



# PREVENT. RESIST. SUPPORT.

## Episode 11: Supporting a Friend

with Jordan Baylis-Morgan



University  
of Windsor

Office of Sexual Violence Prevention,  
Resistance, and Support

### **Prevent Resist Support Podcast**

### **Season 2 Episode 11: Supporting a Friend with Jordan Baylis-Morgan**

Anne Rudzinski: Hi everyone, I'm Anne and this is Prevent Resist Support.

Music: I got your back my dear and I know that you got mine. I feel that hope and fear but I know we'll hold the line. Keep your head up. Keep your hand out when your breath is feeling short. Prevent, Resist, Support.

Anne: Hi, everyone. Welcome to our episode with Jordan Baylis Morgan. This episode was recorded live as an event with our office and Prevent Resist Support. This episode is about supporting a friend who's going through a hard time and that could be depression, anxiety or sexual assault. We're chatting with Jordan who helps us explore the differences between being a therapist and being a support. Jordan is a registered psychotherapist here in Windsor, Ontario. Jordan has a Master's in Counselling and specializes in counselling psychology, he's registered with the CRPO and is a registered psychotherapist. We'll make sure to leave Jordan's information in our podcast description for you so you don't have to worry to write it down. And on that note, let's get into our chat with Jordan.

Welcome Jordan to our podcast Prevent Resist Support.

Jordan Baylis-Morgan: Thanks for having me.

Anne: Thanks for being here. I know that today we're going to talk about support, we're going to talk about the differences between the types of

support that mental health professionals provide and the types of support that friends and loved ones can provide. But I would always like to start out with asking you a little bit about what do you do for work? How did you get into that? And I think it's great, because we have a lot of students on our campus who I think would really love to know how people got their cool jobs. So if you could tell us a bit about your cool job, that would be awesome.

Jordan: All right, cool. Well, right now, I'm a registered psychotherapist, qualifying, which means I'm not fully registered. I'm still needing certain hours and waiting to hear back from test results. But what that means is I generally talk with people about mental health stuff. So depression, anxiety, post traumatic stress, relationship issues, anger issues, just general confusion, you know, not feeling well. I talk to people with a variety of different challenges. I have my own private practice, as well as I work with a rehabilitation centre, where I talk with people through insurance claims. So if someone got into a car accident, and you know, obviously life has changed drastically, that might be someone I talk to who might be presenting with certain mental health symptoms, or someone with a long term disability. So I have a large variety of different clients to work with, I guess, like what got me started in the mental health field was just my own life, I suppose. Just exposure to certain things. But I was very curious about people's behaviour. When I was younger, I could say as far back as grade six or four. And just wondering why people acted the way they did. And I think that eventually led into my interest in psychology.

Anne: That's awesome. And then I don't know, did you already mention this? Did you study at UWindsor?

Jordan: No. So I was born and raised in Windsor, but I eventually moved with my family to Alberta. And that's where I completed all my post secondary education. I got my masters in a place called Athabasca University.

Anne: Oh, awesome. It's always fun to see, you know, when people come and go from Windsor, where they're from, or if they've left to study, if they come back. I think a lot of folks, you know, really come and go.

Jordan: They do you know, I know, I came back when I wanted to be closer to people that I knew and know who I am. And it's good to be back home.

Anne: Yeah, I love that. So today, we're gonna talk about supporting a friend in a crisis. And one of the things that you and I discussed, which was kind of what, you know, created, the idea for this episode, was the idea that the support that a therapist, a psychologist, a psychotherapist might provide, and how that looks different from the kinds of support that a friend can provide. And I think some of the motivation for this conversation is the idea that folks often want to give lots of support and care to their friends, but sometimes don't know the limits of what that can look like. So could you chat with us a little bit about what is the difference between like a mental health professional and the support that a friend would give to somebody?

Jordan: So one of the most important factors in that question, I think, is really being able to identify what does a therapist, psychologist, psychotherapist do exactly, what do they provide? You know, recently in the last few years, psychotherapy has been designated as a controlled act, which means that only certain people are allowed to perform it legally. You know, there's a definition out there and its two main components of the definition really stick out. One is that you know, psychotherapy is treating mental health disorders or problems through psychotherapeutic techniques, and through a therapeutic relationship. And that might be part of the big reason as to why support looks different between a friend and a psychologist or a care provider. That's because of the different type of relationship it is, as well as the techniques employed. So what does that look like? Well, basically, with a therapeutic relationship, it's very structured, there's understandable boundaries. And there's something specifically agreed upon what it is, is the client comes to the therapist, willing to be open and honest, agreeing to, you know, understanding the limits of confidentiality. And, you know, the therapist is willing to take on that responsibility in this relationship, and provide treatment for it in this caring, supportive relationship, and the support that's provided is very specific, you know, it's, it's geared towards a certain goal, you know, from the very beginning of therapy till the end, there's an understanding as to why

both people are there. And the support is mainly driven towards helping a person understand themselves more, process emotions, being provided with education on certain social psychological things, and being provide counsel, which might look like just, you know, helping them understand their options or choices. And those sorts of things. Now, with friendships, and support from loved ones, that can expand a lot differently, because the relationship is different. And depending on your friendship, which could vary greatly, some people say, this guy's my friend, she's my friend, you know, so now you have a lot less structure. And so support can be seen as sort of, what do I do? Like, you know, what are the rules? What are the expectations, and then I guess the reality is, is there there really is no expectations, because you can have a friend that you just see at the gym, you know, that's a friend, but that friend might not talk to you about certain things, and you have another friend that you might talk about with certain things. So the variation in support is very different.

Anne: Yeah, I think sometimes the thing that I see is that in our society, folks want to provide a lot of support and care to somebody who's going through a hard time. And sometimes we feel that we're the only person that can provide that support or care to somebody. So I think one of the things that we talked about that I really enjoy is the concept of like building a support network, rather than just relying on one individual.

Jordan: Well, definitely, I think that, you know, if a friend is supporting someone with their mental health, in some ways, it's similar to a therapist where it's just that you're supporting, you're not fixing it for them. However, the degree of which you're supporting them will vary. But really everyone would benefit from having, like you said, a network. Just having one support may not be enough, it could be in some cases, but in other cases, a person might need more support, and more resources to get help.

Anne: So what are the kinds of support that a friend or family member or a loved one could provide to somebody in crisis? What are some of the things that we can do to take care of the people in our lives?

Jordan: Well, I mean, it depends on the type of crisis. Now, you know, if it's a mental health crisis, that can look very differently, depending on where they're at at any given moment. This is something that's been going on for a long time, is this, something that's very sudden and currently happening, but you know, a friend, it really depends on a person's willingness, preferences. I mean, you can be there for social support, you know, checking up on them, asking how they're doing, emotional, you know, talking to them, listening to them, maybe they're going through some type of financial crisis, maybe a friend might feel comfortable with aiding them in that way. There's lots of things we can do with our time and resources to support one another, just giving us attention. Listening can do a lot. But depending on how severe the person's symptoms might be, the support of a friend might be limited in alleviating all of the problems the person is experiencing. And that's when a transition to different resources and professional help might be needed.

Anne: I love that. So in light of that, I might jump ahead and our question list if that's okay, because I feel like this is a good time to kind of talk about how do you have that conversation with somebody if you think that they might need to see somebody professional? How do you broach that with somebody that you're taking care of?

Jordan: Well, it'll look very differently. I mean, from situation to situation, because how do you communicate with your friends about it? I suppose it may be an awkward conversation at first because it may be something that people don't normally do, but if you see the need for it. I think just being open and honest is a good start. Just letting them know what you think, how you feel, and coming from a place of normalizing and care and love. People sometimes might hear that you think they need help and see that as an attack. So obviously you'll, you know, you'll want to know who you're talking to and try to find the best way and timing and place, you know, obviously you don't want to maybe share this at a party. You know, maybe you want to do it in private, maybe tell them, Hey, can I talk to you about something, it's really important and schedule a time. It's a pretty serious topic. You know, maybe for some people it might be casual, but for others, it might be very serious. But coming from a place of care, being open

about your observations, and just being curious about what their thoughts are of it.

Anne: Yeah, I think that's very helpful. And then I know, at least in my experience, sometimes when I've tried to gently suggest that somebody might want to seek some support, there's been some pushback or some, like, hesitance to go. And I think one of the things that that's related to is stigma around accessing mental health support. So I'm wondering if you have any thoughts about that piece?

Jordan: Well, it's a really big component to all of this is the stigma, I think it's important to note, like, what is it, and really, it's just this, you know, this feeling or sense of disgrace or shame over having something, and in this case, it might be having mental health symptoms. And with that, with a person feeling that way about their mental health, yeah, can make it very difficult to encourage them to get help, because they don't want to even maybe admit that it's a problem, or that it's something that they need help with, or that it even exists. I think, battling stigma is partly by normalizing it, and normalizing mental health, you can look on the CDC website Centres for Disease and Control among other places, and find statistics about 20 to 50% of people throughout their life are going to have some type of mental health disorder or challenge or diagnosis, it's very prevalent, it's nothing that is rare or odd. When you look at the world scene, it's in many ways, no different than medical conditions in the sense that it's inhibiting a person's ability to function. It's making their lives harder. But I think with mental health, there's this sort of assumption that you have mental health symptoms, because of your, you know, there's something wrong with you or your character, you're not strong enough, you can just will your way out of this. But that's not really the case. I mean, obviously, there's genetic components, where people might have certain deficiencies in their different bodily brain related aspects where you know, they have a harder time dealing with certain things. But then in life, we have a lot of environmental components, that will just make it more likely you're going to experience mental symptoms. For example, with COVID, you know, a lot of people are a little bit more afraid, fearful of the future, uncertain, feeling lack of control, isolated. Well, when you do that, you're gonna likely feel more anxious, you might be depressed because you're not

seeing your friends as often your loved ones. So naturally, then you're going to be experiencing symptoms, well, then now, what are you going to do about it?

Anne: Yeah, and I think like, just to touch on that note about COVID, I know that a lot of people I know are struggling right now, I think that we've all been in this state of being for a long time. And there is that like fraying or that like wearing down. And so I think this is like a really great time to have the conversation about taking care of each other and, and accessing the supports that we need to have. So I'm glad that we're chatting about this today.

Jordan: Yeah, it is good.

Anne: So um, let's take a step back now and just chat a little bit about boundaries. Because I know that when we provide support to others, we may do that from a place of love. And we may, you know, want to provide all of that love and support to somebody. But it's also important for us to set boundaries and to take care of ourselves. So what does that look like when we're providing support to other folks?

Jordan: Well, you know, firstly, I want to just say that boundaries are a running theme in my work. It is such an important topic that I think that sort of has been, I don't know if it's been trivialized, but its meaning kind of can get lost, you know. And it's so important in the sense that boundaries are designed to keep ourselves and others safe. They're the limits and rules that we give ourselves to ensure that we will remain well. And frankly, when it comes to supporting people, you need to be well, in order to support people, no different than that you're in the airplane, to take a flight here the whole put your mask on first and then assist someone else because if you're not able to take care yourself, you're not well, you're going to help anybody. So in order to continue to support others, you need to have boundaries established, those are going to maintain your wellness and the wellness of others. You know, for example, if you don't have boundaries, and you're supporting someone, you might allow yourself to get burnt out. And you might start putting some of your frustration on the person you're supporting, starting maybe yelling, saying why you keep calling me, you know, you're

ruining my life, you know, you get to a point of like, you're so frustrated with the person you're supporting, because you're not taking boundaries into consideration and taking care of yourself. And ultimately, all we can do is control ourselves. So with boundaries, it's important to look at a couple of different things about for example, your preferences, your willingness, your degree of resources, because maybe you're not able to support someone 24/7. For how long? You know, under what circumstances? And it's completely fine to decide what you want to decide to have, you know, to kind of say like, well, what would a good person do in this situation? Well, they would help them every day, and they would let them over their house. Well, is that really going to work for you, though? Is that something that you want to do right now, it's very much should be a process of really deciding, like, what are you going to be able to handle? And for how long while keeping a balance in mind with your own health?

Anne: Yeah, I think one of the examples I always think of is, you know, like, call me anytime I will always pick up, I will always be there for you to call me whenever you need me. And like realistically, like, if somebody calls me at two o'clock in the morning, like I'm asleep, I don't know that I'm answering the phone and not out of a choice just out of the fact that I am unconscious. And so you know, I think centralizing that idea of, you know, we don't have to provide support 24/7, we can be available at times that feel comfortable and balanced and healthy to us. We don't have to be available all the time. And I think, you know, there's also like an aspect of consent, I've seen some memes go around that say things like, you know, ask before you share, hey, can I talk to you about something I'm struggling with right now? And so I love just the conversation that's developing around giving ourselves permission to say like, I'm not in a place to provide support right now.

Jordan: Mm hmm. Yes, it's a, it can be a hard topic. Because if you, you know, hide your friendship with messages, like, oh, I'll always be there for you. And always, you know, well, now you've kind of set a high standard for yourself. And I think being open and honest and realistic with each other is so important. Because then it keeps our expectations in check. You know, when that happens, you know, you think about the topic of consent, that's essentially allowing yourself or disallowing yourself from

doing things, you know, and your friends might be maybe breaching a boundary, for example, let's say you said, you know, I don't think I'm going to be able to keep talking to you about this sort of stuff anymore, because I don't really know what to say, and I don't know what to do. And then they keep on messaging you. Well, at that point, they're breaching a boundary. And if you've already tried to redirect them towards saying, I really think you should go talk to somebody, here's a number, please don't call me at this hour, I'm trying to sleep, well, then a person needs to uphold their boundaries and raise the level, we can't think that things are going to work out by allowing someone to just sort of treat us the way that they want to treat us without us, you know, protecting ourselves. So you know, and that's, that's just reality, you know, not all of us are going to be able to support each other in the way that our friends would like to be supported by us, we only can give it we get what we can. And we're only a part of their support. Truly, a person is going to get better by helping themselves. What if someone said, like, oh, I'll help you fix your house, it didn't mean they're just going to fix my house, it's like, you're going to assist me, you're going to help me do this? Well, I'm not going to be here. And just doing it while you do nothing. Now, I'm not saying people might not do anything, but the sole source of recovery or improvement in one's mental health is their own selves. And to rely on someone every time they need help like that, is not healthy, really, because, you know, maybe at that time, they really do need something, but it's a sign that they need to improve something in themselves to maintain themselves, because now they're relying on someone else, you know, if you allow this person to break that boundary and take it, you know, answer the phone call, again, yes, I'll meet up with you again, you're going to get burnt out. And then you might get to a point where you're like, I want to be out of this relationship, I can't take this anymore. And now the relationship is suffering. And now the relationship might end, because these boundaries weren't set. And, you know, the person taking responsibility for their own mental health.

Anne: I just want to talk about like, I love something you said in there that was about the type of support that we might want to provide, or the type that we're able to provide is not always the type that people need. And it just makes me think of like, the love languages and like, maybe we

have like a go to methods of support and knowing what our strengths are in terms of support is really cool, but also asking people what kind of support do you need?

Jordan: Well, yeah, definitely. I mean, knowing your own limits is important. And being able to to be specific with what you can support is helpful because you don't want to over promise you know, because then the person might feel abandoned, you know that you're not doing it and you know, you might feel not so good about it either. That's also part of just the boundaries creating is knowing like, you know, at this point in my life, I can't help you with that and then I got a child now I have my family to deal with or my so and so's has cancer. So we're really helping with them. And that's just being self aware of your own needs and also being open. You know, it's not like you're trying to reject them and that you don't care about them. You're being open and honest that like this is realistic. I won't be able to do this for you. I'll try. And you know, and I think a lot of people would like or prefer for those types of conversations to just sort of be understood without saying anything. But that's not the case all the time. And sometimes you'll have to just be blunt. And unfortunately, there's some people who might even have mental health challenges, and might be aware of that, but still just kind of do it anyway. Because you haven't said no. So then I'm just gonna keep on doing it. And that's going to force a person to either cancel the relationship and leave or have to stand uphold their boundaries and say, hey, like, I'm sorry, but this is too much. Can you give me a break? This month is really difficult. I got finals, coming up exams, you know, please, you know, please try to understand.

Anne: I think one of the things that I'm hearing a lot in your responses that we can give that boundary and a soft and a kind way, we can say like, hey, I love you so much. I want to be there for you. But right now, like, I'm struggling with this other thing. And so I can't support you in this moment. But like, check back with me in a couple days.

Jordan: Well, yeah, but also just oh, well, I can't do it now. Because I kind of feels like an excuse, sometimes, you know, like, oh, just not right now, which it could be like, I am actually busy. But other times, maybe a

person just doesn't feel comfortable having these kinds of conversations, you know.

Anne: Yeah.

Jordan: I just don't want to talk about your sex life like this, you know, I just don't want to go there.

Anne: And I'm never gonna want to go there. I love that too.

Jordan: Yeah, like, I just I don't want to I don't feel comfortable. And I don't think it should be expected. Well, really, it's unhealthy to expect that at all, anyone's friend and one of your friends should be able to handle what you have to say, that's not something that has to be a person that's wanting support from you. It's just again, part of setting your boundaries. And how you can do that more gently is by having a conversation, getting to know them. And can you accept that? Can you accept that your friend doesn't want to do that with you? I mean, like, you can understand that they don't want to go to the gym with you. So why can't you understand that they don't feel comfortable talking about this topic. I know that you might need that, but that just tells you that you need to find the support somewhere else. Sometimes our support systems are not sufficient as it is to meet our needs. So that means you have to expand it. And you might have to go to a peer support group, you might need to talk to a psychotherapist, you might need to consult your doctor, you'll need to broaden your network to serve your needs. Because what you might have might not work for what's going on for you.

Anne: Yeah, I love that we brought this back to this idea that like no one person can be everything in your life. And you probably are going to need different types of friends for different types of support, or maybe bringing in other types of professionals to assist in that like network of support. So let's say that we are somebody who, you know, has made that conversation we've said, hey, I think you might need to see a mental health professional. What is that process of looking for somebody to provide that support look like? Where do people find mental health professionals? If they're not, I know on our campus, if

you're a student, we have Student Counseling Services, which is awesome. But if you know if somebody who is one of our students is supporting somebody off campus, like how do you find a therapist if you're not at the university?

Jordan: Well, first off, I want to say that there is a spectrum of different mental health professionals. You know, for example, an occupational therapist might be able to help you with some mental health challenges. There are social workers who might be able to help you with certain social challenges, emotional challenges. And then even further, there might be like social workers who have been educated or they can provide psychotherapy or that kind of social worker or psychotherapist, certain counsellors might be able to help you, but from a more psychological, mental sort of emotional level. Yeah, you want to seek a psychotherapist, now, psychotherapists, psychologists, social workers can be found in a lot of different places. You know, if you're, you're looking for one, you can just check online. I know Psychology Today is an area where you see a lot of people's different profiles, but also at clinics, rehabilitation clinics, that might have a registered psychotherapist or psychologist on staff could also be someone you could reach out to. But ultimately, you're looking for someone who you can feel you can connect with, someone who you feel might get you and that you are comfortable, but also someone who perhaps has experienced with the area of topic you're having challenge with, who might be able to help you and talk to you about these sort of things.

Anne: So I like the idea that, you know, I've heard this example. Feel like it's kind of a weird one to get, but sometimes people will say that like finding a good therapist is like dating and like, not directly because like don't date your therapist, that's not appropriate. But sometimes you have to like try out a couple different people before you find somebody that's a good fit for you. And the fit with you is important as much as that person's credentials, right? Like somebody could have all the credentials and be not the right person to be your therapist or your mental health support person.

Jordan: Yes, yes. And, you know, unfortunately, the mental health field like any other field as a very qualified individuals, some of the varying levels of

professionalism. So you know, there's going to be therapists that are more effective than others for different populations. So it may take time to find something that's a good fit. However, looking at someone's profile, getting to understand their language, how they see things. And also, just seeing if you can have a 5-10 minute conversation with somebody might be a good way for you to kind of get a sense of what they're like. The different therapists have different types of approaches in therapy, like a different theory that they work off of. And you might see that in their profile, and what might be a good idea is to look up, what is this theory, you know, and then to see like, this, this theory kind of makes sense to me? Do I kind of like that? And it's like, okay, well, then maybe I'm gonna like the therapist, because they're kind of speaking my language in that sense, like, I can see that. So then that might be a way to vet or sort of, or eliminate certain therapists that you might not find being a good fit for you.

Anne: Yeah, absolutely.

Jordan: But yeah, it's very much like dating where I mean, you know, there's lots to choose from, and it takes time to get to know somebody. But I want to also say that you don't necessarily have to like your therapist in order to get the most out of it. Because once you establish the therapeutic relationship, you're in therapy, that time is yours, as much as your therapist might decide, you know, perhaps a certain therapist might want to say, oh, I think we need to talk about this, we think about this, you're hiring them to do this process and have the service. And you have the last say, really about what you guys are going to talk about and what you guys are going to do. And as long as you have a goal in mind, and you see a direction, and the person says, yeah, we're gonna, these are the ways of doing it, and you agree to that and it make sense. Therapy can then be effective.

Anne: And I think, you know, we've talked a little bit about this, but I think that's something that you're saying is that accessing formal support can look a lot of different ways. There isn't really like one universal experience of what that looks like. There are different theories, there are different types of approaches. It's not like a singular experience that can be different for different folks.

Jordan: Oh, no, I've had I've spoken with clients, where they've told me how one therapist, things went in another therapy, things went this way, they're as different as people just because you had maybe one bad experience, perhaps, unfortunately, with one therapist doesn't mean that they're all like that. It does vary quite a bit, unfortunately. But I think that has to do with just the nature of the field. You know, we're only seeing now a standardization of psychotherapy. And I think starting 2020, where now not anyone can just perform psychotherapy, you know, there's people with certain education and credentials, certifications, registrations that have to be met in order for them to be able to do this. Whereas in the past, you know, you can go to a counsellor, but what would that mean? So one thing that's also important is to look at their registration, as well as their education, where were they educated, where they learn about? And yeah, they can kind of give more sense of what it might be like speaking with them.

Anne: So it sounds like there's, you know, lots of options, lots of reasons to seek out that support. And I think we're kind of coming to the end of our conversation. And so I guess what I would like to know is, is there like a singular take home message you'd like to leave folks with, or a message that you'd like to send out to our listeners?

Jordan: Well, when it comes to supporting someone else, with the mental health or emotional needs, I think I could say, one thing I'd like to let them know is that you don't have to do anything, you know, everything's a choice. If you don't feel comfortable doing certain things, it doesn't mean that that's, that's wrong, that's really important to know, because feeling pressured or you have to do something is probably going to lead towards some poor choices, I would really encourage people to be curious about what they can do, and what they feel comfortable with. And then having a conversation with their friends about that. So that there's transparency, there is no confusion about you know, you said you could call you any time well, did you? Or maybe you should tell them what you really mean by that. And chances are, you're going to hurt people's feelings. You can't make everyone happy and be the best friend that they know. But being a good friend in supporting mental health is sometimes not doing what they would like

you to do for them. You know, it's more than that. And sometimes the hard decisions to make are, or the you know, the more correct ones are ones that produce better impacts. But it can be tough. It's not easy.

Anne: Thank you very much for visiting with us today. That brings us to the end of our question list. So yeah, I just want to say like, thanks for spending some time with us. And yeah, we're on a live recording. So I think we'll we'll shut off the recording and let our audience tell us if they have any questions for you.

Jordan: Sounds sounds good.

Anne: So that was our chat with Jordan. Again, we'll make sure that all of the information about Jordan is in our episode description so that you can find him if you'd like to chat with them. And thanks so much for joining us today.

The Prevent Resist Support podcast is a part of the Office of Sexual Violence at the University of Windsor Our full Office title is the office of Sexual Violence Prevention, Resistance and Support. You can find us on our website which is at [www.uwindsor.ca/prevent-resist-support](http://www.uwindsor.ca/prevent-resist-support). Or you can email us at our email address which is [svsupport@uwindsor.ca](mailto:svsupport@uwindsor.ca). So S V like sexual violence support uwindsor.ca. If you are a member of our University of Windsor community and you would like some support around sexual violence or any unwanted sexual experience, you can reach out to us at the Office of Sexual Violence Prevention, Resistance and Support on our website, which is [uwindsor.ca/prevent-resist-support](http://uwindsor.ca/prevent-resist-support). You can also reach out to us by email at [svsupport@uwindsor.ca](mailto:svsupport@uwindsor.ca). If you are not a member of our UWindsor community but would like to learn about support resources near you. You can check out the Coalition of Rape Crisis Centres, their website is [sexualassaultsupport.ca](http://sexualassaultsupport.ca)