Fatima Hafiz: The Western education is about the intellect, but the education that's necessary is a connection between the intellect and the heart.

Sam Fuqua: That's Fatima Hafiz, and this is Well, That Went Sideways! A podcast that serves as a resource to help people have healthy, respectful communication. We present a diversity of ideas, tools, and techniques to help you transform conflict in relationships of all kinds. In this episode, we talk with Fatima Hafiz about understanding emotional responses to trauma. Dr. Hafiz is an educator, facilitator, and CEO of The TEA group - Transformative Education Associates. They specialize in bringing transformative practices to under-resourced communities, primarily in Greater Philadelphia.

I'm Sam Fuqua, co-host of the program with Alexis Miles. Hi Alexis.

Alexis Miles: Hello Sam.

Sam Fuqua: Very delighted to be here with Fatima Hafiz at the 2025 White Privilege Conference. Hello, welcome.

Fatima Hafiz: Thank you for having me.

Sam Fuqua: We are speaking to you after I just attended your workshop. I came away, uh, certainly with an appreciation of your lifelong dedication to helping communities through social work, through restorative practices, and through, uh, a very interesting new app that you're developing that we'll get into. Given your decades of experience, what did you find most, say lacking in social work?

Fatima Hafiz: Yeah, I wanna say that I, uh, began a journey, in terms of career journey, with education, and looking at the ways in which educators were put into black and brown communities, and particularly as it related to white female educators and the experiences that they had that they didn't, they didn't get taught in their training, and I was part of that, but I actually added things to it. So, I try not to talk in lack, I try to speak more about what is missing. And, what was missing is the ability for the universities and folks who teach social workers and um, educators, and even therapists, uh, what it means to deliver services in black and brown communities. And, delivering service in black and, black and brown communities doesn't necessarily fit all the time with DSM, the DSM, you know, diagnosis, because we don't consider the trauma, we don't consider the historical context for black and brown communities, and their experience, in terms of their mental health experience, in terms of their economic experiences, and what drives them. And so, part of it is the inability for a lot of the white educators and white social workers, which is predominantly white females, when they come in, they're not, uh, able to support people at a level that they could support people. They can come in with ideas, uh, they can come in with their training, but there's a different kind of experience they need in order to service. People who have gone through historical trauma, who's gone through, you know, who's carrying a lot of epigenetic trauma, uh, people who are continuously being bombarded with some of the, uh, inequitable things that are happening in our communities.

Alexis Miles: I'm guessing people have heard those terms, epigenetic trauma, historical trauma. Could you just briefly say what they are and give an example?

Fatima Hafiz: So when I talk about historical trauma, I'm talking about the journey of the African American experience from enslavement, and that this trauma goes from enslavement to Jim Crow, to all of the, uh, more systemic things that have happened and that continue to happen through this structural things like the structural racism, things that have happened, uh, in terms of the economic racism, geographic racism. And so historically, we, uh, have been under the pressure of these kinds of conditions. And so, that's where the historical trauma, so when one is getting service as a, uh, client, "client," we change that language. But as a client, usually that is not considered when you are diagnosing, when you are engaged in interventions, it's not considered. Um, and so, uh, that's the historical trauma. Epigenetic trauma is trauma that is passed through the genes. There is studies by Jewish Holocaust victim, victims who show that they are carrying some of the same fears, some of the same things that they experienced, that their parents, their great grandparents, their great grand grandparents experienced during the Holocaust. The challenge with looking at that for the African American experience is that they don't wanna acknowledge that this epigenetic exists in African Americans. They say, "Oh, it's too far back." But the truth is, is that it's continuous oppression. And so, the epigenetic is talking about the genes. It's talking about what we carry. Like, uh, they'll say, "Oh, well black people have a lot of high blood pressure," you know, but we are carrying a lot of this because we are carrying trauma that has not been resolved. And so, that's what I mean by epigenetic and historical.

Alexis Miles: Thank you for that. You mentioned people being educated in their fields, but something's missing. The missing piece. And the things you just described. What can be done to help bridge what's missing so that they can be effective teachers?

Fatima Hafiz: So, I think the first thing is acknowledging, I mean, talking about those who are going into the field, acknowledging their own humanity. And, I think that's missing is that there's not a recognition that your humanity is tied to my humanity. And, you get caught in a system that says that you are an individual. And that, you know, yes, you have privileges. Your white skin actually gives you privileges that you may not acknowledge. And so, uh, the missing is that that's the first thing we have to do is get present to our own humanity so that we can see others. Um, when we can't see others, it's because we have closed something off inside of ourselves. And, the other part of that is we are educated from the neck up. We are not educated from the head to the feet, you know? Uh, so the lower part of our bodies just don't get educated, right? And so, the Western education is about the intellect. But the education that's necessary is a connection between the intellect and the heart. And what does that mean with regards to the idea of love, you know?

Dr., Dr. King talked a lot about love. When I was doing my research, I did research with white female educators. And when, uh, I wanted to do my dissertation, I wanted to talk about love, and I wanted to talk about fear because inside of this culture, you know, addressing the fear that white educators, white social workers, when they go into a black community or brown community, there's a fear there. There's an internal fear that they may not recognize because you push it off. Why? Because you're the authority and you've given the role of being the authority in the space, whether it's in a classroom, whether it's as an administrator, whether it is a social worker, you've given, you've been given a role. And so, people see it, but they don't speak it. They just carry it, you know, knowing that, oh well, I can't fuck up against authority, and this white person represents the authority. And, the second bridge is being able to understand your own fears and your own sensibilities when you are in spaces with other people.

Alexis Miles: Would you say that part of that is also, if a white person is in, in the presence of black or brown people and certain feelings or thoughts come up, they think, oh my God, that sounds, feels like, sounds like racism. I've gotta push that away.

Fatima Hafiz: Yes, yes. And, they start to internalize it and they don't realize that they thoughts and their feelings are actually expressed. Without them even realizing that it's expressed. But many times they don't wanna talk about it. They don't wanna say it because they don't wanna be wrong. They don't want to, oh, uh, I can't say this because then I'll appear racist. No one, they don't wanna, white people don't wanna be called racist. But, uh, the idea is that yes, it comes up and to recognize it is, uh, power to be able to recognize it and then to do something with it. And doing something with, it's not the reaction. It's the, more of like, what am I gonna, how am I gonna respond to it? And most of the time, if the response is to shut it down, you're never gonna respond. Uh, but if you respond to it, not worried about whether it's the wrong thing, I said the wrong thing, I did the wrong thing, because if you can stand in that and be in a conversation, you might be able to get past that and actually expand your capacity to work in spaces with black and brown people.

Alexis Miles: So learning to be comfortable with discomfort.

Fatima Hafiz: Yeah. Being comfortable with un, with di, with discomfort, let's say. Being comfortable with being uncomfortable. I learned that a long time ago with a mentor of mine says, "Well, if you can't be uncomfortable, you don't need to be doing this work."

Sam Fuqua: Do you have any tips for when, you know, like you said a few minutes ago about how some conflicts, we try to compartmentalize them to the head, right? But we know, I know, there's a physiological response that, that I feel in my body, but I'm not always, uh, aware enough to deal with that in, in the right way. And so that can lead me to fight or flight, right? Say something that I, that will just escalate the conflict rather than work through it or just avoid it, you know, that would be the flight. Just shut it, shut it down. Any advice for how people can get more self-aware in those moments and respond not just to what's going on in our head, but what's happening in our body?

Fatima Hafiz: Yeah. One of the first things is being aware. That's the biggest thing. And in this culture, we are not taught to be aware of our bodies. Be aware of what's happening. If you think about in black communities, the suppression of the internalized oppression won't allow us, our voices to be heard and to be activated in a way that we can release what we are carrying. Uh, van der Kolk says that the body holds the score, and the body will become ill when you can't let things go, let things out. The first way is to begin to breathe. See, we forget to breathe. We, we are breathing automatically. We think it's okay, you know? But, think about it when you don't have a breath, you, you can't breathe. The thing is to come back to your breath and to slow the breath down because you'll notice when something starts to happen, something happen, we go (rapidly breathing in and out), you know, we don't even pay attention to it. But we start to breathe heavily or we start to, uh, hold our breath. And so, the breath is the first thing to pay attention to when that experience in your body. And you start to breathe into that place, but you gotta identify where that place is, and sometimes you can't identify where that place is, right? It's just that I feel it somewhere. I don't know where I feel it, right? But you breathe into the body and it'll find its way. Oxygen is the one thing that keeps us alive. If you can't breathe dead, right, we are gone. And so, breathing is the first thing I would think that we would do to slow the brain down so that now you can think more clearly and you can process whatever it was that made you like, and I, one can't see the movement, but it's like a, um,

shimmering in the body and you don't know exactly what to do with it, right? But the breath, I think is the number one thing to remember when you get that.

Alexis Miles: I wasn't in your workshop, but Sam described one thing that happened. It was like turning over a card and looking at it and, and being able to identify that first feeling. Can you say more about that exercise and what you're getting at with that?

Fatima Hafiz: So, many times when we come to these kinds of conferences, we are intellectualizing. We are talking and talking and talking at each other, and we go from one talk to another talk. It's like we are trying to hold all this stuff right, and we get back to wherever we come from and all of that is gone, right? But the feeling is the feeling. They'll say, um, with children, it doesn't matter that you taught them two plus two is two. If they remember that, okay, maybe they won't. But what they do remember is how they felt. And children tend to know to feel. Adults, we grow not to feel. And so, it, what I was getting at with that exercise is so that you can feel something and know where you felt it. Like, you felt it in your body. So, the cards had to do with this conference conversation - race. Uh, white, black, oppressor, all these words, these labels that are put on people. And it's these labels that we are experiencing. It's not the person, it's not us, but it's a label that we've, uh, it's already been defined for us. So, it scares us to see the word oppressor or victim, you know, or white supremacist, or racist. Those things, and we don't, we don't pay attention to those. Okay, somebody just called me a racist. What do I do with that? I'm feeling it, you know, what do I do with that? Know that it's not you.

First of all, you breathe and then you take on what it, because what you do next is you start thinking about, it's just an emotion. Okay, that emotion was quick. 90 seconds. I felt that emotion. It was like somebody said surprised, but that surprise was only a second. Few seconds, few moments. But when you start thinking about what that's, that word meant, then you start spiraling. Am I this? Is that true? What is that, you know? Do I do that? All of those things start running through your head, through your body, and you can't adjust. You can't adjust because that label is labeled inside of you. It's not just the label on the words, on the paper. And so, what the intention is, is to get present to it, not to those words, take those away, but anything that happens when you're talking with family, when you're talking with friends, when you're talking in a, uh, situation, when you're in a situation, just pay attention to the moment that you felt something. But you have to practice. I was saying how it's not that it just happens like that. It's really a practice. Everything is a practice. When you learn something, it's a practice. Uh, I was talking about those young, the young people that were there, the young educators, if they just took one thing and practiced that one thing, it would shift something in their being.

Uh, with the app, we have this thing about I experienced being. So, I do something, but I'm being a certain way when that thing happens. But we don't pay attention to that. What's my perception of what just happened? The perception is the thinking that keeps us spiraling in our feelings, and then we can't get rid of our feelings because we are spiraling because of all the things we are thinking about it. So, it's being able to separate the thought so that now you can be fully present to the feeling and to feel it. I remember, um, some colleagues, we were at a, a pub and we were just talking about feelings, and every one of them, all scholars, all, you know, and I says, "Well, how you feel?" Oh, um, "I think I feel..." and, "I think I feel..." But how do you feel? "I think I feel..." and that's all we heard. People said, "I think I feel." "I think I feel," right, but I don't really feel. I feel, but I've never cultivated it because our culture doesn't cultivate that, doesn't have us cultivate how we feel. They make that, uh, seem like, oh, that's a woman, that's emotional. She's feeling so much stuff, right? But we all feel. We all human beings. That's what makes us human. Uh, and uh,

in Sufism, uh, it says that the emotions are the seed of the heart. Like our heart, actually, the emotions tell us what our heart is saying. Our bodies tell us what our emotion is. So, that's the intention, is to get people to feel something.

Alexis Miles: What I think I'm hearing you say is, you and I could be in a conflict. We are talking. You say a word. That word can cause me to spin if you say, "You, you racist. You colonizer." I'll be in here spinning. We are still talking, but I'm, I'm really not listening because I'm spinning, and I, I can't get myself back into the conversation. So, if I wanna have a real conversation that's gonna resolve a conflict, I've gotta stop spinning.

Fatima Hafiz: I gotta stop spinning. Yes. Yes. And, the way you stop, you gotta speak it, "I, you just called me a racist. Tell me more. How do you see me as a racist? What did I do? What did I say?" Just being frank, being truthful, you know, we as human beings, we have the power to speak it, speak things into existence. When we label, we are speaking something into existence.

Sam Fuqua: You've done some work with, uh, restorative practices as well, and as you pointed out in the workshop, you prefer strongly the word practice rather than justice. Sometimes people talk about restorative justice. So, could you talk about your work in communities around violence and maybe some of these personal practices that you've been talking about, how they might connect with that work?

Fatima Hafiz: I wanna say one of the first big opportunities that I had to work in community was when twelve young people were shot at a party and two of, one of them died and a couple of them were maimed. And, uh, we were called in to have some conversations with the community because when this incident happened, young people were taken to the hospital and the community was going to the hospital because there was their children, and the hospital closed doors, and didn't allow parents and people into the hospital. And, we thought that was pretty egregious. They called the president of the hospital. President of the hospital came, and I find him to have been a very enlightened person because what he did was he looked at the situation, he looked at what was happening, and he said, "What would I do if this was my son?" And, he was paying attention to the way the parent and the child, one of the child who was, their cousin or friend was in the hospital and they were banging their head against the wall, and he looked at this and he said, "What would I do?" But he heard the woman say, "Come on boy, let's get outta here. Let's go." Right? And he didn't understand that that was pain. That was something they couldn't do. And he says, "How would I handle it?" So, we got a call from him and people from the hospital system to come in and to do some work around this issue of what had happened in this incident.

At the time, I was working with a French social psychologist, his name's Charles Rojzman, and we were doing some work and people would call it DEI, but it was more like racism, hatred, and violence that he works around, works with. And so, we were doing some work at Temple University in Pennsylvania, and I told him this is what's happening. We had been working around conflicts and conflicts around the world. His work has gone to Israel and Palestine. His work has gone through Rwanda, uh, where you had to bring the Hutus and Tutsis together, uh, after the massacres and the killings. And, uh, we looked at conflict a little differently. And so, because of the way that we were looking at conflict, that conflict is part of the human experience, but when we can't express that conflict, what we do is resort to violence. And when we can't have that conversation around the thing that we think we are in a disagreement with, it can resort to violence. When we look at people and we see a caricature of that person, it becomes violence. And so I asked him, uh, to help me design something to address this issue in that community, and he did. And, um, we were supposed to deliver it and he went back to France and couldn't get a visa back into the US. So, it

meant that I had to do the work. And, it was my first time, like, doing this large work. And, the group that I had to present to, that we were gonna present to, because he was going to Zoom in, however, the Zoom didn't work, and here, I'm still here having to do this work, right? And they, and the president asked his group, "Do you think Fatima can do the work?" And, uh, the group said yes. And, that's where I began doing this work and looking at conflict in a way that it allowed people to express themselves no matter what, we, we claimed it as no blame, no shame, no labeling, but being in the space.

And the way we set the work up is that we did parallel conversations with leadership, with policy makers, with police and educators and social workers, direct service people, with community. And they could be veterans. They were people who were renters and homeowners. And young people. And so, these conversations went, you know, parallel until we came together about 18 months later, and people were able to talk with each other on a horizontal level. There wasn't the hierarchy. There wasn't where the, uh, the mayor, you know, because he's the mayor, that he didn't, he didn't, uh, share his humanity. And, he came and he shared about his mother beating his father when he was a, before he became a mayor, his, he was on the street beating up other people, but he talked about the relationship in his home. And so, people could relate. And so, we use a lot of techniques. We use a lot of techniques that allow people to actually see the violence. And, see the violence outside of themselves so they can see the violence within themselves. And so, we talk a lot about conflict and allow the conflict to, we allow the conflict to show up so that we know where people are, and people can see. And, out of that came stories. People started to tell their stories, and when they started telling their stories, other people could relate to their stories because it was their story. And so, we didn't have to pinpoint any one person, any one family. They just saw themselves in that process.

And so, that's some of the community work that I did. I loved it because it gave me life to know that there's a possibility for us to heal, uh, through authentic dialogue, through the kind of dialogue that allow us to tell our truth. And, the practices and the methods that I use is some of these, the meditation, you know, sitting with people, the quietness, various exercises. We used theater, uh, we used various ways so people could see themselves. We did public appearances with the theater where the community became the actors in the public theater and they were acting out lives, their own lives, and in, other people saw that their lives were being acted out on stage. And with the public theater, anyone from the audience, if they saw an incident happening on stage, they could come on stage, and that they could play that out for themselves. So, it's a modality for healing, uh, without people having to sit in one-on-one. 'Cause one-on-one therapy is a Western concept. You know, in cultures where they're a community is a group collective process for healing. And so, uh, that's some of the things that I use. Uh, we are looking through our organization, what we are doing is finding other modalities for healing, uh, outside of just Western medicine. So, we use reiki and we use, uh, sound and dance. Dance is huge in terms of healing. Uh, we use EFT, which is a tapping technique. So, these are all free. Like you don't have to go anywhere to do it, to get it. You don't have to pay for anything. We use drumming. We use all kinds of other modalities to support the healing in communities, uh, of color, particularly the black community, uh, from the traumas that they experience.

Alexis Miles: So, ever since you talked about breathing and how it can help slow us down and be present, I've been sitting here breathing and just feeling my feet on the floor and all of that, and it, it's a different experience talking with you than it typically will be. I'm less in my head and more present with you. You know, with Dr. Hafiz, you know.

Fatima Hafiz: Thank you. That, that's so, and just that you took that on, uh, you know, I, uh, have this story. It's a Sufi story where the Sufi master came into a post office, and the clerk was doing his thing, but the master realized that this man was breathing. He had a conscious, intentional breathing that allowed him to do his work, but at the same time, he was in himself, but he was able to see and hear, and feel because of the breath. And, I remember once with Charles, my, the mentor, the social psychologist, we are in the room with the group that we are working with, and the group was talking, everybody was talking, and all I had to do was sit there and just breathe, and consciously breathe, and before I knew it, everyone was turned. I didn't have to open my mouth. I didn't have to ask them to be quiet. All I had to do was be present and to breathe. So, thank you for sharing that. I appreciate that.

Sam Fuqua: Tell us about the app that you're developing.

Fatima Hafiz: This application, uh, I call it a social emotional application, and the name of it is TheraMe. And, so this was about seven years ago, and it was when I was working, uh, with educators, new educators, particularly white females going into black communities. And many of them would come back and, uh, they would have all of these emotional experiences. And, uh, when they came back, they would cry 'cause the kid didn't listen to them or something happened, you know? And I'm like, "Well, why are you crying?" "Oh, I dunno what to do with it." Okay. Okay. And this was pretty often, so when I was doing restorative practices in the schools, I noticed that it was hard for them to actually apologize to students when they were wrong. To identify they were wrong. And so, I started thinking if they have something in real time, that they could say, okay, this is what's happening every time, uh, Jamil, you know, does this, I get like this, you know. I'm screaming at him. Or, I'm sending him out of the room. I want you to pay attention to what you are doing in relationship to Jamil, not what Jamil is doing. I wanna pay, pay attention to what you're doing. And so I thought, well, maybe if you could capture what you felt, and capture the feeling, capture the, the emotion, and then capture the moment. What can you do now? Uh, what do you need, right? Or meditate for 30 seconds, for a minute, for three minutes. Three minutes. We can walk you through a meditation. Uh, 30 seconds could give you a chance to breathe. A minute can give you a chance to breathe, and it would bring you down so that you can get clear so that you can now see Jamil differently 'cause you're seeing him through a lens that you always see him through.

And so, then I started, okay, how can I do that? That's how we started with women, with teachers. But then I realized how much I needed it. And I started to figure out, oh, this is what I need. I started with a sheet of paper when I was talking with teachers. It's like, what's the event? What's the episode? What's the outcome? Right? And, um, that's what, you know, started me. Um, and I started when I was doing research with these teachers, these veteran teachers. And so, the app itself captures the emotion. And like I said before, there's a distinction between the emotion, feeling, and mood. So, those three things can make up our emotional health, right? Um, so, uh, you capture the emotion, and the emotion can only last it, it really only lasts like 90 seconds. The actual emotion. You find out what the intensity is, then you add where I feel it in my body. And then you find the words, which is the feelings. Then you think about, well, what's my experience of it being right now? And then perception. And those two things, experience and perception, requires a little bit more depth for you to think about. And then I'll ask you, well, who was it with? Or what was the situation? And then, what do I need? Because most times we don't know what we need. And so, it gives you some options.

And then you can write in options about what you need, and then what can I do right now in this moment? And, that's where, it was for teachers, educators, like in this moment, what can I do? I can stop. I can

breathe. Maybe I can walk out the classroom. Maybe I just need to sit at the desk and be quiet and watch what's going on and breathe, right? So many different things you can do in any sector, any field. Um, and then once you do that and say, well, what can I do now, then you submit it. You go back, you can review what you just did, and then you can change it if you want, and then you submit it, and you can share it with a good friend, community member, somebody you trust, or you can share it with a therapist or someone that's a professional. Then you just track it. You know, you track it for a period, you start to see, wow, I thought I was angry more times than I was, but it's the negative emotions that make us think that we are in that all the time, right? And so, you track it and you see, wow, I wasn't angry all these last two weeks. I had some joy. I had some gratitude. I had some pride. I had some good feelings. And so, we want people to remember the good feelings because that's what can ground us rather than the negative ones. And the negative ones are gonna happen, and it's important that they happen because you won't know the good ones if you don't address the negative ones, but it makes us whole as human beings. And so, the app is to help people with language around their emotions, to help them capture what's happening in their bodies, and to help them to find ways to settle their brains, settle their bodies, um, so that they can pursue what it is they're pursuing in that moment.

Sam Fuqua: Yeah, I thought it was a more sophisticated and more precise version of journaling to me. Like, rather than having to write down and try to articulate in the moment, or remember many hours later, you have this app on your phone, and it gives you choices for emotions and feelings and moods and, and if the choice doesn't fit, you can also put in your own. And, and then you have a record of those feelings and emotions as well as a quick text you put in about what happened and who was involved. And, so I could see during the demonstration that if I could make this a regular practice, you know, it really could help me track my state of being and, and better understand it.

Fatima Hafiz: Thank you for that. Uh, the other part of that is we, on the other side of the app is the professional or the guide. Uh, we call those who are using the app, the journey here. I'm on a journey. You are on a journey. Everybody's on a journey with life. And, you might be two steps ahead of me, and you might be able to guide me from those two steps that you're ahead of me. But the guide, it, we, therapists, we are trying because in certain communities these are triggering things and when you see a therapist, they don't wanna go to a therapist. Ain't nothing wrong with me. I ain't crazy. Right? But then if you say, okay, this is a guide, and you are on a journey, and even that guide might be on a journey, but they're here 'cause they're a little bit ahead of you and they know a little bit more, they can help you navigate this stuff, right? And so, with the guide side of the app, the guide can invite someone. Uh, we can recommend somebody say, oh, well you know what, I really need somebody to help me process this. We recommend someone. The guide will invite that person, and then that person accepts it, and then they're in relationship with the, with the professional. And then the professional, if you only see the professional once a month, a lot of things happen in a month, right?

So, if you can capture maybe things that happen between the time you see your, your guide, and the next time you see your guide and share with the guide, the guide has a clear idea these are some things that are happening. So, when I come in to talk with you, you are clear what I've been through, and how does it fit within the therapeutic intervention that I'm here to talk with you about. So, it helps the guide to become more effective, more efficient, and to help the journeyer to become self-reliant, more self-reliant on what they can do for themselves, rather than, you know, paying for a therapist forever.

Alexis Miles: Well, do you have to have a guide?

Fatima Hafiz: Nope, you don't. And that's the power of it. You don't have to have a guide because if you are watching your patterns, you can start to shift something yourself. And, if you have close friends, and this is where I see community coming in, if you have trusted people in your community that you can share something with then that's the person you might wanna talk with. With young people, you might wanna talk with your parent, but you can't talk to them directly because you feeling stuff and there's a lot of stuff going on between you, and so, you just send them the, "Hey mom, I'm dealing with all this stuff," right? "This is what I'm dealing with today." Right? And then you don't have to talk to them. You don't even have to say anything to them when you go home or, but just letting them know that these things are going on inside of me, and give the young person a chance to pay attention to themselves so then when they're 30 and 40 they ain't sitting on somebody's couch. The guide can also give feedback to the person if they send them something, they can give them feedback, and then they can look at the, the number of incidents or number of things that they've submitted and get the feedback right away. And it gives the guide spaciousness to see more clients or to not become inundated themselves with, with, uh, you know, serving other people.

Alexis Miles: So the guide might, for example, say, oh, the journeyer sends the guide something, some information, and the guide can say, oh, I see a pattern here.

Fatima Hafiz: Yes. Yes.

Alexis Miles: Or, or they could even say, oh, you are really catching on. Good job.

Fatima Hafiz: Yes. Yes. That's, and that's what we want them to say. Yes. Look at that. You are taking care of yourself. Yes, those, either way, uh, it's to support the person who's coming to see you to get the service. So, uh, we are, uh, planning to go into beta testing, um, towards the middle of April sometime. We, we're going into beta testing and there was a limited number of people. Not more than 50 people. And then, um, we get the feedback. So, we are in phase one of producing what we you saw. And when we get the feedback, we can enhance, so we can see what people like or don't like, and we can work through that. And then, we will be moving into phase two. That will lead us to our soft launch. And our soft launch, hopefully is in, sometime in the fall, early fall. My real goal is to go into community events, and share it with communities so that they can see the value and they can ask for it from the people who come into the communities to serve them, that those people also use it.

Alexis Miles: Let's say this really takes off and people are using it. What's your vision of what society will look like if we have this kind of tool?

Fatima Hafiz: We'd have a different approach to addressing mental health, and we would, uh, put the onus of transforming humanity in humanity's hands. That's what I could see. And it's not just central to here in the US. I've, uh, tested some of this in Africa and people are looking for this also. Uh, so my vision is that we can do mental health differently.

Sam Fuqua: Fatima Hafiz, thank you so much for speaking with us.

Fatima Hafiz: Thank you. Thank you for inviting me.

Sam Fuqua: Dr. Fatima Hafiz is an educator, facilitator, and CEO of the TEA Group - Transformative Education Associates. They specialize in bringing transformative practices to under-resourced communities, primarily in greater Philadelphia. We spoke to them at the 2025 White Privilege Conference in Hartford, Connecticut. For more information on the TEA Group or on the TheraMe app, you can go to theteagroup.org. That's TEAgroup.org.

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