program for any queer forcibly displaced people, such as, you know, if we think in legal terms, refugees or asylum seekers and things like that. Because we found that there was no one providing mental health support in terms of individual therapy and things like that. So we offer individual therapy for free, psychosocial support, as well as supporting people to navigate through the systems. So The Iceberg Foundation is also

unfunded. So no funding there, but passionate group of volunteers. Again, the whole team except one is people of colour. We then also have our capacity building tentacle where we have training, and our student placements sit under there, but we also run the PTNA, which is the Pride Therapy Network Australia for any therapist who is a queer person to come together once every two months and just talk about that duality of impact, you know, of working with community and then having to sit with that and go home. It's not quite supervision, but it's also not quite therapy. Kind of where do you take that stuff? Well, that's where you can take that stuff. And we also kind of offer other trainings and supervisions, and our PIFS programs, so the Pay It Forward Supervision program where people can come and access either free or low cost supervision with the agreement of then they offer free or low cost services to communities so we can have this ripple effect. So yeah, that's capacity building. And then if we ever have profits, we put it all into our philanthropic fund called Elevating the Rainbow, and we distribute that out to the queer communities. Because TIF is really underpinned by three main values. One is compassion over empathy, because we believe in people's experiences rather than our interpretation of their experiences. The second is investing in joy. We find a lot of therapies is a very deficit based model. But we invest in people being able to access and embody their favourite self, not their highest or best self, but their favourite self. The last is we wholly believe that addressing mental health doesn't just happen in a room talking to someone, but it happens in community. It happens when you see yourself being represented. It happens in being able to access community spaces and events and celebrate your religion and your culture, and all of that is mental health or addressing mental health. So we invest through this philanthropic fund whenever we have quote unquote profits, you know, like whenever we have some money essentially to give out. Doesn't always happen. But yeah, that's kind of The Iceberg Foundation.

Yasmine That's incredible.

Mish Yeah, it's great.

Yasmine What's the hardest thing about the work that you're doing? Is it the clinical governance? Is it building trust within the community? What's really tough?

Mish I think the toughest thing is wanting to work in a sector as an unfunded entity, because you take for granted what's available to you in a funded organisation. So for example, when I was working in the intersection of family violence and drug and alcohol, we were able to, at any point, drop of a hat, call a family violence advisor and go, hey, this person's going through this, can you help me, you know, what can we do? And we work a lot, quite closely with GenWest, which is an organisation that supports people navigating family violence in the West. And they will often refer people to us and will work with people at no cost or they have third party kind of funding. And I remember calling family violence advisors and saying, hey, the team is really sitting with a lot of risk and we're not funded, and so we can't actually, can we have just some questions once a month? Could we do some supervision with you? And they went, you're not a funded entity, we can't do that. And I said, yeah, but we're doing the work. If we didn't do the work, people would not have services. And time and time again, coming up against people going, oh, you're not a funded entity, you can't do that. You're not a funded entity, you can't do that. And us going, so you're really creating these environments where you have to be part of the system and perpetuate what the system does to people in order to access these supports for workers. And as someone who's trying to create environments where the team feels supported and loved and connected and pride in what they do, it's so hard coming up against this message time and time again, that you're not a funded entity and therefore, you know, we have all of this not available to you. Now, I understand from a point of view of private practices are, you know, private companies and so they don't have access to that because there's a

sense of well, people are paying you and so you can access that paid service. But for organisations like ours that do a lot of like pro bono or low bono work, it's really difficult to sit as a charity in a space and not be held by the sectors around but still be doing the work and be doing the work in community. So I think that's been my most challenging bit. But I have to say it's very easily overcome by spending time with the team. You know, the amount of passion that there is, the amount of joy, the amount of queer joy there is in this team and the sense of we can all be neurodivergent and it's okay. If someone needs to talk at a volume or be blunted or unmasked or do all of this, we can do that. And that's ,all of us are sitting there with our little fidgets and moving and, you know, saying things and echolalia going on. And the hard bits are easier to navigate because yeah, it's just a brilliant team.

Yasmine What support do you need, then? You've mentioned supervision, supporting your people and support for the profession. How do you manage all of that?

Mish Yeah. First is a really deep connection to our senior clinician and the team. We work incredibly closely together. I see them more than I see my wife, which, you know, works kind of really well when it comes to that professional connection. So I have a really deep and solid professional and personal connection with our senior clinician, who's just a brilliant human being who learned in the Maori traditions, or was taught kind of narrative therapy and looking at it from Indigenous perspectives in Aotearoa, also known as New Zealand. And just the wisdom and the lenses she brings to work, and how much I learn from them is, you know, also, I think, really supportive to me because I get to keep that joy of learning new things from them all the time. And also the team. There are so many people at The Iceberg Foundation who are there because they believe in the vision and kind of go, yeah, of course we're gonna do that. And we're just gonna figure out how we do that. And can we, you know, move things, be flexible, and people are just there out of passion and that drives my own. And I think the most important one is my connection with my wife. Out of all of that, she is the person that essentially holds the fort and allows me to do what I do. And there's a lot of privilege in that. There's a lot of privilege to have someone have your back 24/7, you know. I'm someone who works 90 hour weeks and she goes, okay, if we're going to dinner, you're going to bring your laptop around and you're going to be working. Yep, that makes sense. Like, I have a very funny story that, we were getting married, and the morning of our wedding I was checking emails, and I was like replying/And she was like, oh mate, come on. And I was like, it's a great opportunity. Like maybe, you know, so I'm, and I said, okay, okay, for the ceremony, I'll turn it off. Fair enough. And I turned it off and it was in her pocket. And then she went, your phone's buzzing. I thought I turned it off, but maybe my phone doesn't know how to be turned off. So I looked at it, and what was so funny, is before TIF had an office we were working out of my study, essentially. That's where everyone would conduct their sessions, then we would all book out the rooms and stuff like that. And that day we had used that room for my parents and her parents and all of that to get ready. So it was, you know, because we had done all of our getting ready at home. And so it was a mess, and a clinician was calling to be like, I'm here with a participant and it just seems really messy in the therapy room. And I remember my soul leaving my body. Like, I just remember being like, this is it. I need a hole to open up and swallow me, and I've left the stratosphere.

Yasmine Surely of all days, you can have an allowance, right?

Mish Yeah. But even for her to be like, okay, what do we do? You know, rather than, oh, I can't believe work is intruding, it was more a laugh. And she's in with me every step of the way. I don't take a step that's not supported by her. And I think just having someone who has unconditional positive regard and hope for you is so healing and important. And yeah, so the reason TIF exists and continues and I can do what I do, is very much my wife.

Yasmine Yeah, amazing. Good to have people who have your back and…

Mish Sure, absolutely. And also I have brilliant supervisors, and supervisors that do approach the work similarly to me, that approach the work through intersectional, intergenerational lenses. That see the importance of somatic work, for example. That understand social work is not just in the room with someone, but it's your ethics and it's your political identity and it's the way you stand up in protest and the way you commit to solidarity. Having those supervisors and, also I'm a very outspoken supporter or someone committed to allyship with Indigenous struggles across the world in Palestine, Congo, Sudan, these places, and having supervisors who go, you need to do that for your own body to be able to navigate these spaces safely. And as an organisation, we're very loud and very proud of our continued commitment to solidarity with Indigenous kind of struggles, because they are ours as well, has been really, really important in me continuing to navigate the space in a way that I feel is ethical and congruent to me.

Yasmine Yeah. You've recently been recognised as Australian Social Worker of the Year. Congratulations firstly, but what does that mean to you and what does it mean for your work?

Mish Yeah, thank you. What does it mean to me? I think for me what it meant was a pretty big sign that the community behind social workers is incredibly important. This is not a personal win, and I've been very open about it. This is a community win. Because it's all well and good to look at one social worker, but like I said before, if it isn't the team, you know, holding space, if it isn't people saying, I'll do this or I see the vision and I'll come along with this, we wouldn't be where we are. If it isn't the communities who come and access support and say, I trust and I'm going to build connection, you know, it wouldn't have happened. So this is a win not for me, but really for community. And that's meant that it really shows that community work works, essentially. Which is also juxtaposed against then the NDIS cutting creative therapies, you know, and kind of that work. So it was a really interesting week. But also, I think sometimes it's hard to take a leap of faith and go, okay. So for two years I worked pro bono at The Iceberg Foundation and I didn't really take a wage. And even to be able to acknowledge that, because that was a big leap of faith to take and go, I'm just going to do this work, and I believe in this and I believe in kind of where we're heading. And so it also felt like it was saying, hey, that wasn't a very silly decision, though at some days it felt like a very silly decision. It helped with that, and it helped with believing in community work.

Yasmine Yeah. Are there any programs or projects that you wanted to shout out that are coming up for you?

Mish Yep, so one is, I do a thing and it come from Amy English and Michelle Bowes who are incredible social workers up in…

Yasmine Who have both been on the podcast.

Mish Yes, they have both been on the podcast. But they're beautiful human beings. And they do something called a fishbowl, where they show the way they practice to clinicians with a volunteer. And I've started doing the same around anti-colonial and identity affirming kind of EMDR practice. Look, Amy and Michelle are incredibly skilled, amazing clinicians and mine is a little bit more clunky, but it also just, there's a lot of vulnerability there to show that this is what I would do. What would you do differently? So I'm offering that once every two months with the first one being in Feb for this one. So if you would like to be part of that, you can reach out to

admin and we can put kind of the details in the show notes. And the second one is EMDR peer supervision. I hold two groups, one for newly trained EMDR clinicians and one for more advanced kind of parts work and that attachment form of relational integrative EMDR stuff that happens once a month on the last Tuesday and Thursday of each month. So those would probably be the two things I'd like to shout out.

Yasmine Lovely. And can you tell me a bit about the Zoe Bell Gender Collective and also GiveOUT Australia and your involvement in that?

Mish So, GiveOUT Australia, I have just finished my tenure shift with them as a director, and very excitedly they have partnered and have become one entity with the Aurora Foundation to make Rainbow Giving Australia. And it's just been such a joy and a privilege to be able to sit on a board of incredibly passionate humans who want to grow the pot of gold under the rainbow essentially, for the queer communities. So out of every hundred dollars of philanthropic money that's kind of put out into Australia, only five cents of that goes to the queer communities, and a very small percentage of that goes to communities of colour, queer communities of colour. And so to be able to do a very small bit in changing that was such a privilege and joy. I was the chair of the Give Out Day subcommittee for two years where we raised, you know, this year, which in 2024, we raised half a million dollars. And eight years ago, we raised like $80,000, you know, and even that was, oh the goosebumps, or the electricity that goes through the body. But that mutual aid stuff, most organisations in the queer community survive on less than a thousand dollars a year. Think about people who are volunteering and showing up for community and being the people that they needed when they were younger and being the people they still need and their families need, being able to see that they have funding and are able to access support to be able to then support community. It was incredible to be part of that story, and definitely an honour of mine. And with the Zoe Bell Gender Collective, I've just come on board as a new board member, and that's really supporting trans and gender diverse non-binary people around a whole range of things from family violence to respectful relationships to young people navigating the world and school and workplaces as trans, non-binary and gender diverse people. So I'm really excited to see where Zoe Bell grows into and becomes, and again a really deep privilege to be able to be on those boards and support people from an anti-colonial, anti-capitalist, intersectional framework. This is another place where social work is seen sometimes as not being social work-y. Like it's not a social work role to be on boards or to help shape policy or programs and things, but it absolutely is, you know, and the micro, meso, macro, it absolutely is. So to social workers who go, oh, boards are just for, you know, different people. I would highly recommend starting to think about governance and starting to think about this us versus them and how can we remove some of that in organisations and how can you be part of decision-making governance? What does that actually mean for your practice and how does it filter down to the community work we all do?

Yasmine Have you heard of a mini series called In Our Blood? It’s on ABC iview?

Mish Yes, I don't have a TV and so …

Yasmine Me neither. Everything is on demand.

Mish Yeah, but I have, and I think it's on our to watch list.

Yasmine Yeah. I mean, it's a four-part series, it's called a musical drama but it's not really. It's inspired by Australia's radical response to AIDS in the 1980s. What's reminded me as you're talking, it tells the story of a community grappling with a terrifying new disease and with no cure

in sight, they realise they'll need something pretty radical to survive and trust again. And there's that legacy of supports within diverse communities in Australia, similar to like, this isn't a new concept. This is something that we've been doing and grappling with for so long. But yeah, it's just not recognised. It just kind of simmers under the surface and doesn't get the support that I think it deserves and needs. So yeah, I'd recommend that. Also, from a drug and alcohol perspective, there's The Oasis and Life After the Oasis, I don't know if you've seen those. They're wonderful, just in terms of the inclusive and non-judgmental nature of the supports with, again, a Sydney context, I guess they're both Sydney-based. But are there any other resources or media or things that you'd recommend people check out if they're interested in learning a bit more about the work you're doing or have done?

Mish Sure. Definitely not TV series because I'm not a TV person, but there's a couple of podcasts that I would highly recommend. One is Decolonising Therapy. I would highly recommend that to a lot of people. And I will always say to people to start thinking about intergenerational work. And so My Grandmother's Hands is another beautiful one. And somatic practices, how you bring that and how you work with the whole person rather than just the cognitive aspects. And there's a person called Linda Thai, and she does beautiful, beautiful somatic work. And so I would highly recommend those.

Yasmine Yeah, nice. I'll find those and I'll pop them in the show notes so people can go off and do some checking out of their own. And because you're too modest, I'll say there's also the Queering EMDR book that you've been part of, and just really important in terms of increasing resources for LGBTQIA+ folks and making sure that information is really accessible as well.

Mish Yeah, 100%. It's by two really incredible human beings, Jamie Marich and Roshni Chabra. I would highly recommend checking out their work. They're just fabulous human beings. So even being able to listen and learn. And Jamie has a beautiful book called Dissociation Made Simple, and being able to, for people to understand dissociative identity, some people call it disorder, some people call it responses. Yeah, it's a really well-written book that's easy to understand. Roshni does great, great work in the EMDR field around queer experiences and how to be queer affirming for people. So yeah, also two people I would highly recommend people check out.

Yasmine Yeah, thanks for that. You've had such an amazing set of opportunities. You've made a lot of those opportunities, but you've also kind of just built things as you've gone, right back from the desire to work with community, building on that family and ancestral background to drive that and really trusting your instinct or your gut in terms of what feels right. And that initial work with the drug and alcohol support, and even your experience in India, there's been such an incredible diversity of things that you've been part of. And now as you're moving into, I guess, taking more responsibility as a leader and shifting focus and interests slightly, really holding space for people and making sure that they have the support that they need to do the good work that needs to be done. And each role that you've taken seems to have influenced the next in terms of direction and your career over time. And yeah, again, just had that opportunity to work across different sectors and cultures and finding connection within everything that you do, right up until the current work that you're doing with The Iceberg Foundation and those three pillars of addressing mental health. Is there anything else? There's so much to talk about. I was going to say we've only just tipped the iceberg, but is there anything that we haven't had a chance to talk about or anything you really want to make sure people know about your experience, your history, things that we've discussed, before we finish up?

Mish I think when you were saying all of those things of like, you know, you've been able to kind of do this, and even at the start when you said, you know, how did you make some of these decisions, what I want to come to is that I had a parent who always said that as long as I was happy doing what I was doing, it was enough. And I think a lot of men are allowed time to make mistakes, find themselves, try different things. And it's seen as a, oh, he's just having a bit of fun, you know, he'll get there, he'll figure it out. Whereas gender diverse people, non-binary people, trans people and women are on this timeline. You've got to grow up, go to school, go to university, get a job, have kids, be a parent and work somehow and then have this career. And then, you know, there's this timeline that men don't often have. And I had a parent that removed that timeline for me and just said, go see, you know, go see what happens. Which allowed me to make a bunch of mistakes and follow rabbit holes down as, you know, now knowing that was all kind of vast neurodivergent stuff, and this is really my hyper focus. And being able to still say if everything stopped and it all, quote unquote failed, which I don't think could be possible, it would still be okay because I'm still, you know, enough and loved and held. And I think that was more important than the opportunity that was presented, because I was able to go oh, of course I'll take that opportunity because it doesn't matter if it fails. You know, it means I've tried something. And even with The Iceberg Foundation, one of the things was, let's just see. Let's just see what happens if we do this. What happens if we operate in that way? You know, and I think when we talk about a lot of people innovate and the privilege of that, it's this bit of, I was afforded the privilege of not being on a clock or not for success to look a particular way, and which meant that I could just go and do these random ass opportunities and it'd be okay, and it'd be seen as not that I'm wasting time or I don't have a direction, but of people trusting me and going yeah for sure, go follow the rabbit hole, we'll be with you. I think that's really important to be able to, because sometimes people go I wish I could do that. And it's all well and good but it's also around finding communities that support you to do that, and if that's not your immediate kind of family or whatever, looking to peer supervision, looking to community spaces that are beautiful. Support each other and come together to build each other up. And I think we need that as a sector more.

Yasmine I think also social work as a profession in general, recognises and appreciates that diversity of experience. Even if you've stepped away from whatever you might consider to be your career goal or your trajectory, anything that you do and anything that comes your way is considered learning and is considered building on your ability to do your work and consider things in a more well-rounded approach. So we're fortunate in that sense, and I think we're reflective enough as a profession to be able to say that wasn't time wasted, that was time spent developing your understanding of the world and your skills, and that's made you a more productive, or it's made you a member of the team that people can go to and ask questions and say, how did you get through that? Or, what was your experience with this? They can learn from you as much as you've learned from that experience.

Mish 100%. And if we look at a lot of societal issues that we're navigating, they are intersectional issues, right, they're not kind of this one dimensional issue. And so when people come to the work and go, okay, I work in mental health and then nothing else, or I work in drug and alcohol and nothing else, or I work in homelessness and nothing else, I think we really miss opportunities to be able to come and look at things through a multidisciplinary kind of lens of doing little things here and then, you know, being able to form connections and go, oh, well, they do it this way in this sector, maybe we can take that and retrofit and do all of that. And a little bit of playfulness and a bit of guts, I think, to support that innovation, that playfulness, has been lost when we come back to how do we get the best outcomes, how do we get people to be their best selves, how do we, you know, churn people out to have these quote unquote perfect outcomes.

And a bit of flexibility and saying, yeah, of course, run with that. You know, see where that takes you, has been lost a little bit. It's a pity.

Yasmine It is. But thank you, Mish, so much for the work you do, for what you'll continue to do. You've had such a huge impact on the profession and the communities you support in such a relatively short amount of time. So yeah, it's only gonna get even more exciting from here, I'm sure.

Mish Thank you so much for having me on here and yeah, navigating the conversation with me, and it's been a pleasure.

Thanks for joining me this week. If you would like to continue this discussion or ask anything of either myself or Mish, please visit my Anchor page at anchor.fm/socialworkspotlight, you can find me on Facebook, Instagram and Twitter or you can email swspotlightpodcast@gmail.com. I'd love to hear from you. Please also let me know if there is a particular topic you'd like discussed, or if you or another person you know would like to be featured on the show.

Next episode's guest is Evanthea, a Social Worker and Counsellor with experience in child protection, out of home care, disability, and therapeutic roles. She currently works as the Director of her business, Budding Resilience Therapies, specialising in supporting individuals with complex psychosocial needs and offering experienced practitioners who have a multifaceted approach to supporting their clients as they navigate multiple systems.

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