**GMT20210122-000945\_Dr--Michel**

[00:00:00]**Delphine:** [00:00:00] welcome back to the access to education podcast, where we talk about everything having to do with special education and learning differences. As a parent, I'm always looking for ways to help support my children in their learning challenges from seeking out support from doctors to experts, looking into alternatives is always important today on the show I wanted to share with you the perspective of a naturopathic doctor In my early information seeking. I did this with my own boys, wanting to see how naturopathic doctors could support my children in natural ways to help control their impulses and support their development. Dr. Michelle is a naturopathic doctor practicing in a tobacco and Georgetown area while studying biochemistry and life science.

At McMaster university, where she was introduced to naturopathic medicine, she's a strong believer in the idea that if you don't feel well, you can't perform well to that end. She supports her clients and understanding their health and how to balance real life with support of natural medicine.

I hope today you can learn a little bit more about how this type of support [00:01:00] might be an alternative or something to consider in your own journey. Dr. Michelle, welcome to the show. I'm super excited for

this conversation today.

**Michelle:** [00:01:07] Thank you so much for having me as you and I were already kind of being like, we get really excited, but we talk to each other.

So we're going to have to like rein it in.

**Delphine:** [00:01:15] You're

not going to have to reign it in a little bit. So full disclosure for those listening, Dr. Michelle and I worked together for Oh a while. Anyway, with my eldest and a little bit with my middle son while I tried to kind of. Work my way through the fog of what I could do and how I could help.

And, and Dr. Michelle was pretty integral in helping me understand some things I didn't know. But let's start right off the get go. Cause I think it's really important to talk a bit about the job of a naturopathic doctor and what work it is that you do. So can we start, like, let's start with the overarching theme.

**Michelle:** [00:01:48] Yeah, absolutely. So as a naturopathic doctor, I have post-secondary education. I have got four years under my belt and then it's four years of, of naturopathic medicine. And the fourth year is also like a residency. [00:02:00] So we are trained as medical professionals. We are trained to kind of oversee. I see all sorts of things as naturopathic doctors, you know, from geriatrics to pediatrics, to fertility, pregnancy, and all sorts of chronic issues in between as well as like random stuff that comes up along the way.

Like that's where kind of an all encompassing type of practitioner. Some people choose to see us as primary care physicians, depending on where, how they want to treat their health. Our main focus is always, you know, we have the same kind of Hippocratic oath. So the regular doctors first do no harm, all that kind of stuff we really do live by the philosophy is like doctor as teacher.

And I think our biggest goal always has natural path is to really understand what's really causing the problems because at the end of the day, your body creates symptoms to basically talk to you and tell you that something is not okay. That's your body's way of communicating with you? The symptom itself is not the problem.

So, what you have to do is kind of look at the whole body as [00:03:00] a, all the moving parts that you look at, the person, the whole person, and by looking at all the different things that are popping up and the little so-called red flags or symptoms, you can start to narrow down, what might be the real issue at hand?

Is it one, two, three, or maybe even four things or something that needs to be balanced out? So for me, at the end of the day, it's always about being that like, Health detective and really figuring out what the root causes or the, or the one or two root causes are that are really causing. Your body to feel certain things and for you to have a diminished quality of life.

So, you know, I always like to use the analogy is if the gas light car, the gas light comes on in your car, you don't just cover it up and be like, we're going to keep driving. This is going to be great. You know, you, you go to the gas station, you fill up the tank and you keep driving. So like, my job is to help you fill your tank again.

So that's kind of how I approach it. And with naturopathic medicine, we are. Our approach to helping you is going to involve lifestyle [00:04:00] practices, because what you do every day is going to affect you every day. It's going to involve nutrition. It's going to challenge you maybe in how you approach nutrition.

It's going to involve possibly some supplements and release concise nutraceuticals based on where you are and what needs to be supported. It could involve botanical medicine, which is plant-based medicine. It could involve acupuncture. It could involve like homeopathics. And then after that, those are the foundational kind of modalities we use in naturopathic medicine.

And then after that, depending on people's external training, after they graduate, they might incorporate some other kinds of really cool modalities, like some natural to become osteopaths or, you know, different things like that too. So,

and I remember I actually started seeing you a little bit, cause I was enjoying your interactions with my son so much that I was like, Oh, maybe there's some things that can help me.

And what that became for me was my self care. Right? So a lot of parents with kids who struggle, we spend a lot of time supporting our own children, putting our energy into our own children, which is a little bit what I was doing when I got to UW and then remembering that my self care [00:05:00] is as important. So when we work together, you know, it was about looking at the whole to your point, right?

Of like looking at. All of me looking at me from head to toe and kind of what, what could we move and what could we alter? So it's not just about the kids. It can also be just the parents, sometimes

oxygen mask scenario. When you're on an airplane, you put the oxygen mask first on you, and then you put on your child.

Because that's be serious. If you cannot take care of yourself, you are no good for anybody else in the family or yourself or your job or whatever other hats you wear as a parent. So, you know, cause we all, I feel like Sundays, like people are just like, dang, spinning like a million plates and you don't even mean like waiting for

one to crash.

Yeah, for sure. Right. And I, and I know it's people are always like, yeah, but I don't have time. I don't have time. And I always like to say like, Do you have 10 minutes to give to yourself? You have to show yourself self-love and 10 minutes in the grand scheme of a day, isn't that big of a sacrifice? I know some days it feels like it's hard to even find that, but if.

[00:06:00] You know, Sundays. I, I always often say like, it's a communication thing between you and your partner and being like, okay, like you get your time, I'll watch the kids. Then you, then we switch just for a little bit of sanity. Like maybe those are the kinds of conversations that have to have, but that 10 minutes can go a long way sometimes.

**Delphine:** [00:06:16] Yeah, it can, for sure. I discovered fishing while we were working together. So there you go. That became my 10 minutes was fishing, so, okay. So speaking of us working together, one of the things I learned from you that I didn't. Know about before or understand, and I've grown to understand more through my work with you, for sure.

And some of my own digging, we talked a lot about the, the brain gut connection. And understanding how that plays together and how that can sometimes affect the development of a child, the, the behavior of a child, you know, it can, it can play a role in all of those things. So can you talk a little bit about what the brain gut connection is and what affects potentially whether child [00:07:00] or adult, right.

Because brain and gut is connected throughout life. So it doesn't matter. Let's talk about it in general. It does.

So what is the brain gut connection? Okay.

**Michelle:** [00:07:13] So we have what is known as our central nervous system and that's our brain. And then that communicates with the rest of our body. We all know this. We know that our brain is like the grand command station kind of thing. Now in our gut, we have a huge amount of nervous system in our gut.

It's actually called the ENS. So it's called the enteric nervous system. And it's actually been coined the second brain because it has so many neurons, so many nerves, neurotransmitters nerves, hormones, et cetera. It's actually, it's like a huge network of communication just in and of itself. In the gut and it's actually pretty wild.

The gut and the brain are very intimately connected through something called the vagus nerve. And it's the 10th cranial nerve. And the vagus nerve has a lot to do with putting our body in a calm [00:08:00] place, which most of us, right. I don't think are stimulating. So. When it comes to like how our body reacts in an automatic kind of way.

We have our stress response, which I think most of us are in like 90% of our day, if not more. And then we have what is called our rest and digest response, and it's called our parasympathetic nervous response. And our Vegas nurse plays a really important role in that. And it's. The it's aptly named rest and digest, like you're supposed to be called and you're supposed to digest your food and it's supposed to be amazing.

And this is how the brain communicates with the gut. But this is also where the gut communicates back to the brain. So there's a really special relationship between the brain and the gut where it's a two-way highway. It's not just a unidirectional brain telling the gut what to do. The gut literally goes back and talks to the brain through the same kinds of neuro-transmitters like these chemical messengers that the brain uses through hormones, through nervous tissue.

It's actually pretty wild. So there's been a lot of studies and more recently about this and how, [00:09:00] if you have distressed in your stomach or your intestines. That will through neuro-transmitters through chemicals through hormones will actually communicate back to the brain and cause distress in the brain.

And people might actually start to exhibit things like anxiety or depression or mood or cognitive issues or behavioral issues. So it's, it's. Something that I think it like in functional medicine and naturopathic medicine, we've seen the connection in clinically, but now the researchers actually starting to prove this, which is actually really wild, like there's papers through Harvard, through John Hopkins.

There's a whole bunch of research being done on this. A big contributing factor to all of this also is the gut microbiome and our gut microbiome is all of the bugs that live in our gut. So I think. We are, I don't know how many trillion, but we're like X amount of trillion, microbes, bacteria, parasites, viruses, and fungi and yeast and stuff.

Like we are actually more bees microbes than we are human cells, which is [00:10:00] wild to think about. So they're really the ones that are driving the bus. And if the balance of that microbiome is out off-kilter and we have the wrong type of bugs. Kind of driving things, then it's going to create a lot of problems in our body.

And this microbiome has been found to have, could be a huge contributing factor to how well the brain can then react and respond. And. Reply back to sorry, how much the gut can then communicate back to the brain. Amongst other things too, because the microbiome is going to play a big role in a whole bunch of digestive processes.

And in my book, what you can, what you eat and how will you can absorb it is going to affect the nutrient density of your body and how well your body functions as a whole, regardless of the brain. So but just back to the gut brain access, there's just that. Two way street of communication and that's actually pretty wild.

**Delphine:** [00:10:56] So I just, I feel like we need to make it clear that we're [00:11:00] not. Saying that just because you have a cognitive, you know, you're having trouble cognitively functioning or you're I dunno what some of the other things you were talking about sort of you're always ha hyper anxious or any of those things.

It doesn't necessarily mean there's anything. Wrong necessarily between your brain and your gut and all of that, but it is can be a contributing factor.

**Michelle:** [00:11:21] Absolutely. So what they're starting to see is that this has an influence on those things, that gut health, because of its communication pathway, back to the brain can influence a lot of these struggles that people might have.

It doesn't mean it's the causative factor. It doesn't mean it's the root of it, but it's going to, it can very well be a huge irritant and make things worse.

**Delphine:** [00:11:42] Right? So. What would some of the sort of signs and symptoms be that maybe there's something happening between the gut and the brain that aren't communicating correctly that are maybe accelerating or making the the person feel that they're anxious all the time or that they can't focus all [00:12:00] the time.

So what would be some of the things that might be a telltale for you? Like if somebody sat in your chair and said this and you'd be like, Oh, I think that this is, this might be connected to that.

**Michelle:** [00:12:10] That's a tough one because some people don't even have gut symptoms at all. Okay. Right. Like, I remember a story of someone who had severe celiac disease and had no digestive issues.

She came into the medical doctors, or she went to her doctor's office complaining about fibromyalgia, and she had to build gut, no gut issues. And then they, and then she wasn't getting any help from them. So she went to a naturopath and then he tested, did a food sensitivity test. He's like, let's start ruling things out that cause inflammation, because inflammation is a huge poopoo on just general health.

So cognitive health. Physical health, mental health, emotional health, all that stuff. And inflammation is a huge driving force of why we have a lot of chronic degenerative diseases these days. And so they were running to roll that out and they found that gluten was really high. So then they went to the next step and rolled out silly X to these, and then they went to get the biopsy and this guys.

Estimate [00:13:00] was like, yo man, her gut health has been destroyed from Celiac's disease probably for 15, 20 years. And that's when she started to get the diagnosis of fibromyalgia. So when they removed gluten heals, her gut, all her body pain quote unquote went away. So sometimes it's not even as overt as being like my guts out of order some that's probably causing my anxiety.

You know, I, I feel like I would probably approach supporting someone. If there isn't overt gut issues. I think if they have severe anxiety, if they're have a cognitive issue, if they have ADHD or autism or something like a learning disability, I think because of my understanding of food sensitivities, I would naturally want to start to there because what you eat every day is going to affect you every day.

And then that might snowball to help you understand what's going on in the gut more. Right. If you start to eliminate those and see shifts and changes, but I wouldn't necessarily assume that the microbiome is off and this is off, and this is off, especially if, if there isn't any telltale gut signs. But you know, there, [00:14:00] there, there are people who work in the industry that in my naturopathic field that have focuses and autistic spectrum and ADHD or learning disabilities, and they often just automatically go and treat the gut.

They'll do certain tests. Because they've just seen that time and time again, that there are certain connections between adjusting things there that might not even be super obvious and how it affects just mental, emotional, and cognitive capacity.

**Delphine:** [00:14:26] So if you're going to support someone with ADHD, with anxiety, with autism, with any of these things that.

Potentially natural paths can support with, in terms of brain gut health. I'm going to try and stick really specific because I think we can get really broad with what you can support. So I'm trying to keep it kind of narrowed to that whole idea, but what. Are some of the things that would be used to help balance that out.

So like, I always think I'm like, Oh, I need to go and get vitamins or I need to go and get a probiotic, or I need to do this. I need to do that. So like, even for myself, I remember when we were going through this with our [00:15:00] eldest fish oil was a big piece of it. And he would just, you know, drink it right off the spoon and was awesome.

And I know we were doing a probiotic and we were doing a couple of other things. So what are the sorts of things that. You know, potentially, cause obviously you don't have the patient in front of you and I know every patient is going to require something different based on kind of what's happening, but is there something kind of generally you can say when we look at.

Brain gut health. What are the things that are suggested to add into the diet to help support a better gut that will then help the brain?

**Michelle:** [00:15:32] Right. So first and foremost, always start with diet before we even reach for like supplements and nutrition. If they're not drinking enough water, that's a problem.

Our body's 70% water and we need to be able to flush the toxins out too, because otherwise that accumulates, that causes inflammation and that affects brain health. Right. So I always say, say drinking water, making sure that your macros are balanced, you're getting a huge amount of vegetables, you know, versus just a huge plate of carbohydrates.

All [00:16:00] the time, although that's what they're, I think that's where kids are most addicted to, but it's this weird addiction thing. And the thing that they're most addicted to is usually the thing that's causing

**Delphine:** [00:16:08] the most

**Michelle:** [00:16:08] problems, unfortunately. And even as adults, we don't realize that, but that's usually, if someone comes into my house, I feel like I don't take my for me.

And then we do a food sensitivity test and it's like usually the highest score. And then it makes a huge impact on their quality of life. Right. So So I always start with the diet and I would say running through food sensitivities, if that's possible, if you, if you're ready to take that on, because I understand as a parent, that's also your responsibility to the child.

So that becomes a difficult matter. But I would say understanding what foods affect you in a positive way versus a negative way is a huge thing because what you eat every day affects you. All day, every day. Yeah. And I mean, as

**Delphine:** [00:16:45] parents, it's, it's busy, right? Like, so for sure, it's, it's the balance of what is required to keep the child healthy, but then sometimes, like, I'm just thinking of people who might be listening in terms of, you might have a child who [00:17:00] has this.

Particularly since sensory thing to something, which then would make it difficult and then you, right. So I think your, your point is valid in terms of you have to be reasonable and you have to look at the whole thing and go, okay, what can I cut out maybe? And what can I absolutely not cut out. So, yeah, I think that's a good point.

**Michelle:** [00:17:15] I would say at the very, at the very least balance out the plates, like get those vegetables in some way, shape or form. And that means you have to like, let your kid cook with you to get them more interested in the process to eat them and whatever. And maybe don't have gluten everyday on every single plate or don't have dairy at every meal.

Like there are things you can start to do to shift. To move the needle in the right direction. But I find that just as, as a whole, we in our world to see way too many carbohydrates, which then at the end of the day, just literally turns into sugar in your body. And sugar is one of the worst things for brain, right?

They call Alzheimer's disease type three diabetes. Right because the sugars affect the brain in such a negative way. So the over-consumption of that is something to just, if, if that alone you can do, that's already a huge step in the right direction without [00:18:00] being like here's a food sensitivity, here's a food sensitivity, like balance out the nutrition, get a good amount of healthy fats, you know, like walk away from the margarine.

You might as well just melt the plastic onto your meal. Like get away from that, go to the olive oil, go to the coconut oil, use butter, you know, I'd rather you have like. Butter doesn't require chemical engineering, right? So things like that before we even get to food, sensitivities are a really big deal.

Healthy fats are really great for brain health, right? I'm getting a lot of colorful veggies and fruits on the plate. The more colorful, the more color spectrum, the more nutrients you're going to get, I would also say then you would leap into the side of supplements where, like you mentioned, the Omega's are really important.

EPA. When you look at your Omega three is like a fish oil. You have two big components of them that you really want to kind of balance out. EPA really has a really strong anti-inflammatory. And DHA is really good for cognitive and neurological development and support. So the two of them together really make a nice, powerful punch for that.

[00:19:00] And they also contribute to. Cell health, every single cell in your body, including your brain cells. So we want to make sure that those healthy fats are in there. I would say a probiotic could be a really important addition,

Into the mix. And then after that, it really becomes case specific. Right.

That's where it becomes case specific. Like, do I have to put them on something for their anxiety, in which case they might reach for a GABA or an or maybe camomile or passion flower as herbs. Right. Do they need something to balance out mood from a depression side of things? Maybe we just give them a higher dose of official oils.

Maybe we give them some specific nutrients, you know, like to help improve their serotonin production. So then it becomes a little bit more. I would also say vitamin D actually that's a lie. I would definitely add vitamin need to the mix because that's like, that's like a wonder vitamin. It has sectors throughout the body.

And it's so important for

**Delphine:** [00:19:56] us. That's a big one. I find up here where we're recording [00:20:00] from, you know, in, in. Canada in Toronto. And I find in Toronto, in the winter, the sun doesn't seem to exist. So I grew up in Ottawa where like the sun came out, it was minus 25, but the sun was out. So you were out in the sun, but here I feel like, and maybe it's the Lake.

I don't know that it's like, there's a blanket of like cloud that kind of hovers. And you can see the sun, you can see the shadow of the sun. So yeah, I mean, vitamin D is totally a good one, but just in general, it's a great one to kind of have. On top.

**Michelle:** [00:20:29] Yeah. I would think if you're going to get started without working with somebody one-on-one and omega-3 is super important, most adults should probably be taking this as well are saying we're cognitively clouded these days.

Oh my God. Flamed and cognitively clouded, permanently

**Delphine:** [00:20:45] cognitively clouded. So it's fine.

**Michelle:** [00:20:48] I would say vitamin D PO likely a probiotic, you know there's a good chance that that could be a really. Important thing. And I would say it'll mega three, but none of [00:21:00] that is as good as, without balancing the diet first.

Right. And again, it doesn't mean addressing food sensitivities, but just making sure that it's not just super carb heavy

**Delphine:** [00:21:10] all the time. Yeah. So I don't know. How answerable this question is because I feel as though it might be very case specific, but I'm going to ask the question anyway, because it can sometimes be a bit of a polarizing issue for people, but I'm wondering what sort of natural pathic doctors are sort of outside of the.

The mainstream medicine, what kind of supports can professionals like yourself provide to families who might have kids with learning difficulties, learning, challenges, anxiety, ADHD, any of those things? What is it that you can provide them? That might be different than mainstream medicine.

**Michelle:** [00:21:49] Well, a lot of our testing is really interesting.

Right? So a lot of functional testing that we do as naturopath, you get detailed reports, right? Or you can [00:22:00] really talk about like, if you want to do a poop test, I just ordered some for some people. And like the amount of information on these poop tests are wild. And that's going to tell you about the microbiome and bacteria and like that could be affecting mood and all those cognitive issues.

But like things like organic acid tests, Right. That also tells us about influences on the body that will interfere with how things are broken down. So that could be a genetic hiccup, or it could be like an accumulation of toxins or different drugs can even like interfere with the breakdown of metabolites.

And if you are burning through something too quickly, Or not well enough so that something accumulates in the blood that will start to affect function communication on on a biochemical level of hormone level and on a cell level, which then obviously affects mood, cognitive function, behavioral issues, all that kind of stuff.

I know organic acids testing could be a really, really interesting way of understanding specifically what needs to be balanced out in a child where you can be like, is there a yeast overgrowth? Are they detoxing [00:23:00] properly? Are they this like, Are, they are their IEP is their omega-3 status sufficient. Is it, you know, is there a, is there a deficiency in certain nutrients, like vitamin D like B6, like B12, like all these different things.

That's the kind of testing that we can do that really shows you a detailed and like tailored to that person. Then you can create a very specific treatment plan from that after one that's extremely like, like fine tuned and it's. Precise for that person's needs. You know, also even some naturopaths are also dealing in genetics and stuff too.

And I started reading some books about genetics and epigenetics recently, and there are certain genetic defects like the competence gene, for instance sometimes people are born with a genetic issue there and then sometimes just lifestyle practices can muddy up how well that gene gets expressed to create function.

So that's where working on diet and lifestyle practices, which is things that w. Our naturopathic it's foundational for naturopathic practices. But then on top of that, if [00:24:00] you understand what your genetics are and you can see what is unique to you, then you can sub in with specific nutrients that can help support that gene, if there's a deficiency or if it's functioning too high or too low, like the comped gene, for instance if it's working too slowly or too quickly, it could lead to things like focus, issues, attention issues, anxiety.

Depression. Like there's a whole like, so that's where we can come in and really start to fill in the blanks. And it doesn't mean it's an. Either or situation. So Sundays people feel like if I, you know, if I go to my medical doctor, I can't tell them and I'm seeing the naturopath or like, it's like a betrayal.

I don't know. Like people have like weird things where like, they feel like they only want to believe one person versus the other. And like, we all have our strengths. And I think that's a really important thing to recognize. And I know that as a naturopath, there are certain limitations as to what I can do for a person, right.

There's going to be a time and a place when pharmaceuticals can be absolutely necessary. And I'm never going to stand in the way of somebody's [00:25:00] wellbeing from that capacity. But what we can do is also support possible. Side-effects. We can minimize side effects. We can minimize nutrient deficiencies that often come along with pharmaceuticals because they're very strong and they drive function very unilaterally and like when one strong direction, and then it might cause depletions of certain nutrients that cause other problems.

So then we can fill in the blanks there too. I'm a strong believer that the two things can be married in a really great way. You know, no pill, whether it's an supplement. Or a pharmaceutical is going to work as effectively as it can. If you don't have foundational key things in place. Like good nutrition, like good water.

Like, are you pooping enough? Are you getting enough sleep? You know, do you feel loved? Do you feel supported? Do you have, you know, all of these other contributing factors and these are a lot of the things I talk to my clients about, you know, sometimes people come in and like, well, can you give me what pill can you give me?

I was like, well, first off you need to eat a vegetable. [00:26:00] You need to drink some water. And I was like, and then we can talk about pills. Cause that's not going to do anything until we set you up for a win here. And I feel like that goes for both naturopathic. Supplements as well as pharmaceuticals. It elevates the process.

No matter what route you take,

**Delphine:** [00:26:16] I love the idea that they can work in unison to support the person, right? Like it's all at the end of the day, when we, as parents get to the point at which we say, okay, now we need a pharmaceutical, or now we need something that is greater than a fish. Supplement let's, I'm just keeping it really simple, but, you know, I mean, we, we ended up, you know, we tried for a while with our eldest, with all the different supplements and we were kind of like, no, we're not really seeing anything.

And then we did the pharmaceutical and then we saw change. Right. But we, we gave it our level best. We worked with you. We talked it out. And what I liked about, or what I like about. Naturopathic medicine is that it looks like you said this at the beginning. It does look at the whole person as an individual.

And not like we do sometimes with the pharmaceuticals. Oh, well, he weighed this much. Then you take [00:27:00] this much of it. Right. Instead of I found with the naturopathic stuff, it was like, well, you're missing this much of that. So I want you to take this much of this thing to supplement, right? Like it's very specific and tailored, which you can't always get with the pharmaceutical agency.

So it's a little bit different. And I do like the idea that it's the whole person.

**Michelle:** [00:27:17] Yeah. And the whole person means that sometimes the pharmaceutical is needed to yeah.

**Delphine:** [00:27:23] Sometimes you get there, right? You, you try. And, and I think my, my wanting, having you on today was kind of to, to give people the idea that there are alternatives.

There are other things that, you know, you can absolutely go to your doctor if that's what you're comfortable with, but know that you can try other things. It doesn't always have to go that way and it's not. It's not a lost trial period. If you want to do it, like it doesn't, you don't lose anything. If you try it.

I w I would argue gains because I learned so much about my kids and their, their bodies and their health and what they needed to, to function as a parent, I learned so much that it was, you know, [00:28:00] it was really helpful. So.

**Michelle:** [00:28:01] Well, I'm glad to hear that.

**Delphine:** [00:28:04] So if if there's a parent out there listening and saying, yeah, well, I wouldn't mind working with an agile path, but like, what do I look for?

Or how do I know that they're going to work with the kid? Do I have to look for someone specific? Do they have to have a particular qualification? Like what, what are people looking for when they're looking to work with a naturopathic doctor?

**Michelle:** [00:28:20] Well, first of all, in, in Ontario, we're regulated by the college of natural pass of Ontario.

So you want to make sure that we are a legitimate naturopath because a lot of people out there that call themselves natural natural doctors or doctor of naturopathic medicine, but they don't have the same credentials, the same training, and they're not regulated by our board, which is, which is. A designated board, like nurses, doctors, chiropractors, like we are part of that branch of people.

If you are regulated with the college of natural paths, Ontario. So you definitely want to make sure where we are part of the legit ones, the legit bunch. And yeah, I would say. There is Ontario [00:29:00] associations and Canada wide associations. You can always take a quick look on either of those association, websites to do is zeroing in is who's in your neighborhood.

If you don't already have some names. And I would say, just check out their websites really quick. You know, most of us are advertising our strengths. Or what our focuses are. So if someone does have a focus in cognitive or learning disabilities, ADHD, spectrum, that kind of stuff, they'll, they will advertise that on there.

Website, like for me, I definitely have a niche that I've carved out over the last few years more. So that is very digestive health related and stress-related based on my own journey and like what I seem to attract. But I also understand that that's at the core of most people's problems. So I feel like that's a really good lane to be

**Delphine:** [00:29:44] in because I can solve a lot of stuff

**Michelle:** [00:29:45] with that.

But there's a lot of people who do focus on. Children and, and, and, and, and in children caring and, and learning stuff and, and behavioral issues and anxiety and mood. So look at their websites, see what they say most natural paths. I [00:30:00] don't really know of any natural that doesn't do this, but we offer a 15 minute or 10 minute free consultations.

So you have the opportunity, especially in this day and age, a lot of it's virtual now. So you can do it in person or virtual, depending on how their clinic is set up. And you can have a meet and greet. Like go suss them out. See if it's a good vibe. See if you feel like it's a good fit. Does your, does your kid like respond well to this person's energies?

Or do you feel like the kid is like not having it, that's going to make or break your therapeutic process? So I would say, do take advantage of those free meet and greets and find the one that you feel is the best fit for you. And that would be. Those would be the three things I would say. I was like, see if they have a focus in the area of health that you really want to have addressed, make sure they're part of the regulated health profession of that province and take advantage of a meet and greet.

See if these guys are a good fit.

**Delphine:** [00:30:49] And I would say, as a parent, you want to make sure like the kid needs to be a good fit with the practitioner, but you as the parent need to be able to have a good open relationship with that practitioner, right. Because you are going to come [00:31:00] to them and be like, Oh my God, this week was a disaster.

And be able to like, have the opportunity to have that open dialogue, because it's just like having a doctor. If you can't have a conversation with them, that is open and honest, then I, I'm not sure you're going to get the same results that you might be hoping for.

**Michelle:** [00:31:16] That that therapeutic relationship is just not just as important, if not more important than the actual process itself.

If you already don't have trust in that person, like don't bother.

If it doesn't feel good, move on. There are others. Yeah. I don't resonate with everyone. I'm cool with that. You find the person that fits best for you, right? Like it has to be a good working relationship for all people.

**Delphine:** [00:31:41] For sure. So we may have reached the point and we've got this parent listening tonight, or today, whenever they're listening and they're thinking, yeah, yeah, this ethics stuffing, it sounds really good, but it's not for me or it's not going to work or it's not going to be effective or what's the point or it's going to take too long, kind of, what would you say [00:32:00] to someone?

To open their minds to the possibility that this might be a good fit. How would you, I don't want to say convince them because I don't want anybody to be convinced that this is, this is the right thing. Cause it isn't the right thing for everybody. But to allow them to be more open-minded to

**Michelle:** [00:32:14] the idea that this might be worth, at least looking into.

Yeah. I don't like the word convince either. I never want to pressure someone who's not ready to see me to see me either. Like that's just not my jam. Well, I think become a little bit more educated about it. You know, a general Google search. Isn't always going to get the job done because there's, depending on who's writing the article, there's gonna be some extreme bias, but what they're paying are, but any profession.

So I would say go to either the Canadian association of naturopathic doctors or the Ontario association of naturopathic doctors. So those are C a N D or O and D. And you can go to both of those websites to learn about naturopathic medicine, to see if it's the right fit for you. You know, start following up a couple of people on Instagram.

If you feel like you're dealing with your health outcomes, like if you deal with [00:33:00] functional digestive issues, start following some natural paths who, who sit in that focus and. See what they have to say, because most of us are interacting on our, on, on like things like Instagram and stuff. So you get to understand, like, where are they coming from?

What's the research? Like, what are they talking about today? Does it, you know, and then you get to understand a little bit more about their approach and the reasons behind that approach, et cetera. A lot of people have found me on Instagram in the last year, because I've been much more vocal about it. And they're like, I like the information you provide and all that kind of stuff.

So start, you don't have to commit immediately, like start following some people and just. Listen. I would say there are some really cool naturopaths doing some awesome things like Dr. Ben Lynch is the guy who talked about genetics, that whose book, I just read his work. His book was called dirty genes, and I found it super fascinating, even as a naturopath, but it's not above your head with regards to.

Wording and stuff. And then if you're looking about how can I start to clean up the genetics, even without seeing an MD, like that might even be a cool place for you to start and see how that works. And if it [00:34:00] works might be like let's deep dive further. Dr. Mark Hyman is a functional medical doctor, so he's not an MD, but he's a functional medical doctor and he's got really awesome information about.

Gut health and food and how it affects your body and research and things to back it up. So I even have him as a reference point for things that I do, and I have some of his books. Dr. Aviva Romm is a really cool person as well. And she deals with like a lot of female health and also children's staff.

So you can always look at the connection of natural care from those perspectives to,

**Delphine:** [00:34:31] Yeah. Like there's just so many different avenues for support. Like I think when we talk about kids with learning difficulties and even adults with learning difficulties and, and co like not cognitive, but attentional and focused things like we're all in a world of like constantly moving and running and going forward.

But I think we can all benefit from. Looking or at least exploring and being open to some of these other modalities of kind of health promotion. I mean, cause that's what it is. It's about being healthy. It's not [00:35:00] about, you know, saying, Oh, you're doing it wrong. Or you know, you can't do it this way. Or that way really is about looking at you as a whole person and saying, how can I help

**Michelle:** [00:35:07] you?

Right. And we make, how can we make you function most optimally? That's my goal. It's not just about treating disease. It's about okay. Like we manage those symptoms and we treat the disease, but like, can we make everything just work? Way better just in generally your absolute best. Like, I don't want people to settle for feeling fine.

Yeah. I agree.

**Delphine:** [00:35:28] And kids are the same way, right? Like just having them be fine is maybe not ideal. If we can get them to be optimal, then why wouldn't we? Right. So, yeah. I would

**Michelle:** [00:35:36] say there's so much on social media right now. And there's a really cool podcast. A couple of my friends started called it's called that naturopathic podcast, which is actually kind of dope and they talk about a whole bunch of stuff, so, and they break it down and they have a lot of really interesting topics.

So you know, just, just put your toe in the water and just see how it feels like, look in a few things like Listen to a podcast, [00:36:00] look at the OEN D look at the C and D see if it fits and you know what, it's not always going to fit. Like, like Delphine's said, like it's not always going to be a good fit and that's okay.

Right. Like maybe five years down the line, you're like, Ooh, I do want to explore this more, but now you've already looked into it enough that you're at somewhat more familiar. And then you're ready to, to, to jump in a little bit more, you know, everybody's at their own pace. There's no pressure.

**Delphine:** [00:36:26] No pressure.

Never any pressure? Not at all. Dr. Michelle, thank you so much for this conversation. I was really eager for this conversation today. So it was nice to get a chance to chat with you and connect again. I'm just wondering where can people learn more about you? I know you're on Instagram because I'm following you on Instagram, but where else can people find?

**Michelle:** [00:36:43] So my, my Instagram handle for those who are interested is Dr. Michelle. Underscore and D so like naturopathic doctor. So Dr. M I C H E L L E dot N D [00:37:00] a and that's my handle. But my website is also Dr. Michelle and d.ca like it's super easy. So, and I will, I will

**Delphine:** [00:37:08] attach the links in the description of this podcast.

So people don't have to be like furiously writing it down. I will attach it.

**Michelle:** [00:37:14] But yeah, those are the two things that I'm most, I'm most active on. I'm I'm most active on my Instagram. Like I do live sometimes some of my colleagues and, you know, throw up videos or share information that I find is interesting.

So there's a whole bunch of stuff happening on my Instagram. It's not always GI related, but it's mostly poop talk. So just be ready for

**Delphine:** [00:37:32] that. So your kids will love it. Then small children will love it. It's right up their alley.

**Michelle:** [00:37:36] Here you go. They want to look at a poop emoji come to my page.

**Delphine:** [00:37:40] It's an awesome sales pitch, Dr.

Michelle. Thanks again. It was a great conversation.

**Michelle:** [00:37:45] Thank you, Delphine. Thank you so much for having me.