

**Transcript for The Who's Dat Phat Girl Podcast - With Brooke Hoover**  
**SEASON 2 EPISODE #11- Mental Health Month Dump**

Hey y'all, I'm Brooke Hoover. A Louisiana native, actor, writer and comedian. I've lost 100 pounds through diet and exercise or shall I say "lifestyle changes". My twenty year and counting health journey has taught me that just like taking a diet pill for weight loss, body positivity doesn't magically happen overnight. I'm working on re-gaining my self esteem and re-kindling my love affair with Cajun and Southern comfort food in a healthier way all the while juggling eating as clean as I can, re-establishing myself in the entertainment industry which, as we know, is historically fat phobic all the while showing my inner phat girl some love - that's phat with a PH - pretty hot and tempting. Let me tell y'all a tale or two...

What's up everyone? We are here. We are here. I am here with the Who's Dat Phat Girl? Podcast. It has been a while. It's been over a month, maybe a month and a half and you know I'm working on not apologizing. I always say we shouldn't over apologize. We shouldn't really apologize except to our microphone when we hit it. But, I am sorry because I did commit to myself and to y'all, to my active listeners that I would do one podcast a week. And...that's a lot. That's a lot. That's a lot like if that's just your job like some people it's like that's their job or that's the way they promote their business. With me right now, it's a side...thing, an off-shoot of my solo show, an amalgamation of things that I am turning different ways and it's hard to manage life and work and no work because the writer's strike is happening right now and SAG, our union, has just passed its passing a strike authorization so we all know what that might mean. So, that's stressful. To top it all off, as we all know, my dad has had some - a lot of health issues and I was down in Louisiana helping take care of him and it's not just health issues, it's a lot of life issues and stuff to sort out so I think it's okay that the podcast was on the backburner. I think everybody can understand and will understand, that's our demographic.

So, I had planned last year in May because I know May is mental health month. I was like oh next year, May 2023, every week I'm going to do a different interview or theme with somebody based on mental health. And, that didn't happen this year and it didn't happen because of mental health. It's been super stressful. I'm not the type who likes to talk a lot about things that are in the works until they've already happened I think that's because of protection, fear, I don't always like to hear people's opinions or have people's stuff come at me. So, I have some stuff in the works, some other stuff I've been working on. One thing I will share that has been very positive is I was part of the Montclair Story Slam. I will be sharing that on the website so you can go listen to that. But otherwise a lot of things in the works. A lot of things with deadlines. A lot of things with it submissions be it my own creative projects or work and again to top it all off, dealing with my dad.

I've developed Rosacea, which I haven't really eaten anything differently but my doctors think it's from stress. So, on that note, let's talk about mental health, right? So, I think...you know people might say, Well Brooke what's your experience? I

always joke, I'm not a doctor and I don't play one on TV...yet. But, to protect many of my loved ones, I will not say who these people are not because we are ashamed of it but because I have not cleared it with them so for their privacy, I will say there are a lot of people in my family who suffer from mental health. And...I get emotional about it because down South, and I think everywhere like I think every culture, every cultural group kind of has their thing, but down South, they always say, well we don't hide crazy, we just put it on the porch and parade it. And, yeah, that is kinda true.

In South Louisiana, we don't hide crazy, we just put it on a float and bring it to Mardi Gras. And, I think that kind of has manifested in my family as the quote unquote crazier ones are the class clowns, we're expected to be the funny ones because oftentimes people who are suffering from mental health mask it or hide it or handle it in different ways. And, I think comedy is a much healthier way, it's a much healthier way than alcohol but is it necessarily the right way to mask and hide your feelings? No. Not necessarily.

I should also say that usually I have an outline for the podcast. Today I don't. I always joke, I'm ADD. But, I do say that in all fairness, adult is a thing. ADHD. I'm not making fun of any sort of mental health in any shape or form. All I'm doing is making fun of myself and what I call Lena Dunhaming it. One of my best friends and I we joke. It's just a code word. It doesn't mean anything except for when we get like a little too self indulgent or extra. And, I'm not saying Lena Dunham's self indulgent or extra. I don't really follow her enough to know that. I think...she...created Girls, Guhls as I would say. That's all that I know.

But, I do think that mental health we have so much longer to go. We are not there yet. We are on the road there yet. But, especially seeing what some of my family members have been through, there's just a big disconnect. A lot of people won't even admit that there's a mental issue or impact be it with their families or be it with themselves or be it with their loved ones. There's...it's very hard to talk about this without getting more personal so I'm going to do the best I can.

General practitioners (laughs) I'm sorry I might offend people but I always say don't apologize except to your microphone or pop filter, which is right here. General practitioners don't know shit when it comes to mental health. Right? Trying to then talk to a mental-- trying to then find a mental care provider who's worth their weight in gold oftentimes from what I've heard and experienced, is you're going to have to pay out of pocket to really get the right specialized individualized treatment.

I can speak for myself when I say this that you know those therapy things that we see all over the place? Oh go do this online therapy. Go do this online therapy. It's great. It's accessible. Yes. Since the pandemic, online therapy has become quicker. Easier. More accessible. Has it become better? No. No, no, no, no, no, no. So, I have speed dated or beyond speed dated three online therapists.

In fact, the first one was perhaps...favorite is a bad word to use here. The first online therapist I had for nearly a year and they were perhaps the one I clicked with the best. Did they give me the tools that I asked for in order to cope with my anxiety and depression? Not really. I'm the type, I want a toolbox. I want to have it figured out. I can talk as we know 'cause I have a podcast. I can talk till the cows come home. I already know what works and what doesn't work for me and people might say, (pretentious voice): Brooke that's exactly why you need to be in therapy. And, yes my friends, it just might be and I'm open. However, being an actor, knowing different techniques and stuff already, I know what works and doesn't work and basically wanted to fast track therapy (laughs) and you can't always fast track therapy. But, I think you can cut a lot of the bullshit.

So, for the first almost year, I had had my SAG-AFTRA health insurance and I had the COBRA and then when that went away, just for a plethora of reasons, lack of work, everything, I was on Medicaid and honestly it was incredibly difficult, finding a therapist, especially an online therapist who would take Medicaid. But, once I found that person, again, I was with this person for a whole year and I may have stayed with this person but then I qualified for my union's health insurance. Yay, yay, What what? But then I couldn't go to the same therapist because they didn't take my union's health insurance.

So, trying to find someone who is in New Jersey where I live not New York even though I wanted a New York City based therapist because I said they might kind of...this is me getting a little stereotypical here but a New York City based therapist might understand kind of like the freelance lifestyle more than say somebody in the suburbs of Jersey.

Whose clientele might be different than me. Who knows? I couldn't go to any of the people that were linking up with my health insurance because they were linking up with New York not New Jersey. You can't cross state lines like that. So, there's a platform called Beacon health and the two therapists there have not been so great. It's like you're paying a \$25 co-pay and yes doctors do say you need to test around, you need to see who works for you. Right? But, it can be awfully expensive. The co-pays add up, \$25 for, if you try somebody out for a month, you don't like them, I would say that's \$100 wasted, it's not necessarily \$100 wasted but it's kind of like \$100 spent on movie theatre popcorn instead of like popcorn from Whole Foods. You know? So, I do think that better therapy, finding a better therapist and the vetting process needs to be a lot better. I was also talking with my general practitioner about this and she completely agrees that it's like especially during the pandemic, people sought out therapy and I applaud people and myself included seeking out you know the mental health side of things. Cause I know on this here podcast we talk a lot about the physical health. We don't always talk about the mental health - we talk about the emotional health, I think through my little tales. But, everybody was seeking out a therapist and it's just like, it just became inundated. You know we're talking about artificial intelligence taking over the jobs of writers and potentially actors and it's like almost like I feel some of these

therapists - Rosie the Robot from "The Jetsons" could be a better therapist than some of these therapists.

And, if people want to give me backlash and hate for me saying what's simply my opinion, go for it. But, it's based on my experience. And, here's the deal. I don't like wasting my time. I don't like signing into a platform waiting for a therapist and then the therapist saying I didn't attend my appointment and then me spending an hour on the phone with the platform and my insurance to make sure I'm not going to be charged the \$25 co-pay and then being ghosted by the therapist. Oh, that may have happened the way I just said that with so much fuel.

So, finding a therapist can oftentimes make your mental health worse and by your mental health I mean mine. So, the process of finding a therapist has been more stressful almost than the stress I'm dealing with.

Here's another thing: Stress can create anxiety, depression. There are mental illnesses that exist already without a circumstance. I once told someone, Oh God. This is about 10 years ago when I first thought I was maybe experiencing depression, I talked with a good friend. I was like, I think I feel depressed. Something's not quite right. I was trying to reach out. Like reach out. Reach out and touch someone. Reach out when something's not feeling right. And, the person said to me, "Oh girl with all the stuff I'm going through, I should be depressed." And, I was like whoa you just totally turned it around and made it about you.

And, you can be depressed or anxious without anything. That's the thing with anxiety. It creeps and it's creeping. It's lurking. It's like hey. What's up? I'm the nails on the chalkboard. Everything's going fine. There's no horrible circumstances. Everything's status quo. But, let me be here to (Fart noise) F shit up. yeah I won't say the F word but I'll say the S-word. (Laughs) I won't say F but I'll say shit. Y'all know what I'm saying.

Hopefully we do so, for mental health month, I think it's important to stop masking. I don't mean COVID masking. Perhaps that is what could be causing some of my Rosacea is my continued overuse of masks. But I don't know if that's such a thing but no masking your feelings from others, I get it, I get it. I do it. Oftentimes it's an armor, it's protection. It's what people expect of you sometimes. But, you cannot mask things from yourself.

And, that's what I'm asking us to do this month of May. Don't everybody feel like you have to go out and find a therapist because as we know even though I do believe in therapy to an extent, I believe in finding the right therapist. I don't believe in just talking just to talk. I believe in finding a toolbox and oftentimes Pinterest and YouTube videos have helped me a lot more than a couple months of therapy with certain therapists.

My dogs Annie and Archer, well Archer is sleeping but Annie keeps walking back in. Dogs. Cats. Animal videos. Very healing. I'm not a therapist. I'm not a psychiatrist. But, I just know from personal experience and seeing others go through this having, having a purpose. Having something to do. Sometimes sitting and doing nothing. Sitting in nature. Having some sort of ritual or routine. I exercise a lot. I just rejoined a gym because my herniated disc has kind of flared up. It's getting better. I'm like the pool, the pool will be great and actually the pool and this random step climber have really helped my herniated disc. But, exercise is very, very important. And, finding the right doctor for you. Finding, if you need to be on medication, the right medication for you. Listening to your body. When you take a medication and it doesn't work and I will leave everyone with this...if a doctor prescribes you a medication, a mental health medication and it doesn't work and they keep saying, "Just keep taking it, just keep taking it, that's part of the side effects, just keep taking it, it'll go away. It'll work." Your body, your mind, your intuition are pretty powerful. You don't need to listen to a doctor just because they're a doctor.

And...there are tools out there. I'm still in the midst of finding the right ones and finding the right ones, helping my loved ones find the right ones for them and I'd like to say I'll see you next week or I'll see you or I'll hear you or I'll talk out my butt off to y'all next week but I do have some other deadlines for some creative stuff so I don't know when I'll be back, but I will be back with this here podcast soon. Take care of yourselves. Let's take care of our mental health.

I say we're going to leave this with an "om". My friend, one of my great friends Amy is a yoga teacher. I highly applaud and condone her yoga classes - also yoga is great for mental health. I would say let's leave with an "om" but that feels a little...feels a little weird and that's exactly why we're going to do it.

Let's do "om". I'm going to kind of back off from the microphone. Y'all ready? (Takes a deep inhale) Ommmm. Remember y'all. Part of being PHAT - Pretty Hot and Tempting is taking care of yourself, all up in here. Mentally. One thing I do want to suggest, this is where the ADD comes in. This is probably why I should have had an outline, one thing from the therapist who ended up ghosting me, a good take away from this therapist was to take fish oil, vitamin D (sniffs) oh a little snot's coming out my nose, fish oil, vitamin D, flax seeds. So, that has also helped. Remember about 60% of your brain is fat. So, eat those healthy fats.

Keeping in mind that eating a couple tablespoons of coconut oil might not be the best fat for the type of saturated fat that coconut oil is, so fish oil, salmon, avocado, avocado oil, olive oil, nuts, especially walnuts.

What's her name from Orange is the New Black? Pennsatucky? Taryn Manning had a cauliflower (Southern accent) she was like "This is good for your brain. This is brain health cause it looks like a brain." So, go for it. I think walnuts look like a brain so they're good for your brain health and let's leave it with Pennsatucky's advice. You know, screw a therapist's advice, Pennsatucky, Taryn Manning, love her, (Southern

accent) Cauliflower looks like a brain. This is good. This is good for your brain. So, go out and eat some cauliflower. Do an "Om". Go out in some sort of nature. Even if you just have to touch a leaf. And, take a deep breath. I'll be back with more things to entertain us at some point. Peace, Love and Phatness and Mental Health.

Thanks so much for listening, y'all. It is my hope to inspire, uplift and entertain you with this Who's Dat Phat Girl podcast. So, if you're HUNGRY for more, you can book me to speak or perform my solo show that inspired this podcast Phat Girl Costumes written by yours truly and directed by my best bud Brian Lady at your virtual or in person event. Please visit [Brookehoover.com/fluffybuttproductions](https://Brookehoover.com/fluffybuttproductions) or email me at [contactbrookehoover@gmail.com](mailto:contactbrookehoover@gmail.com) for more information. And, let's follow each other on instagram - I'm @Br00keH00ver and those O's are not the letter O but they're ZEROS. Not because I want to be a size 0 but because I guess I'm just so clever with my late 90s Yahoo! self

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