



**THE SPECTRUM
OF HEALTH**
— P O D C A S T —

Podcast Session #54

Autism and the Underlying Causes

With Luminara Serdar

Dr. Schaffner speaks with Luminara Serdar. Luminara is a scientist, nutritionist, and holistic healer who helps recover kids from autism using many strategies, including neuromodulation techniques. She helps kids on the autism spectrum of underlying causes and she creates a really wonderful treatment protocol if you decide to work with her.

You can visit Luminara at: <https://www.autismtransformed.com/>.

Dr. Christine Schaffner: Welcome, everyone. I'm Dr. Christine Schaffner and I thank you so much for joining us on the Spectrum of Health Podcast. Today, my guest is Luminara Serdar. She had me recently on her Autism Recovery Summit, there's information in the show notes so please check that out. She's doing such amazing work to help recover our children with autism. This is truly an epidemic, and we absolutely need to create more awareness, not only on prevention, but on giving parents more resources and tools to recover their children and to have hope. Luminara is a scientist, nutritionist and holistic healer who helps recover kids from autism using many strategies including neuromodulation technique. She helps kids on the autism spectrum with underlying causes and she creates a really wonderful treatment protocol if you decide to work with her. So, please check out her website at autismtransformed.com, and I hope you enjoy our conversation. Welcome, Luminara, I'm so excited to have you on the podcast.

01:11 Luminara Serdar: Oh thanks, I'm glad to be here.

01:13 CS: Well, it's fun that I get a chance to interview you. You've interviewed me a few times now, and you have your upcoming and ongoing Autism Recovery Summit that you asked me to be a part of, and I was of course very grateful and honored to be part of your summit. I just really, really appreciate the work you're doing and the education that you're providing to help parents recover their children with autism.

01:36 LS: Oh thank you. I love interviewing you and I love interviewing all the people actually. There's so much amazing information.

01:44 CS: It's such a great time where we can share this information more freely and readily, and more people are open to receiving it, so I think, of course, you're making a big impact, so we're grateful. For everyone who's listening, we're going to give information about Luminara's Autism Recovery Summit. If you can just dive in, what do we mean by autism recovery, at this point?

02:09 LS: I've heard a lot of stories from parents that their child regresses around age two or three, really young. And they've been speaking, they've been developing normally, and then their child just sort of gets locked in this fog and they stop speaking, and they know their child's in there. And when they take their child to the pediatrician, they say, "Oh, this is autism, and it's always going to be this way, there's no cure and prepare to put him in an institution when he's 18." And I think that's heartbreaking and false, because the parents know their child's in there, so recovery is for those people who know their child's in there. They've seen the skills that they can do and that they've lost, and they want to get that child back. And there's a whole bunch of people who think autism is the way it is and there's nothing you can do. So I just want to separate out that there are people who don't believe anything...

03:09 LS: I'll just tell you, I was at a Christmas party a few years ago. My cousin was there, I think she's an occupational therapist or speech therapist, and she's like, "Oh, don't lead these people on. Don't give them false hope." And I was like, "Oh my gosh, you don't understand that something can be done because there's issues going on inside the body." So when I say recovery, it's that something has happened at some point in the child's life to make all these skills that they've developed go away, or sometimes it just happens from birth, that the child isn't developing normally. When we dig deeper inside

and look at what's actually going on in the internal world, the biochemistry of the body, we find that there's a lot of things that are off-kilter that can be corrected. That's what I mean by recovery, it's correcting that internal terrain so that it works better. And when you do that, the behaviors on the outside change completely.

04:01 CS: It's such a hopeful story and a hopeful framework and paradigm to have for such a devastating condition. I'm aligned with your perspective, and it's just really important to get this information out there, because it is heart-breaking for both of us to hear that people still are of the mindset that if your child does have autism, that you just have to accept it, accommodate it and move forward. I'm so grateful you're putting this information out, Luminara. For people really interested in your perspective, what's the framework that you have developed over the years that you use to think about children that just don't develop normally, and then children who develop normally and then they regress. What's the framework, and the narrative, and the factors that you feel are leading to autism, at this point in your journey and discovery?

05:07 LS: I feel like it's a combination of factors and one of those is that, generationally, my parents and grandparents were exposed to fewer toxins in their lifetime than I was and than my son was. So I think generationally we're all being exposed to more and more and more toxins and that's in our environment, that's in our air, that's in our water...all the roundup that's sprayed on the crops, all the pesticides and herbicides, all the new plastics, all the new chemicals we come up with. And so those don't go away, they get recycled, and sometimes they get recycled through our bodies. And in 2004, I'm sure you know this, and probably many people listening know this, there was a study done called "10 Americans" by the Environmental Working Group,

which found that there was something like 280-some toxins in the umbilical cord blood alone.

06:05 LS: So it's this combinatorial factor of we're more toxic because we're exposed to it more. And then, also, a part of what I studied was genetics, and when I was back in college, I worked indirectly in the human genome project, and there's been studies, at least in mice models, that say that when we have either an emotional trauma or some kind of hit physically or emotionally, it changes our genes somewhat and we pass that down to the next generation, and then they pass that down to the next generation. And the paper showed that after two generations, it was kind of set in place. So, I think our genetics are changing along with that toxicity factor. We're putting more and more toxins into circulation, literally our own circulation, but circulation around the earth also, and we're not evolving fast enough in our bodies to handle that. I feel like the state of the autism body is just a super overload of toxins. And of course one of the things that those toxins do is diminish our ability to detoxify. So we're kind of in this catch-22 where our detox mechanisms are severely impaired. And so, what happens? Well, we just build up more toxins.

07:24 LS: I always say, imagine if you didn't take the garbage out of your house for a year, what would your house look like? How would you come in and get the food in the refrigerator? It would probably rot before you got it. You wouldn't find a path there. So, the bodies are toxic, there's a huge load, and that messes up the systems, and we need to get that all functioning again. So you can see it's kind of a big task to get the body back on track. That can happen early on in the womb, right? The child appears to have autism from birth or just doesn't develop normally, or that can happen from a chemical or emotional traumatic kick when we're young. I don't like to take a

stand one way or another on vaccines, but I can tell you I've heard from hundreds and hundreds and hundreds of parents, especially at the autism conferences I go to, that their child regressed after a vaccine or they were vaccine-injured or they had a big reaction to a vaccine. I'm not saying that is what causes autism, I'm saying that could be the straw that breaks the camel's back.

08:30 CS: Yes, I hear you. Even when I was new to working with Dr. Klinghardt ten years ago, and really just I didn't know where I stood or just was really in the position of observer, that was a very, very common story--after a vaccine, it was a very triggering event and the child was not the same again. And so I think, again, we just need to have more of an open mind and to look at these children who are affected, and to dig deeper in how can we create more of a conversation and investigation around this. Parents know their children, and whether this is something that is accepted or not, it doesn't discount what actually happened. I hear you and, again, you made such a great point and I like quoting that study as well. It's like, we're not starting from zero anymore. Generations before had less of a load at ground zero, starting from conception to birth. And so I think we really have to look at that as a huge factor in all of this as well.

09:50 LS: I really like Beth Lambert of Epidemic Answers. This organization espouses the Total Load Theory, which is we're born with a load. And I've just joined the board of Epidemic Answers too to help them spread the word and get their study done. They're doing a big study to sort of show what's underneath. One out of every two kids in the US have a chronic illness. That could be allergies or asthma or something else, but that's not right. We need to investigate it and dig deeper and start helping these kids.

10:33 CS: Absolutely. And as you're well aware of in your community, the rates of autism are increasing. Every two years, we take a look, and the numbers are ever increasing, in spite of all this information that's out there, so I think we still have a lot of work to do, which is why you're doing this. Luminara, obviously when recovering a child, detoxification strategies are essential. Just looking at your summit, you had this opportunity of interviewing a lot of wonderful people on the frontlines of treating autism. What were some of the highlights and pearls that really stood out to you when you were compiling your summit?

11:28 LS: Well, one of the first things that stands out is that most of the people I interviewed have a really holistic view. If you think about specialized doctors, GI doctors or neurologists who look at a child... A parent takes their child to the pediatrician and then they go to specialists. And they're not looking at the whole person, what's underneath? So that was one of the things that stood out, for sure. And of course that's how I work, holistically, and I know you do too. But that's super important, because everything is connected inside, and so one thing affects another thing. That's one key. And then, gosh, there were so many great offerings from people, everything from speech--so we have ways to help with speech from The Son-Rise Program. This is actually the way we interact with our kids, so more of an interaction type way of getting to speech, and then there's also certain supplements that help with speech like Methyl-B12 injections, and that's not the only thing, but that's a big wow typically. I've interviewed a lot of people who talk about brain inflammation because of course that's one of the key factors in autism. There's a lot of PANS and PANDAS, which is the Pediatric Acute-Onset of

Neuropsychiatric Symptoms. PANS and PANDAS are acronyms. PANDAS is for strep and PANS is for any pathogen.

13:09 LS: And what happens there is the immune system mistakes the brain as something it needs to attack, so you have all this inflammation. So we have a couple people speaking on that, and other immune inflammatory processes. We actually have a couple of moms with kids with autism; one who's fully recovered hers and she talks about strategies, and I think that's very useful for parents to hear. And another mom who is a nurse and she talks about using cannabis and how that really helped with her own health issues and then her daughter, especially around puberty, that was a big shift.

13:47 LS: We also have someone talking about vision and how tracking with the eyes and vision is coordinated with sensory processes and movement processes, and how it's all kind of put together in the brain. And she gives some really, really great ideas for helping, and for what to look for with your child, if you need some help with vision. Another really great one is screen time. Well, we and our kids are kind of addicted to all the screens. We talk about that and about EMFs. Of course, you are a wonderful speaker along with several others, and we talk about drainage and detox, and I feel like this is probably the starting point, drainage, for people.

14:37 LS: I know you talk about this all the time, because I see your videos and your emails. If we're like that house I mentioned earlier that's full of garbage, if we start moving things around the house, it's just going to lodge in another place, so I'm likening that to the body. If you start to detox, which is super important, if you start to detox and your drainage systems aren't open, your lymph isn't flowing, your kidneys are backed up, your liver's backed up,

you're not pooping everyday, constipation, that stuff's not going to get out of your body. You know, in my own practice that's easily where I start. I do a lot of assessments and I look at those organs of elimination and I say, "We've got to get these moving first." And usually gentle homeopathics will work because these kids are really sensitive and that's enough of a push for them right there.

15:33 LS: Back to the summit, I just wanted to say a lot of our kids are in fight or flight, and so there are a couple of speakers who talk about vagal stimulation, which is the vagus nerve that goes from the brain and innervates all the organs in the trunk of the body. And actually I think I heard about Carol Garner-Houston from you. She's got a vagal stimulation system in which people see results in one to five days. And then there's micro current neurofeedback. I was really impressed with those things to help calm the system, because when you calm the system then everything can just relax and heal.

16:13 CS: I'm so glad you connected with Carol. I had her on the podcast as well, so if anyone's listening and wants to learn more about her work, she has a company, her practice is called Brain Harmony. She works really interactively and closely with families and patients, using different equipment to help reset the brain, and the vagus nerve and a lot of the work that Stephen Porges did. She's excellent. I really enjoyed connecting with her and I'm so glad you connected with her as well.

16:47 LS: She's just a spitfire of a person and she really just has a heart of gold and wants to help. And then in my own practice I use muscle testing assessments, autonomic response testing, as well as neuro-modulation tech-

nique. And so we can ask questions of the body that there may not be a diagnostic test for, or you can ask what's happening in the moment. It's really cool to be able to use those techniques to find out what's really happening right now and what do you really need right now? And then we start getting people on drainage and then detoxing and, voila, the body starts working.

17:29 CS: Yea, it's such rewarding work when you do this. Just taking a step back, Luminara, your summit sounds awesome and I'm so excited to share this with our community. I guess taking a step back, how did you get into this work? Tell us a little bit about your background and your history leading you to serve children with autism.

17:56 LS: I was trained as a scientist. So like I said, I studied Genetics and Cell Biology and I was a molecular biologist. And at some point I shifted because I had allergies that were eliminated through neuro-modulation technique. I just was fascinated with what that technique was, based on principles of quantum physics and you could shift the physiology of the body instantly. So that kind of shifted my life. And what I did is, I went ahead and learned that and started helping people with allergies and when people with autism started coming to me, I would work with their allergies but then other things would shift, like spinal corrections would hold, or, you know, just other weird things would happen, and I didn't know why.

18:45 LS: So I started going to autism conferences to really dig in and understand what was going on. And then at some point I realized that I could do neuro-modulation and shift the internal terrain of the body all I wanted and it would work, but we also need to first of all drain, get the toxins out so that

things could actually work better. And then also we need to put the raw materials in, so the body could work. It's this dance between getting the toxins out, getting the right stuff in the body like good vitamins and good minerals, good food, not junky food, not fast food, not processed food. It's a dance between getting that in and taking things out as well as shifting the internal terrain.

19:36 CS: Maybe people who are listening right now are just fascinated and excited and have some hope for their child, so what are some things that you see with your clients recovery-wise? Any anecdotal stories, or anything you want to share that comes to mind?

20:02 LS: Yes, absolutely. When I do a first neuromodulation session, one of the things that does is relax that fight or flight, kind of like a vagal nerve stimulation, but in a way that really calms the body. Almost every time I work with somebody, their first response is a huge bowel movement. I mean, I get a lot of constipated kids, so they usually release and they release huge stinky, tarry, smelly stuff out of their body. I always say better out than in, so go ahead and let them release, and with that usually comes a good night's sleep. A lot of the kids I work with have trouble sleeping, so their sleep improves, their anxiety reduces a lot, especially when you're getting those toxins out of the bowels so that they're not recirculating. That just reduces the anxiety, I see better eye contact, I see improved comprehension, I see kids trying to talk. So over a few sessions, what I'll see is, they're either having more words, putting words together in sentences, or talking more, and of course, that's the neuromodulation, but we're also working on, again, the drainage and detox and getting the right raw materials in. So it's a combination thing but those are some of the things I see.

21:25 LS: I'm trying to think if there's a particular person. I'm working with a mom who actually has a couple of kids, one is more PANS / PANDAS and very inflamed and I started working with her daughter, she's about five. I started working with her about a year ago, and her anxiety level is just so much less. She'll come in the room during a session and she'll actually interact. The first time she was scared to death. She's talking in complete sentences, she goes to school no problem, she's cooperative, she's hugging her mom like she never used to do so she's showing affection. And so I see this when I'm working with the younger ones. A lot of times, parents love that new normal and they don't remember even how their kids were unless they regress. They have some setback for some reason and then they're like, "Oh my gosh, I forgot what this was like, they're not sleeping anymore."

22:37 CS: What wonderful stories and how rewarding. I'm just curious, you mentioned PANS and PANDAS a few times now, and I know that there's going to be more information on the summit, but do you find that we're seeing more of that these days, or do you think that there's just more awareness around this being a mechanism to describe the brain inflammation and what's going on with the neuro-psych symptoms? Do you have any thoughts or opinions on that? I'm just curious.

23:14 LS: Yes, it does seem to have increased, but I'm not sure if that's because of awareness or not. I think part of that issue is leaky blood-brain barrier, I feel, physiologically, and then the immune system is just so confused at that point. I would say it's actually increased. I don't know, I could literally say it's something in the air that's really diminishing our health as humans.

23:51 CS: I would agree with you. Again, I've only been doing this 10 years, but I feel like, yes, of course, there's more awareness around this. Dr. Coleen Hart trained me in looking at the tonsils as a big area of focus, especially when we're recovering the brain and how that can be a reservoir of infection. A lot of this, it can mean the entry point of immune cells as well as pathogens into the brain and create all this micro-glial activation and everything. So we have more of a framework, but my sense is that this is happening more as well. Again, that's just my sense, and maybe there's some statistics we can review after our talk, but I agree. When I think back to naturopathic school, I was taught, and I believe very, very much that the body knows how to heal, and we need to remove the blocks and obstacles to healing so the body can self-regulate and heal, but as you mentioned, it's like there's just so much that the body is up against, right? It's not just a gluten-free, dairy-free diet anymore or GMO-free foods.

25:10 CS: There is just this whole other layer that we have to address, and I feel like my patients and especially the children, we can think of them as the canaries in the coal mine, right? We can think of them as foreshadowing what we need to really be looking at, and my sense is that some people might be listening, "Oh, this doesn't apply to me," or "I'm not affected," but I think we're all affected by our environment to a certain degree. Of course, it's going to express differently depending on your epigenetics and all of that. But it will ultimately catch up with all of us and it will manifest in some way, so our big message is not only in recovering people's health but also how do we live a lifestyle to be aware of these exposures and to do our best to live a lifestyle of detoxification so we can keep up with this burden.

26:10 LS: And you know, there seems to be a bigger increase of more than one toxicity. I know you guys have been dealing with that for ages but it seems like it's really amped up, and that's why I say I think there's something that we're all exposed to even more. Maybe it's the Wi-Fi, maybe it's the 5G, maybe it's the more waves in the air, I'm not sure, because I don't have the evidence on it, but there is definitely something that's making us less hardy.

26:41 CS: Yes, I think that's a very thoughtful insight and we all should be doing our part to investigate that more. And Luminara, are there a couple of pearls for you to share, in case people want to think about some lifestyle practices? What do you do in your own life to deal with this toxic burden?

27:05 LS: You know, it's funny you asked that, because when people ask me things, I forget how toxic my life used to be and I forget about things. So of course non-toxic cleaners, I use 40% vinegar to clean with everything. So I'm never breathing in those fumes. And when someone comes in the house with perfume, or I can smell their shampoo, it's over-powering. So the scents that I'll use have essential oil scents. It's the cleanest products possible as far as chemicals in them. So if you look at the back of your shampoo bottle, what are all those chemicals you can't pronounce, I would get rid of that and be simple. I just come to be very, very simple in my living. I don't buy a lot of stuff. I try not to go through plastic. I try to use glass in my kitchen. Everything's in glass. I haven't used a microwave in decades. You filter your water with a reverse osmosis filter. Sweat, go out and sweat as much as possible. I do hot yoga.

28:16 LS: I'm in the room sweating three or six or seven times a week, whatever it is. Movement. Movement keeps your lymph flowing and I use a lymph

brush everyday. You can just look on the Internet. I was going to say Amazon, but I don't want to buy it from Amazon. [laughter] Look on the Internet or go to your health food store and buy a lymph brush and just brush up your arms and up your legs, and up your body, and that helps your lymph flow. So these are just some really simple everyday things. Maybe if you're in a city, you want to filter your air with a good air filter. I'm sure you guys probably have good recommendations for that. So those are just some simple things.

29:00 CS: Great recommendations and I agree. At the clinic, we are fragrance-free. We're really mindful of that. And you forget when you take those things out of your life and then when you're re exposed to them, you're like, "Oh my gosh, how can people live amongst this?" Your body habituates to that as normal, then when you remove those from your life, you can really feel and smell the difference. I think those are great recommendations. Luminara. In this time when we're recording this and sharing this information, we're in the time of COVID and all of that. Has that changed your practice of seeing clients? Are you doing telemedicine? How are you working with people now?

29:46 LS: Yes, I have been working telemedicine, I won't say telemedicine because I'm not a doctor, I'm a nutritionist. But I've been working over Skype and Zoom for years. I have clients all over, as you do probably, I have clients all over the world, all over the country and they usually find me by my website, and I can help. I can do my work from a distance, so that they don't need to bring their child in to see me, but I will see them on video of course. And then I take whatever tests they have done, they can give those results to me, but I'll do my own assessments too, because what I do is consulting, but it

also would be termed energy medicine, energy work. I can do it from a distance. And that works perfectly fine as if you were right here in front of me.

30:36 CS: I love it. And there's so many modalities that work from a distance. It's great that you can see patients wherever they may be. It's the time, the time that we're in. So, Luminara, we'll have information about the summit in the show notes, so everyone please check out that link. How can people find out more about you and your work and how to become a client if they're interested?

31:03 LS: They can go to my website it's, autismtransformed.com. They can browse around, get some free downloads there. I have a contact page there, so they can fill that out and contact me if they want to work with me. We can work with neuromodulation technique sessions, or we can just do a straight consult and say, what's going on in your body. I create a body bio map of the internal terrain, and give you that report and make suggestions of how we go about unwinding the things. Unraveling the big ball of yarn I call it.

31:43 CS: Love it, I love that. It sounds like a really comprehensive service and we'll absolutely share your website as well. And I just want to thank you for your time today and thank you for having me on your summit and for all the wonderful work you're doing, to help these children. Our children are our future.

32:03 LS: They are.

32:03 CS: It's just so important to realize how many children are affected and how we can come together to not only recover them, but prevent this from

happening to more children in the future. So thank you, thank you, thank you for everything you're doing.

32:17 LS: Thank you for having me. I appreciate you.

32:28 CS: Thank you for listening to the Spectrum Of Health Podcast. I hope you enjoyed my conversation today with Luminara. Please check out her website, as well as her summit, Autism Recovery Summit. All the information is in the show notes. Until next time, thank you so much.