

**0:00:18.3 Katie Berlin:** Hi. Welcome back to Central Line. We're coming to you today from onsite at the very first ever AAHA Con here in San Diego. And we have our first guest of the conference today.

**0:00:31.4 Alyssa Mages:** I am?

**0:00:32.7 Katie Berlin:** Yes. One of my very favorite people on the planet. And not just because it was your idea to go to a pink concert earlier this week, which is amazing.

**0:00:41.5 Alyssa Mages:** It was so epic.

**0:00:43.2 Katie Berlin:** Yeah. It was really epic. But Alyssa Mages, welcome back to Central Line.

**0:00:48.1 Alyssa Mages:** Oh, thank you. It feels weird Last time I had such a good like, crew with me.

**0:00:53.9 Katie Berlin:** You did, you had like many...

**0:00:54.0 Alyssa Mages:** I had The Josh Weisman.

**0:00:56.8 Katie Berlin:** Yes.

**0:00:58.3 Alyssa Mages:** And The Phil Richmond.

**0:01:00.3 Katie Berlin:** Yes.

**0:01:00.7 Alyssa Mages:** And The Michael Shirley.

**0:01:01.3 Katie Berlin:** Indeed. Yeah. So it's, if you haven't caught the conversation that I had with those four back at Connexity last year. Be sure to check that out. It is on it, it's here in the podcast feed and it's, it was amazing. I think it's called All Aboard the Energy Bus because, [laughter] the best. That's the best energy I think that you could possibly ask for in a group of people. And a big part of that, which you do not give yourself credit for is you, so.

**0:01:28.6 Alyssa Mages:** I Just like to have fun. [chuckle]

**0:01:30.3 Katie Berlin:** But Alyssa, would you just introduce yourself to listeners, viewers?

**0:01:35.1 Alyssa Mages:** Sure. Hello everyone. My name is Alyssa Mages. I am a CVT. I'm based out of the Philadelphia area in Pennsylvania, a little town called Schwenksville. We're very shwanky there. And I've lived around the Philadelphia area pretty much my whole life. But, also called New England Home. I went to undergrad there, lived in the Keys, lived in Canada. I've got two humans, one's 15 and she's pretty fantastic.

**0:02:00.6 Katie Berlin:** She is.

**0:02:01.6 Alyssa Mages:** Yeah. Thanks.

**0:02:02.4 Katie Berlin:** She's a mini you.

**0:02:04.3 Alyssa Mages:** Except she's two inches taller. Which is unfair. [laughter] And then I have a 10 year old son and, a husband who puts up with my shenanigans on the regular, my pronouns are she/her/hers. And I am down to one furry creature in my house right now, which is a little sad, but also kind of liberating, which I feel bad saying. But.

**0:02:19.3 Katie Berlin:** Yeah.

**0:02:20.1 Alyssa Mages:** She's a lot.

**0:02:20.5 Katie Berlin:** She is a lot. I mean, she's a whole mood.

**0:02:24.8 Alyssa Mages:** She's a, yeah. So she's has... Resting, her name is Butter. We had bread and butter, and now we just have butter. And, she has resting butter face, so it is no longer the other RBF it is resting butter face.

**0:02:34.7 Katie Berlin:** Yeah. She could actually redefine RBF on her own, 'cause like she is a pro.

**0:02:40.1 Alyssa Mages:** She's so vicious. [laughter] So, yeah, that's, and, I hang out with my company Empowering Veterinary Teams or EVT, and I'm also really proud to be the director of the Mentor Vet Tech program with Mentor Vet, and getting ready to launch a new company in the new year. It is called Nurtur, no e on the end. And that's gonna be focused on veterinary team communication. So training and utilizing, gamified avatars, it's really cool.

**0:03:04.2 Katie Berlin:** Because you didn't have enough to do.

**0:03:06.1 Alyssa Mages:** It's, no. No. It's really, if I'm not busy, I don't know what I'm doing. [laughter] I'm also very, very good at doing nothing. But when I'm on, I'm on.

**0:03:17.9 Alyssa Mages:** Yeah. Yeah. I identify with that a lot. I'm either doing everything or absolutely not... Or like watching... [laughter],

**0:03:23.2 Alyssa Mages:** There's no gray area.

**0:03:23.6 Katie Berlin:** Yeah. Like cooking show after cooking show on Netflix so 100%.

**0:03:28.9 Alyssa Mages:** Yeah.

**0:03:29.0 Katie Berlin:** And it life's simple pleasures, you know?

**0:03:31.7 Alyssa Mages:** Yes, absolutely.

**0:03:35.0 Katie Berlin:** So, Alyssa, I know some of this about you, but I'm curious to what your answer will be. But I was wondering if you have a third space, you know, you wear so many hats that require you to be present in a way that isn't about you. You know, you're a mom, you're a wife, you're a very, you know, prolific speaker, an educator and business owner. So where do you go when you don't wanna be any of those things? Just be Alyssa.

**0:03:56.7 Alyssa Mages:** I have a third and a fourth space. Am I allowed to have two?

**0:04:00.2 Katie Berlin:** Yes.

**0:04:00.4 Alyssa Mages:** Okay. So first is I need the water? So I've been a swimmer since I was 10 or 12 ish, somewhere around there. And then I shifted into synchronized swimming. And there are two other synchronized swimmers in veterinary medicine. Shout out to Karen Shenoy and Teva Stone. [laughter] Yes. I did, I outed you guys. Sorry.

**0:04:21.2 Katie Berlin:** Yep. And now we're gonna have to make that happen at some point.

**0:04:22.8 Alyssa Mages:** We have to make that trio happen. So I no longer compete. I've had a whack ton of knee surgeries, so, but I get in the water and I just can disappear, even though it's transparent and it just is, that's my meditation. I'm not good at doing the sitting still meditation. But if I get into that zone of either lap swimming or simply just being on a paddleboard in the middle of somewhere, that's where I don't have to be anything. I can just be. And then my fourth space is on, on a stage singing. So I'm in a Tom Petty tribute band called Hypnotic Guy, and I do all the background vocals and hand percussion. And then every once in a while they let me sing a Stevie Nick song 'cause she and Petty were really good friends. And I don't have this hairdo. And that happens, I throw on a wig and I get to disappear even though I'm in the spotlights, but I'm just in the, I can't even talk today. I'm in the moment, I'm in the music and I'm just rocking out. And it is amazing it's the music I grew up with. My dad got me hooked on Petty and the Heartbreakers, and then the Traveling Wilburys and all of those good guys, that had a lot of influence in other different types of genres. But I mean, I could talk about music all the time, so.

**0:05:35.5 Katie Berlin:** And we did talk about music a lot this week.

**0:05:39.3 Alyssa Mages:** 'Cause we love it.

**0:05:40.6 Katie Berlin:** Yeah. So...

**0:05:40.7 Alyssa Mages:** It's medicine. Music Is medicine.

**0:05:43.8 Katie Berlin:** Music is medicine. And in fact, we have a speaker talking about that.

**0:05:45.1 Alyssa Mages:** Oh. Really? I didn't see that.

**0:05:46.0 Katie Berlin:** At this conference. Yes, Dr. Charles Short.

**0:05:51.2 Alyssa Mages:** I'm gonna have to check that out 'cause it is.

**0:05:51.3 Katie Berlin:** Yes, I'm very excited for that talk.

**0:05:51.4 Alyssa Mages:** And there really isn't a genre of music I don't like. Yeah. There's all, I mean, I will have a hard time sitting through Wagner, but [laughter] there are some other operas that are just absolutely powerful and then you, you know, who doesn't like a good rapper's delight.

**0:06:06.4 Katie Berlin:** Yeah.

**0:06:08.4 Alyssa Mages:** So country not a huge fan of the newer versions of it. But...

**0:06:12.7 Katie Berlin:** Like cool Girl country is a little different.

**0:06:15.3 Alyssa Mages:** It's a little bit much for me. But there's undeniable talent there. So if it's your jam and you can lose yourself in the moment and you own it, you better never let it go.

**0:06:24.3 Katie Berlin:** So water and music are your third and fourth spaces.

**0:06:28.5 Alyssa Mages:** Water and music. They are. Yeah.

**0:06:30.3 Katie Berlin:** Yeah. Well that's pretty great. And I know how important that is to you now, especially, with some health challenges and all the stresses of owning your own business and everything.

**0:06:41.7 Alyssa Mages:** There's a few.

**0:06:41.8 Katie Berlin:** Yeah, just a few. But I'm glad that you have those.

**0:06:46.6 Alyssa Mages:** Thank you. Me too. Everyone has to have that, whatever that looks like. And it may be totally different also if I can disappear into an excellent novel.

**0:06:54.1 Katie Berlin:** Yes.

**0:06:55.1 Alyssa Mages:** That's a good place to be too.

**0:06:57.7 Katie Berlin:** Yeah. Yes. I'm excited to trade more book recommendations with you. So, we'll make sure that we make that everybody knows where to reach you and find out more about...

**0:07:05.1 Alyssa Mages:** Oh, yeah.

**0:07:09.1 Katie Berlin:** What all your, you know, the work that you're doing, [laughter], but.

**0:07:09.2 Alyssa Mages:** The work and the quirks.

**0:07:10.1 Katie Berlin:** The work and the quirks. Yeah. [laughter] So, we'll make sure to drop some of those links in the show notes.

**0:07:14.4 Alyssa Mages:** Thank you.

**0:07:14.8 Katie Berlin:** And bring them up at the end. But, so here at the conference, our theme this year is level up. And I love that theme because I feel like it could encompass so much, you know, you really can think about what area of your life you wanna apply that to. But for you specifically, looking ahead at the next, you know, 6-12 months, what does leveling up mean to you?

**0:07:38.5 Alyssa Mages:** Bringing everyone up with me. So for me, it's hard to look back and

reflect and celebrate the little moments. I'm not great at that.

**0:07:51.3 Katie Berlin:** Samesies.

**0:07:52.0 Alyssa Mages:** Right? Because we're like, oh, we gotta get to the next place. We gotta go to the next thing. And we don't take the time to really sit back and recognize, I've actually made it. I'm already enough and it's not about me. That was never the goal with starting EVT or any of these other ventures. It was never supposed to be this. So my goal over the next 6-12 months is that everyone knows who the EV team is, and they get their chance to shine, and they get to step up. And I get to step back because it's really, for us, especially as, you know, a het cis white woman, I don't need to be in the spotlight at all. I've been there enough. And it's really important for anyone that has been othered in their experience to shine. So I am ready to just take both hands and get everyone up and push them up and beyond and just be that boost that they need.

**0:08:45.9 Katie Berlin:** Well, and that's something you do really well. And it's one of the things that when we met, I felt the most about you is just that your energy always says there's enough for everyone. And I wanna make sure that everybody feels that.

**0:08:57.9 Alyssa Mages:** Thank You. That means a lot. That's...

**0:09:01.2 Katie Berlin:** Yeah.

**0:09:02.4 Alyssa Mages:** That's what I... I really want that to show up and I'm really glad to hear it does. Thank you.

**0:09:06.6 Katie Berlin:** Yeah. It's an abundance mindset, you know, not a scarcity mindset, like where you don't have to compete. We can actually all just share in, there's more than enough resources, more than enough space and stage for everybody. So, I love that.

**0:09:19.2 Alyssa Mages:** Thank you.

**0:09:20.7 Katie Berlin:** That definition. And I definitely see that happening.

**0:09:24.6 Alyssa Mages:** It's coming.

**0:09:25.4 Katie Berlin:** Yeah. Like, not just from the work you're doing, although in a large part from the work you're doing, but also so many other groups are working towards that same goal right now. And that feels really good to be here.

**0:09:37.8 Alyssa Mages:** It does.

**0:09:38.7 Katie Berlin:** At this moment in Vet Med.

**0:09:40.7 Alyssa Mages:** I agree. And I think it, it hurts me in a different way when I hear people say that Vet Med is broken. Are there parts of it that need a lot of fine tuning and fixing? Yes. 100%. I'm not denying that, but to say it's broken implies that it's irreparable. And I can't agree with that. Looking at all the work that Niccole Bruno's doing with BLEND, looking at what Valerie and Marcano's doing with PAWSibilities, looking at what all these other organizations, you know,

you've got the Anesthesia Nerds lifting people up. Look at what Carrie Journey and Steven Sitel have done.

**0:10:14.4 Katie Berlin:** Oh yeah.

**0:10:15.1 Alyssa Mages:** That's amazing.

**0:10:15.2 Katie Berlin:** Yeah.

**0:10:16.4 Alyssa Mages:** Right. And all...

**0:10:17.3 Katie Berlin:** The practice they just started.

**0:10:17.4 Alyssa Mages:** The practice they just started here in California. And there's so many other organizations Get MotiVETed with their burnout prep certification course that wouldn't have happened five, 10 years ago.

**0:10:27.0 Katie Berlin:** Yeah.

**0:10:27.2 Alyssa Mages:** Right? And all the conversations that we're starting to have more readily and the big organizations are starting to notice.

**0:10:36.7 Katie Berlin:** Yeah.

**0:10:37.9 Alyssa Mages:** And they're stepping in. And my dad and my mom both have always said, you're not gonna make a difference from the outside in, always. You can have a different perspective, and that's necessary too, but you've gotta sometimes stick in and dig in to get it moving forward. And that's how you, you know, how do you fix a car not from, you know, standing like, this is, there's something wrong, but you like, open the hood and actually figure it out and...

**0:11:01.5 Katie Berlin:** Get a little dirty.

**0:11:01.7 Alyssa Mages:** Get a little dirty. And so I can't get dirty all the time on 14 hour shifts anymore, but I have a team that can help me do that. And I happily will show up and do that when I can. And really, if you can look at that, you know, look at all the different practices that are, are making a difference. That's the ripple effect.

**0:11:20.0 Katie Berlin:** Yeah.

**0:11:20.3 Alyssa Mages:** Right. So every time you throw a pebble, it's spreads. So you do one good thing, it's gonna affect so many people. So it's, it's rusty. And, you know, the axle may be a little bit loose, but the red wagon's okay. It's gonna push along.

**0:11:35.0 Katie Berlin:** Yeah.

**0:11:36.4 Alyssa Mages:** We'll get there.

**0:11:37.8 Katie Berlin:** Well, and I love, like my favorite analogy, which we've talked about.

'cause we talked, we were talking about tattoos the other day, but.

**0:11:44.0 Alyssa Mages:** Can you ever have too many [laughter]?

**0:11:44.1 Katie Berlin:** I mean. I don't think think so.

**0:11:45.3 Alyssa Mages:** We, I mean...

**0:11:46.8 Katie Berlin:** I mean, I'm sure that's subjective, but [laughter] I would say, you know, but I told you that one of the things that I love the most is the concept of Kintsugi, you know, the Japanese art of fixing broken pottery with gold.

**0:11:57.9 Alyssa Mages:** Gold.

**0:11:58.2 Katie Berlin:** Yeah. And so when something actually breaks into multiple pieces, they glue it together with this gold epoxy. And it's really, really beautiful afterwards.

**0:12:06.5 Alyssa Mages:** Yeah.

**0:12:07.4 Katie Berlin:** And I feel like maybe that's how I wanna think of VET med right now, as it is a little bit broken in the sense of there are pieces that aren't aligning the way that they should.

**0:12:15.8 Alyssa Mages:** Yeah.

**0:12:16.7 Katie Berlin:** But we are seeing so many people wanting to be that gold glue that puts it together.

**0:12:24.4 Alyssa Mages:** I love that. And that's a better analogy. And I think that's a much more apt description, because to your point, there are disparate pieces.

**0:12:28.7 Katie Berlin:** Yeah.

**0:12:30.3 Alyssa Mages:** So, it, all right. It is a little broken. But...

**0:12:32.2 Katie Berlin:** But at the end we're gonna gonna have something that's...

**0:12:32.3 Alyssa Mages:** It's a piece of art.

**0:12:33.6 Katie Berlin:** Yeah. Exactly.

**0:12:34.0 Alyssa Mages:** And what is medicine?

**0:12:36.3 Katie Berlin:** Yeah. It's an art.

**0:12:37.2 Alyssa Mages:** It's an art.

**0:12:39.9 Katie Berlin:** Yeah.

**0:12:40.0 Alyssa Mages:** That was good.

**0:12:40.1 Katie Berlin:** I'm seeing some merch.

**0:12:43.4 Alyssa Mages:** I [laughter] Oh, yes. [laughter] Like a blue ombre glaze.

**0:12:47.4 Katie Berlin:** Yeah.

**0:12:47.5 Alyssa Mages:** This is good.

**0:12:49.6 Katie Berlin:** Alright, well now that we've decided that it's a new line of Merch. So that actually is a good lead into the next thing I was gonna ask you, which, you know, tech week is coming up, it's September right now. So Tech Week is in less than a month. And at AAHA. As many places. I feel like October has sort of turned into technician, national Technician month because this year we have the very first AAHA technician utilization guidelines coming out October 1st, which you were on the task force.

**0:13:17.5 Alyssa Mages:** I was. I was.

**0:13:19.2 Katie Berlin:** That created those and I'm so excited for those to hit. They're actually gonna be in Trends Magazine in the October issue that gets mailed out. So I'm, that's, I'm super stoked. But they'll also be available on the AAHA website, [aaha.org](http://aaha.org). Which for free, so everyone can access them.

**0:13:37.7 Alyssa Mages:** Get them. Read them. Yes.

**0:13:39.7 Katie Berlin:** And I'm just, I'm really curious to know what that process was like because those guidelines, that task force was a lot of very strong personalities.

**0:13:48.2 Alyssa Mages:** It was.

**0:13:50.4 Katie Berlin:** Coming together to create something cohesive.

**0:13:52.3 Alyssa Mages:** It was, I'm not gonna lie, a little bit of imposter syndrome. Like, you want me here?

**0:13:57.0 Katie Berlin:** I don't think you're the only one.

**0:13:58.0 Alyssa Mages:** No. [laughter] But then it... When I got there was like, no, I really, I need to be here. And every voice that's there needed to be there. And it was such a labor of love for everyone. And you could get that sense. And there was such a feeling of camaraderie and collaboration. There was no egos involved at all.

**0:14:20.0 Katie Berlin:** Yeh. Love that.

**0:14:20.4 Alyssa Mages:** It was just I see it this way. Okay. How about this perspective? All right, well, how can we implement this? How can we tie this together? What does this look like? And really coming to a place of we need to start from the ground and build it up instead of bringing new

things. And there's so much controversy we could open that can of worms, but maybe we shouldn't today [laughter] but maybe we should because it shouldn't be something hard to talk about. Right.

**0:14:44.6 Katie Berlin:** Yeah.

**0:14:46.9 Alyssa Mages:** And it gets challenging in our profession regardless of being a technician or a veterinarian because there's so many different governing bodies and associations and who does what and who takes care of this and who do we report to. And it's all state by state.

**0:15:00.9 Katie Berlin:** Yeah.

**0:15:02.0 Alyssa Mages:** How can we have cohesion when it's state by state? Well, we have a national standard. And we all take that exam. So I'm a CVT in Pennsylvania. There's LVTs. I can't list all the states because there's too many, and I mix it up and I don't wanna mess up. But I do know that Tennessee is LVMTs.

**0:15:20.4 Katie Berlin:** Yes.

**0:15:21.0 Alyssa Mages:** 'Cause they're the only ones. [laughter]

**0:15:22.8 Katie Berlin:** Tennessee is the outlier there, but yeah.

**0:15:24.7 Alyssa Mages:** And then we have our RVTs and that's all of Canada now. So I think there's so much we could learn from Canada. I may be a little biased. I lived there for five years, and my daughter was born there. So I like it a little bit. But really what I think the underlying message needs to be is we are all coming at this from the same angle. We want to have a unified body, we want to have title protection, we want to have the recognition and the ability to work to the highest level of our licensure. And in many practices, that's just not the case.

**0:16:01.0 Katie Berlin:** Yeah.

**0:16:02.8 Alyssa Mages:** Because. Even in Pennsylvania, it's not required to have a credential to be called a technician. And well I absolutely respect someone who's been on the job trained and works there for 20 years, oh my gosh, yes. Because they're gonna be able to get that 17 year old dehydrated, hyperthyroid cat that's trying to eat everybody in one poke. 100%. I'm not questioning their skills.

**0:16:25.8 Katie Berlin:** Yeah.

**0:16:26.0 Alyssa Mages:** At all. And their knowledge is based in what they've learned there. They know what to do and they're damn good at it, but why are they doing it? Do you understand the mechanisms of action? Do you appreciate what the lifecycle of this parasite is and why you need two different, you know, parasiticide or things like that and there's so many different references. So it would be akin to me having had my credential now for 13 years. Well, I could have been a vet three times over, so call me Dr. Mages. Sounds good. [laughter]

**0:16:56.3 Katie Berlin:** Yeah.

**0:16:57.2 Alyssa Mages:** And I'm not.

**0:16:58.0 Katie Berlin:** Yeah. And legally my job is protected.

**0:17:02.4 Alyssa Mages:** Yes.

**0:17:05.8 Katie Berlin:** From you being able to call yourself a veterinarian or do a lot of the things that I do.

**0:17:07.4 Alyssa Mages:** Correct.

**0:17:08.2 Katie Berlin:** In every state that's protected, but we don't have the case...

**0:17:10.9 Alyssa Mages:** We don't have that.

**0:17:12.4 Katie Berlin:** In a lot of states for technicians.

**0:17:14.7 Alyssa Mages:** Right. And there's really only four things we can't do. And that is prescribe, diagnose, give a prognosis, and perform surgery, that leaves it open to a lot of other things.

**0:17:25.9 Katie Berlin:** Yeah.

**0:17:27.1 Alyssa Mages:** And also understanding the difference between immediate supervision, direct supervision, and the other scope of that, what that looks like.

**0:17:35.1 Katie Berlin:** Yeah.

**0:17:36.1 Alyssa Mages:** And it's an important part to have on the job training. Yes. But how can you do on the job training and your full-time job of another person, you know? So as a trainer on the job, when you're training an assistant, what does that look like? How do we define that? What is an assistant? I don't know. Oh, I met this really great girl at Starbucks. I love Starbucks. I'm not... [laughter] Sometimes it's necessary. And she was really kind and she was really smart. And she doesn't mess up her orders. So we're gonna hire her and then train her or him. And in three months, not only are they gonna call them a technician, they're gonna call them a nurse. There's that other can of worms that I love to mess with. [laughter] We do nursing skills.

**0:18:16.1 Katie Berlin:** Yeah.

**0:18:16.8 Alyssa Mages:** That's part of what we do.

**0:18:19.6 Katie Berlin:** Yeah.

**0:18:20.2 Alyssa Mages:** And it goes along with everything else though. You know, we do phlebotomy, we do radiology. And if you get trained in a specialty center, you might be doing oncology anesthesia and then you can even go onwards to get your specialty. Right. So much you can do. I don't wanna be limited to a nurse. That's one aspect of that. And in a lot of states it's protected for human medicine, which is silly. Honestly, I don't disagree with that. We should have a

unified title, but we don't yet.

**0:18:49.0 Katie Berlin:** Yeah.

**0:18:51.4 Alyssa Mages:** So adding another one in to me doesn't make sense until we figured out what we should all be called collectively and how we can standardize that and protect it. And then we can go onward from there. And then you can open another can of worms. We're just gonna be wriggling all over the place [laughter] and talk about the mid-level practitioner.

**0:19:06.0 Katie Berlin:** Oh yeah.

**0:19:06.6 Alyssa Mages:** Oh that's a big one right, oh my goodness. We already have them. We have VTSSs.

**0:19:11.8 Katie Berlin:** Yeah, and mid-level doesn't seem like the right word even to describe them because they know so much.

**0:19:19.4 Alyssa Mages:** Oh, my God. It's...

**0:19:21.7 Katie Berlin:** A veterinary technician specialist is a VTS, in case you're not familiar. And man, they know their stuff.

**0:19:28.5 Alyssa Mages:** They know their stuff. And it goes right along with all the colleges of the veterinary specialists for doctors, right? So if you have, you know, the American College of Veterinary Internal Medicine that accredits and boards our oncologists, neurologists, radiologists, and internists. Guess what? We have those for veterinary technicians as well. So you have to do your 2-4 years of veterinary technology degree and then your clinical hours and case studies and reports and another exam.

**0:19:52.0 Alyssa Mages:** Oh yes, sorry, national exam for credential technicians. Just all of these things. And they know. It's just like a nurse practitioner. I know I threw that title in there. Don't get confused. How are we utilizing them? So it's really not only standardizing the title and having it protected, but standardizing the utilization piece of it as well. Are you working your assistants to the fullest level? Are you then, when they can get up to the next level and they've gone to school and then are a credentialed technician and then they can go onward from there and you're not limited. I've worked in general practice, emergency and critical care, oncology, anesthesia, academia, lab animal, large animal, wildlife, sales. That wasn't a good fit. And now an entrepreneur. Sky's the limit.

**0:20:44.4 Alyssa Mages:** So it's really making sure that not only we educate our profession about what a veterinary technician does and how we can utilize them appropriately, but we have to educate our clients and the public because when you tell them you're a veterinary technician, they look at you like that, right? The head tilted like... And they're trying to make that make sense. [laughter] What does that mean? Oh, I was a vet tech once.

**0:21:09.2 Katie Berlin:** No, you worked in a vet hospital.

**0:21:13.5 Alyssa Mages:** Which is wonderful. Thank you so much for your service. But it's not the

same thing. And so that's why, well it's similar to a nurse for animals. Oh, where's the education piece there? So it's a multifaceted, really wiggling collection of cans. So that's what we were really trying to tackle. And we could have probably written a novel on it. Not a novel, a textbook, really.

**0:22:22.4 Alyssa Mages:** But I feel like we really put together a good piece of work, and I'm really excited I can talk about it now, 'cause it's been hush-hush for so long. [laughter]

**0:22:28.9 Katie Berlin:** Right? I mean, it's really, really exciting. And like the whole October issue of Trends, this is one of the, you know, because it's a non-clinical guideline. And I say that, I'm making little quote marks with my hands, because it doesn't talk about clinical medicine in the way that like the endocrinology guidelines do. But is it as important to practicing good medicine as the clinical medicine is? Absolutely.

**0:22:54.5 Alyssa Mages:** Absolutely.

**0:22:54.7 Katie Berlin:** And but we're publishing it in Trends instead of in the in JAAHA, in our medical journal, because it is technically not about the medicine. It's about all the other stuff that you need to make excellent medicine happen, just like the mentoring guidelines were earlier this year. And I think that's one of the things that I am loving most about watching, you know, besides AAHA, so many organizations starting to realize and embrace is that even if they've been talking about clinical medicine only for a very long time, like AAHA has been talking about clinical medicine and some practice management pretty much exclusively. Now we're starting to realize that the so-called soft skills, the I know I hate that but [laughter] the soft sciences like psychology and communication and leadership, all of that stuff is so, so essential to what it really means to run a successful veterinary clinic and to and to keep a team happy and fulfilled and together. And so I'm just I'm really, really excited about that change that I'm seeing all over the profession.

**0:24:03.1 Alyssa Mages:** It is. It's really encouraging. And it goes back to putting the gold pieces in.

**0:24:08.7 Katie Berlin:** Yeah, exactly.

**0:24:10.0 Alyssa Mages:** So I love to call... That's the gold.

**0:24:10.6 Katie Berlin:** Yeah, that's the gold.

**0:24:12.8 Alyssa Mages:** It's human skills. It's how we human. And that's I think where we got away from that. We're so focused on can you place a jug cath? Can you do an art stick? Can you maintain TIVA? All of those things which are absolutely critical. But what about the humans that are performing those skills? Because if you focus solely on your clinical skills and you stress out over that, what happens to your well-being? Right. And if one suffers, so too does the other. So we've gotta do all of it. And that seems like a lot. But there's a lot of resources out there and a lot of organizations that can help.

**0:24:48.6 Katie Berlin:** Yeah, absolutely. Okay, another question for you.

**0:24:50.7 Alyssa Mages:** Oh, oh, [0:24:52.9] \_\_\_\_ [laughter]

**0:24:55.1 Katie Berlin:** So well, so tech guidelines being released the same month as National Veterinary Technician Week. I'm curious if you could have a gift or a wish, like, say it's your birthday and you get a cake and it's got a little candle on it and you blow on it and you can make a wish. If you could wish something for National Veterinary Technician Week, what would it be?

**0:25:18.3 Alyssa Mages:** I only get one wish. Or is it one of those candles that I blow it out and it lights back up because that would be fantastic. [laughter]

**0:25:23.0 Katie Berlin:** I mean, technically, it could be a wish that encompasses more than one thing, I guess.

**0:25:26.6 Alyssa Mages:** Okay. Oh. That's really hard.

**0:25:32.8 Katie Berlin:** I know. I feel like we should ask all of our technicians this, though.

**0:25:35.3 Alyssa Mages:** I agree.

**0:25:36.8 Katie Berlin:** We just give them things. But like, what do you really want?

**0:25:38.0 Alyssa Mages:** Can I have a pizza party?

[laughter]

**0:25:38.8 Katie Berlin:** Yeah.

**0:25:40.9 Alyssa Mages:** No.

**0:25:41.4 Katie Berlin:** Yes.

**0:25:42.2 Alyssa Mages:** No.

**0:25:43.4 Katie Berlin:** But it's a yes and. Like, yes, you can have a pizza party.

**0:25:45.7 Alyssa Mages:** And?

**0:25:46.7 Katie Berlin:** And what's your actual wish?

**0:25:46.8 Alyssa Mages:** Exactly. Because my pizza has to be gluten free, dairy free. And no tomato. [laughter]

**0:25:52.7 Katie Berlin:** We can have a pizza party, but you won't be able to eat any of it.

**0:25:56.5 Alyssa Mages:** My wish for veterinary technicians. And this is for my credential cohort. So I love all of you in the support roles in veterinary medicine. Truly. Please hear me that I respect and appreciate all the work that you do. But this veterinary technician week month is for credentialed veterinary technicians. That is a veterinary technician. I wish for recognition, appreciation and appropriate utilization with the accompanying compensation. Well, that should be that should be easy. [laughter] And while I'm still wishing I'd like a pony 'cause I never got one.

**0:26:35.4 Katie Berlin:** And a pony.

**0:26:35.5 Alyssa Mages:** And a pony.

**0:26:36.8 Katie Berlin:** So like, I don't want to say that maybe you'd be more likely to get a pony than to have those other things happen like really soon. But I really hope that that's not right. I really hope that those things are going to come sooner rather than later, 'cause I think they will come. It's just a matter of when.

**0:26:52.3 Alyssa Mages:** Right. And I think it's we simply have to get a unified front together. Right. And instead of I wanna be this versus this and we gotta do this and not this. What is the most important? Right. So I think of all of those things, if we have title recognition and protection, the rest will follow. Because once that is cohesive and standardized, nationally recognized. Well, once you've achieved that, then we can establish standards of pay. We can establish standards of implementation, utilization. But we've gotta start there. So we have to stop fighting about what we call each other.

**0:27:33.2 Katie Berlin:** So we just have to get all 50 states to agree.

**0:27:36.0 Alyssa Mages:** That works really easy. [laughter]

**0:27:39.8 Katie Berlin:** You know, I like it, though. And I think you're totally right. Like sometimes we could spend all of our energy and resources chasing after something that we're just not ready for because we haven't gotten past the first step. So we're trying to jump over that step and we just can't. So hopefully it will happen. And if we can present a unified front and that means with doctors as well...

**0:28:01.4 Alyssa Mages:** 'Cause that's a big part. We need veterinarians behind us. And beside us.

**0:28:07.0 Katie Berlin:** Yeah. And this is where I'd really like to say just I can't imagine having worked in a hospital where the technicians were stronger and better utilized. I really don't love that phrase. Like, it sounds like...

**0:28:21.0 Alyssa Mages:** I know, like, you are a tool.

**0:28:21.3 Katie Berlin:** Yeah, like you're using a vacuum or something. But like... [laughter]

**0:28:24.8 Alyssa Mages:** Well, I mean, we do MacGyver everything.

**0:28:25.7 Katie Berlin:** Yeah, that's true. But but I feel like the technicians at the hospital where I last worked. So shout out to Shiloh again, Shiloh Veterinary Hospital in York, Pennsylvania. But they had so many credentialed technicians and they were really able to do a lot. And I saw the full capability of that, not just that technician degree, but of the people who go after that degree and do the necessary CE to keep it and want to go to conferences every year and get a CE allowance and use it and ask, can I try this or can I learn this? And I think being around that really made me realize how little I saw of that other places. And I wish every veterinarian would have the chance to work in a practice like that, where you come into the culture and that's already the culture, because that

will shape how I see technicians from now until forever based on looking at those strong people doing what they were trained to do and loving it.

**0:29:23.9 Alyssa Mages:** And what did that do for your workflow?

**0:29:26.6 Katie Berlin:** I mean, I will say that I am not the most efficient or fastest, but it's not because the technicians were not drawing all the blood [laughter] and like doing all the radiographs and like monitoring anesthesia like bosses. And, you know, it made surgery so much less stressful, which is stressful for me to do surgery sometimes. And we had a treatment technician that ran that place like a ship, you know, like that treatment technician could have run, you know, like a military operation. And I just...

**0:29:55.3 Alyssa Mages:** I've worked with techs like that too.

**0:29:55.8 Katie Berlin:** Yeah. And and I just so for me personally, like the workflow that I could work on was mine and not so much worrying about like, do I need to triple check that slide or do I need to run that blood myself or do any because they all just they figured out the workflow for me and did it so much better than I ever could have. And it meant so much to me to see them working the way that they did in the sense of like, I didn't, I had no idea working in Pennsylvania before that. I had no idea that technicians were capable of so much.

**0:30:31.8 Alyssa Mages:** If they're given that chance. Right. And that is so lovely to hear because that is the type of culture we're looking to create, right? Where as an assistant, you can see what you can level up, see, level up.

**0:30:45.8 Katie Berlin:** Yeah, level up.

**0:30:46.8 Alyssa Mages:** And strive towards. And again, it's not saying that an assistant or someone who's been on the job trained is not qualified and isn't valuable and shouldn't have those opportunities. Absolutely they should. And the recognition. Yes. That's why there's a veterinary assistant week. Right. And there's no shame in that. I was a veterinary assistant for years before I went back and got my degree.

**0:31:06.5 Katie Berlin:** I was one before vet school.

**0:31:07.8 Alyssa Mages:** Yeah. And it was for me, it was, okay, I know what to do again, but not why. And when you have that sense of team, right, then you know, okay, I can stay in this lane. I can merge here. I'm going to come back over here 'cause I'm not really comfortable there. Right. And I like being under the umbrella of a doctor. It's all on you. [laughter] I'm happy to sit over here and play with the things that I'm that I like. I'll stay in my corner of the sandbox. Thank you. But really making sure that I recognize that where my skills are and where my skills are not. All the spicy burritos. Yes. All of the angry snarling dogs I can, but I'm not your go to. Right. And because I've been out of clinics now for three years and I will pick up shifts here and there. And when we go in and do trainings, I'm very present. And I'm doing CE on my own and taking other courses to make sure that this doesn't stop working. But I know that I have team members that are in it. You know, one of my lead trainer, he is a practice manager currently.

**0:32:10.8 Alyssa Mages:** So when we're talking about management and leadership, that's him. And

he's got a certificate in anesthesia. Right. When we're talking education development, I have another trainer who has a Master's in education. So we're talking to her to make sure that that's relevant. I'm working through my certificate from Cornell on that. So I absolutely appreciate and understand that you have to not only talk the talk. You have to walk the walk and surround yourself with experts. I'm not great at everything. But I know people who are great at other things. And so identifying the existing strengths within your team and making them shine and saying, hey, you can do this at the next level. This is how we make this happen. This is a, you know, a distance program. This is how you can get the certificate. Your certificates lapsed. I'm still in my brain you earned your LVT. So let's see who we can talk to to get that reinstated. You wanna go back to school and do all these things. How can I facilitate that for you? What do you wanna do? Don't leave that med. I had to get out of clinics for many reasons, but I didn't ever want to leave the profession.

**0:33:15.7 Alyssa Mages:** So what do you want to do? How do we make that happen? How can you as a veterinarian support that? Recognizing it, championing it, talking about it, highlighting it and lifting it. And that's what you do. And that's one of the many millions of reasons I love you.

[laughter]

**0:33:33.9 Katie Berlin:** Well, thank you, Alyssa. And I I honestly I think we are going there. I talk to so many vets now who sound different than the veterinarians I was talking to 10 years ago, you know, and it's just 'cause we didn't know, you know, which is kind of crazy that we didn't know. But a lot of us just didn't know. And all the ways that we're reaching people now, I think we're getting through.

**0:33:57.3 Alyssa Mages:** It's coming.

**0:33:58.2 Katie Berlin:** I'm really hopeful. And and you make me hopeful.

**0:34:00.0 Alyssa Mages:** Thank you.

**0:34:01.9 Katie Berlin:** I would love for people to know where they can find you.

**0:34:04.4 Alyssa Mages:** Everywhere. [laughter]

**0:34:06.3 Katie Berlin:** Yeah. Yeah. Find it. Where can they find you? But like, where can they find what you're working on? Information about your programs and and also stay tuned for your new venture.

**0:34:15.7 Alyssa Mages:** I know that's so we have all the websites are up. So [empoweringveterinaryteams.com](http://empoweringveterinaryteams.com), [nurtur.co](http://nurtur.co). It's [N-U-R-T-U-R.co](http://N-U-R-T-U-R.co), [mentorvet.net/tech](http://mentorvet.net/tech). And we're on social. So my personal is [L-Y-S-S\\_E-V-T](http://L-Y-S-S_E-V-T). And then we're mvet team and we're making sure that we're we're hitting all of the things and just showing up in the places where we need to and kicking people to places where they need to go and shine and doing some other side projects and writing some books and making some cool critters. And yeah, there's a lot of fun stuff coming. So also, if you don't know who Med Dimensions is, look them up.

**0:34:56.0 Katie Berlin:** Oh, Med Dimensions.

**0:35:00.1 Alyssa Mages:** It's a 3D printing organization. Oh, it's so cool.

**0:35:03.9 Katie Berlin:** Okay. 3D printing is fascinating.

**0:35:06.4 Alyssa Mages:** It's phenomenal.

**0:35:07.0 Katie Berlin:** Yeah, I'm definitely going to look that up. Yeah.

**0:35:07.0 Alyssa Mages:** And they're brilliant. I mean, it wasn't enough to get biomedical engineering degrees. They had to go to vet school, too. I'm so sorry guys, I feel like an underachiever. [laughter]

**0:35:16.1 Katie Berlin:** I don't think anyone would accuse you of that. [laughter]

**0:35:19.8 Alyssa Mages:** And just make sure, you know, we hang out with the team at BLENDVet. I am a part of the board of directors for PAWSibilities. There's big things coming there. Volunteer for Vet for a Day. Look for all of the, you know, The Street Dog Coalition. Make sure you know who these organizations are. And don't the other thing that I'm really passionate about and we are at EVT as well is allyship. And it's active. It's a verb. So verb your life. Get out there and verb it.

**0:35:47.2 Katie Berlin:** Love it. It's a good shirt, too.

**0:35:49.0 Alyssa Mages:** That is I can't take credit. This is the BlackDVM Network, Tierra Price and Snout School. So, yeah.

**0:35:58.3 Katie Berlin:** Well, Alyssa Mages, thank you so much for coming by.

**0:35:58.9 Alyssa Mages:** Thank you, Dr. Katie Berlin. [chuckle]

**0:36:01.3 Katie Berlin:** You are gonna be helping out at the BLENDVet Pathways event tomorrow. It sound exciting.

**0:36:04.3 Alyssa Mages:** Yes. I'm so excited. Yes.

**0:36:06.4 Katie Berlin:** And so if you want to know more about BLENDVet and the work they're doing to try to present and introduce VetMed to more kids in communities, especially where they might not have that chance on their own, then we'll drop those links in the show notes.

**0:36:21.3 Alyssa Mages:** Absolutely.

**0:36:21.9 Katie Berlin:** So thank you so much.

**0:36:23.9 Alyssa Mages:** Thank you.

**0:36:24.7 Katie Berlin:** And thanks to all of you for listening and watching.

**0:36:24.8 Alyssa Mages:** Yes. Thank you, everyone and get out there and be your best self.

**0:36:28.1 Katie Berlin:** We'll catch you next time on Central Line.