

**Davia Roberts 0:03**

Welcome to More Than a Therapist, a podcast for ambitious and creative clinicians who want to build careers beyond the couch. I'm your host, Davia Roberts and I hope you're ready for today's session. Today, I have the honor of sitting with Dr. Carrie Champ Morera, someone I'm extremely, extremely excited to introduce, particularly because she comes from the public school system. I know a lot of talented clinicians who believe their career options are severely limited due to their work with children and adolescents. But Dr. Carrie's career shows the exact opposite. In fact, her career as a school counselor, and psychologist is what opened the door for her to transition into tech. But I don't want to give away all the good details, because I simply can't do it justice the way that she does. So I want to start by welcoming Dr. Carrie to the podcast and say thank you for being here.

**Dr. Carrie Champ Morera 0:52**

Thank you so much. I'm so excited to be here today and really looking forward to connecting you and the audience. And I'm hoping I can be helpful.

**Davia Roberts 1:01**

Oh, you will be trust me like I've, I've seen your background, it will be helpful. When I learned a little bit more about your background, I was excited to see that you just had so much experience in the school system. And not just the public school system, but also in private residential. And I think when folks work in those particular settings, they feel really pigeon holed, and don't feel like their skill sets are marketable to other the other fields. And so I'd love to go a little deeper into that with you today. Because I want to know, like what was your role in most of these schools, the schools and what were you doing? And how did you pivot that into tech?

**Dr. Carrie Champ Morera 1:44**

Yeah, great. Well, it was really a quite a journey. So to start psychology and psychological assessment have been a passion of mine since I started out in college. And I had numerous roles over the years in a variety of settings and had the opportunity to earn various licenses and credentials as a result of my training. I started out as a mental health worker while I was going through college, working in the schools and doing groups and behavioral observations. And I got into that through doing some internships. Then I became a certified school psychologist while I was going through a master's program, and then worked into the pub in the public schools for a couple of years.

And there I was conducting psychological assessments and also providing individual therapy. And then I had the opportunity to switch over to a private residential school as a school psychologist and had experiences there, again, doing evaluations and therapy. And while I was there, I eventually moved into a manager position and provided oversight to an assessment team, that included clinicians and other school psychologists. And then I worked in that capacity for about 10 years. But all around that time, I was also doing some independent work and some contract work for various mental health agencies and

schools, just so I had some other experiences that I could gather along the way. But all throughout this time, there were two things that really intrigued me first was the tech piece. And I had just been fascinated with teletherapy and tele assessment and how clients and clinicians started using the virtual platforms to meet the clinical needs.

And then second, the psychological assessment portion of my work, including the management and the supervisory responsibilities that I had, I really looked forward to that every day. And I started to have lots of ideas over the years about improving products. And while he was enjoying being a direct provider, and supervisor, I wanted to pivot to the world of tech, which specifically involves psychological test development. And so I had been a user of the company's products, that being psychological assessment resources, who I work for now. I found a job posting on the company's website, and it was for the role of project director.

**Davia Roberts 4:16**

Well, that's perfect. Like you're literally using their their assessments already. So you're quite familiar with their, their background.

**Dr. Carrie Champ Morera 4:23**

Yes, yes.

**Davia Roberts 4:25**

Coming across that post... I'm wondering like, did you have any personal or professional reservations about entering tech? I know some people are intimidated to ever put themselves out there.

**Dr. Carrie Champ Morera 4:38**

Sure. Yeah. So I had reservations. I had contemplated applying because I felt I did not meet every single criteria 100% that was listed in the job description. And at the, at the same time, though, I thought, "Oh well, I'll never know if I don't try and go for it." Sure. I had some other doubts, I would be leaving a full time job with good pay and benefits and a good work environment, and people that I truly like to work with. However, for myself, I was seeking a position that would challenge me and enable me to utilize some of my creativity and other talents. And I was thinking, if I continue to stay where I was, I would not have the opportunity to grow. So that was really the impetus for me to to look towards tech. And additionally, what was also comfort comforting for me was that I did have some other certifications and licensing to fall back on. So I knew that if this doesn't work out, then I would have some other options. I mean, as we know, there's certainly no shortage of clinicians in the mental health space. So I could always go back to that traditional work.

**Davia Roberts 5:53**

As you are going through that application process. And like you said, you're like, I don't meet 100% of everything that's listed on here, I have some other credentials and some

other skills. What would you say were the most transferable skills that helped you feel more confident in the application process that we may overlook, as clinicians?

**Dr. Carrie Champ Morera 6:14**

Sure, I think one is the understanding of mental health and wellness. So therapists have a deep understanding of mental health and wellness and that can be applied in the design and development of digital products and services that are out there promoting mental health and well being. And so I was able to apply all of that knowledge working for a psychological assessment company. Another transferable skill would be the counseling and coaching. So as therapists we're really trained in these areas, and these different techniques, and those can be helpful when you're working with a wide variety of professionals that don't have a background in psychology.

I think third is understanding of a variety of therapeutic techniques. Again, this applies more towards digital mental health. But if you go in that direction, mental health therapists are familiar with the various therapeutic techniques like cognitive behavioral therapy that was was my background. And so those types of therapies can actually be applied when you're thinking about the design of digital products and how those customers are going to use them. And then one more skill that I would add to that would be management skills. Managers are needed in all companies and while you do not need maybe to know all of the technical aspects of everyone's job, if you were supervising them, you could at least get familiar with the industry. But that's certainly a transferable skill.

**Davia Roberts 7:52**

Those are often often overlooked, especially when you talked about digital mental health. Because I know for so many people listening, we see tech, and we see big tech companies, and we're like the only tech jobs are working with the tech mental health companies that want me to be the therapist. They're like, I already do that. I want something else. But to hear you talk about No, your your expertise and your training with CBT or DBT. That is going to inform how they provide services, how they create products, and that expertise is useful. And it doesn't have to be in direct services.

**Dr. Carrie Champ Morera 8:30**

Exactly.

**Davia Roberts 8:31**

Once you were able to, to go through that application process. Obviously, you were offered the role, you accepted. How was that transition for you going from the school setting, but you're also consulting on the side and doing your own thing. But how was that transition going from your traditional nine to five in the schools and now being in the tech world?

**Dr. Carrie Champ Morera 8:53**

Yeah, I would say I mean, for me, it was absolutely amazing. All the stars aligned, honestly. And I will, I will never never look back. I didn't realize it sounds silly. But I didn't realize how much I really knew about psychology and mental health until I was then in an organization in which I was working with many other individuals who were not psychologists. And yeah, it's like, well, this all this like knowledge that I gathered over the years now I'm able to use it in a different way and so that was just really empowering. And I found that, you know, I've been able to be creative and use many skills, talents and abilities on a daily basis to help teams within the company and then also the customers that we serve. So, for example, I'm able to help the marketing team with messaging for our products, then bringing the psychological assessments to life. I can help the sales team that we have with some of the technical and research parts of our products when they're selling them.

And then on the customer side of it, I've been able to lead and host webinars that we do through the company and presentations to help bring other experts on board and also to provide education, not only about the products that we sell, but just generally about topics in mental health, that are current in our field. Also, I'd have to say, just in terms of my experiences, that my work environment here has been very, very supportive, I have a strong and dedicated and talented team. And you know, it's okay to admit if we don't know something, or if we make a mistake. And I really think that that's important in the world of tech and product development, particularly if you want to be innovative and to be successful, you have to take a lot of risks and challenges.

**Davia Roberts 10:53**

No, it's amazing to hear you speak so positively about your work environment, because let's be honest, that can be really rare and hard for people to find. So for you to say, like, No, I feel so supported and the stars aligned and it's been such a positive work environment is awesome. And it's also really nice to just hear someone talk about, you know, when I was applying, I didn't hit all of the things they were looking for but when I stepped in the role, when I actually got the gig was like, Oh, wow, I'm bringing a lot to the table. And when it comes to like my background in psychology and mental health, because I've ever worked with clinicians around like, just coaching and someone wants to start, you know, doing like public speaking. And they'll speak at such a high level around mental health. And they're like, Well, this is what they need to know. And I'm like, yes, if they're a therapist, just like, remember that everyone else does not have your same baseline for mental health and mental health education. And so the fact that we come in with so much it can be so transformative for our work environment. So I love you highlighting that because your work is extensive. And people really do benefit from that. And sometimes we don't realize how extensive our experience is.

**Dr. Carrie Champ Morera 12:09**

Yes. Yeah, exactly. And if I could just add about the work environment and the culture piece, I've just been hearing more and more about clinicians and school psychologists being really stressed out and burnouts in their current roles. And it's really unfortunate,

because all of the work that they do is so important, and it really does impact the lives of, of so many. And sometimes people, you know, unfortunately, you get to a point where then it affects your own mental health. And so you need to step back and you know, perhaps, unfortunately, leave and look for something somewhere else. But it's really, really important to try to find a work environment that is going to be supportive, and also a culture that aligns with the values that you hold.

**Davia Roberts 13:06**

100% Because if we're trying to escape burnout, accepting that first job and saying, okay, at least I get out of there. Well, if we haven't vetted them, we may be walking into the same type of situation or something worse.

**Dr. Carrie Champ Morera 13:20**

Exactly.

**Davia Roberts 13:20**

That's what we don't want to do. However, in that process. I know there are some people that are thinking, okay, okay, Carrie, I like I like what you're saying, I like this, there's a possibility of some great working environments in tech. Like you, you're making me curious. But tech is huge, right? Like Tech is a big field, like what are some of the roles that people should be aware of as possibilities.

**Dr. Carrie Champ Morera 13:45**

So there are so so many roles, and I think more and more being created every day? Gosh, so a handful of roles. Let's see, there could be a research assistant. And so anything from the bachelor's level up through the doctoral level, you could do do research at a variety of different companies. And I think sometimes that's that's overlooked. Another role would be the one that I started out was the role of the project director or some companies may call it a research scientist, where you're on the development side of product development. Another position may be a project manager so therapists can really take their knowledge that they use perhaps in case management and providing client feedback and all of the skills that they needed to organize things that can be transferred to manage projects and so that is certainly a position.

Another one would be consultant, just finding companies where you can apply your subject matter expertise and like I was talking about earlier, like you don't really know how much you know until until you get out there and start talking about it. And so, there may be you know, plenty of companies in the tech space that can utilize your your knowledge of mental health. Another area would be a content writer. So as therapists, we do a lot of writing and haven't been trained in it. Companies need blog writers, people who can take technical jargon and explain it in simple terms. They also need people who can develop training materials and help craft some marketing messages. So there's certainly a lot of opportunities there. And then additionally, any management or leadership roles, particularly if it's a mental health tech company, and the therapist has supervisory

experiences, but a caveat that I have is that a position title at one company may have a very different position title at another company.

**Davia Roberts 15:44**

That's important.

**Dr. Carrie Champ Morera 15:45**

Yeah. Yeah, exactly. Um, even within like the same, the same industry so that the test publishing industry, for example, it's not always aligned in terms of what you would call one position at one company versus another. And additionally, roles and responsibilities can vary between what one position looks like in a startup, for example, where you're going to be doing maybe a lot more, versus an established company or an organization.

**Davia Roberts 16:15**

But there's a full spectrum. So there are opportunities out there, we don't necessarily have to be locked in to them saying, a therapist who will do XYZ, we have to simply be open and see how are our skills transfer. Now, when we are talking about those skills, what do you think are some of the things that will equip us skills we need to have professionally, or just ways we need to better market ourselves to be considered strong candidates?

**Dr. Carrie Champ Morera 16:44**

Sure. First, it's important to research the field. So your research the field and find out what digital tech tech companies are providing mental health services, look at their mission, find out if they have any current or future positions, you can also browse job postings or job requirements to find out what kinds of skills are required for the roles that you're interested in. And then you can work on trying to fill in those gaps. So along with that, I would say get hands on experience, if you can. So gaining hands on experience in digital tech can be a valuable way to help you build that knowledge base so you can be successful.

So you may want to consider taking on a digital technology related side project, if you can connect with someone, volunteer for a nonprofit organization, or startup or perhaps look for an internship to help get your foot in the door. And speaking of getting your foot in the door, networking is a great way to help market yourself, work on building those relationships with people in digital technology. And that can help you find out about new opportunities. If you make a connection with someone and let them know you're looking, they may remember you and call you up when they have something available. You can also look for industry events to join. Join online groups, connect with professionals, different social social media groups, like LinkedIn, for example. And then also, I would say, you know, keep learning, the field is constantly evolving. So it's really important to stay current with the latest developments and trends. Take courses if you're able to... and reading, read all the industry publications that you can get your hands on.

**Davia Roberts 18:36**

Now, that is phenomenal. And one of the things that I do believe is often overlooked is the power of networking. From my personal experience, I think tech is one of those realms where networking is so much more powerful. And so being in connection with people that are part of this world who can share like you, you offering, you know, space to be like, no, let me let me tell you... like it doesn't have to feel so intimidating and exclusionary, but just offering you know, insight, and it not be transactional, but truly be relationship building. And being able to learn is so helpful. And I think starting there, but also like you said, Dr. Carrie, really building your skills, because there are so many resources out right now. And I even think about like some of the Google courses I'm going to do well, I'm in the middle of doing a UX course. And I'm like, how could I combine my mental health with UX design? I'm like, those are so beneficial in 2023. So let me gain these skills and see how I can build them into my career. So network, see what's out there, study the industry, but also tap into your interests and how will that inform the extra skills that you want to gain to improve your career? So thank you for that.

**Dr. Carrie Champ Morera 19:50**

Once you're applying for the job because it looks like the job market. job market is very competitive right now. Really makes sure that you're tailoring, tailoring your resume to the actual job that you're applying for, I think that that can really help you stand out. And also include a cover letter as well highlighting some of your accomplishments or what benefits you could bring to the company.

**Davia Roberts 20:18**

What would you say is that pearl of wisdom that you wish you knew, before you got started, that you would like to share with the listeners today?

**Dr. Carrie Champ Morera 20:28**

I would say go for it. Take the risk and move out of your comfort zone. There's no time like right now. If you think that conditions will be perfect, they will there will never be perfect. There will always be excuses. If you don't seize the opportunity that's in front of you, there's no guarantee that you may have that chance again. Sure, it may be scary. It was scary for me, but I just decided to go for it. If it doesn't work out, at least you know, you tried and if you look hard enough, there will be something that you can learn from every experience that will help you move forward. And if you remain persistent, the right opportunity will come.

**Davia Roberts 21:10**

So it sounds like we're out here to do it scared. Before I let you go. I would like to have you join me for a final segment called the hot seat. The Hot Seat is the final segment where I asked you 10 rapid fire questions and you reply with the first thing that comes to mind. Are you ready?

**Dr. Carrie Champ Morera 21:26**

Yes.

**Davia Roberts 21:28**

What's your favorite song? The pressure

**Dr. Carrie Champ Morera 21:36**

I'm blanking out.

**Davia Roberts 21:39**

If y'all can see her, she is looking around the room. Like I gotta find it, I gotta find it.

**Dr. Carrie Champ Morera 21:45**

Next question.

**Davia Roberts 21:46**

Next question. What do you like most about your job?

**Dr. Carrie Champ Morera 21:50**

That I get to interact with people every day.

**Davia Roberts 21:52**

Okay, so you like I got this one. What would you say is the most challenging?

**Dr. Carrie Champ Morera 21:58**

Most challenging is accepting feedback

**Davia Roberts 22:03**

Cabin in the mountains or beach house?

**Dr. Carrie Champ Morera 22:05**

Beach house.

**Davia Roberts 22:07**

What is the number one skill a therapist can bring to tech?

**Dr. Carrie Champ Morera 22:12**

Communication.

**Davia Roberts 22:13**

What is your favorite way to unwind?

**Dr. Carrie Champ Morera 22:17**

Taking a nap.



**Davia Roberts 22:19**

What is one thing that you are watching on Netflix?

**Dr. Carrie Champ Morera 22:23**

Nothing.

**Davia Roberts 22:24**

Nothing? Well, what's one book you're reading?

**Dr. Carrie Champ Morera 22:27**

One book... as.. Leading with questions.

**Davia Roberts 22:31**

Leading Ooh, okay. I'm going to add that to the show notes for those who are interested.

**Dr. Carrie Champ Morera 22:36**

It's by Michael Marquardt,

**Davia Roberts 22:37**

Who?

**Dr. Carrie Champ Morera 22:37**

Marquardt.

**Davia Roberts 22:42**

What's a good networking tip for therapists?

**Dr. Carrie Champ Morera 22:46**

Good networking tip is don't be afraid to reach out

**Davia Roberts 22:51**

Like it. And last question: Have you finished your notes this week?

**Dr. Carrie Champ Morera 22:57**

By the end of the day, it's Friday.

**Davia Roberts 23:00**

Like I still have time. Well, thank you so much for joining me, not only for the hot seat but for today's episode. And before we say farewell, where can people connect with you online?

**Dr. Carrie Champ Morera 23:12**

So I am on LinkedIn, so feel free to connect with me there. I am also on Instagram @theconnectiondoctor.

**Davia Roberts 23:21**

Oh, awesome. Well, thanks again for joining us. And for those of you who are interested in learning more information about Dr. Carrie and the Therapists in Tech organization. Be sure to check out today's episode show notes at [morethanatherapist.co](https://morethanatherapist.co).