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Jax Taylor's Therapist Speaks! Should Reality Stars Get Help On Camera? — Exclusive



Vanderpump Rules star Jax Taylor did something rather out of character on the show's Dec. 16 episode. No, he didn't make yet another play for ex-girlfriend Stassi Schroeder. Instead, he turned to licensed therapist Elizabeth D. Winkler to help him sort out his issues when it comes to women.

Jax certainly isn't the first reality star to seek help on camera. Many others have done the same, while several

shows – including VH1's *Couples Therapy* – focus solely on psychological treatment.

But is on-camera therapy necessarily a good idea? Not always, says Winkler. In an exclusive conversation with Wetpaint Entertainment, she discusses why therapists, patients and producers need to tread carefully.

Wetpaint Entertainment: More and more reality stars seem to be turning to onscreen therapy. What are the benefits of filming their therapy for their respective shows?

Many reality stars have an attitude that their private life is now public so they have more ease with filming situations that many people would never be comfortable with. The benefit to filming therapy is that it displays another side of the person. We often see these shows as highly dramatic so a therapy session gives some balance to a person that may be portrayed in a limited perspective.

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As a therapist, what kind of discussion would have with a potential client before agreeing to have their session filmed?

I would make sure that they were willing to potentially expose aspects of themselves that they may not be aware of yet. Therapy is a process where clients have revelations and become aware of reasons why they have been reacting or behaving in a certain way, and this can be exciting but also can be upsetting for some. So I would discuss the potential benefits versus the potential harm of that exposure on television. A client has to feel comfortable with letting go of control in this situation and if he or she cannot, then it's best that they not film their session.

Is there ever a scenario in which you'd advise against filming a patient's therapy session?

Absolutely! I would advise against it if I felt that the client wasn't ready for that exposure and if the material we were working on wouldn't benefit their growth but rather have a negative impact. The point of therapy is to facilitate awareness and growth for a client, and when that is on TV it reaches a larger audience, which can be very helpful to those who relate to these reality stars' issues. If I ever felt the exposure would cause potential harm to a client, I would advise against it.

Why are reality stars such good candidates for therapy?

Often times reality stars are overwhelmed by the way their private lives have become public to the world. This publicity can lead to a lack of unbiased self-reflection on their internal process. The therapeutic process is a place where the client can reflect on how all of these new influences in the reality star's life have changed them and how they feel about those changes. It provides space for them to witness the life they are living, and to question, reflect, and ponder how they feel about their current state of being. This is difficult for most people to do when they are caught up in social media and their fast paced life.

Do you think seeing people on television seeking help for their problems can encourage viewers at home to do the same?

I do think that it can encourage others to seek therapy. People enjoy discovering more about themselves, and when you see someone else go through that process and you relate, it can elicit a desire to go through that process yourself. Many people have a belief that therapy is for "sick" or "damaged" people, but I believe everyone can benefit from therapy. Our lives are so consumed by the external world of social media and busy schedules, and we don't take enough time and space to reflect and process if we are truly are happy and connected to what our current life is.

Vanderpump Rules airs Mondays at 9 pm on Bravo!

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