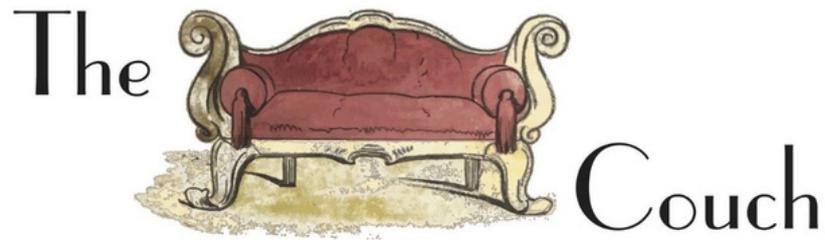


The Psychology Couch Monthly Newsletter



Heal. Learn. Grow

Psychology • Psychiatry • Wellness

The Rage Room Experience

Team building 2022

Every year, The Couch practitioners and admin staff attend a team building event to encourage teamwork, promote communication, de-stress and to connect together. This year was definitely one for the books, as our team participated in an experience at Rage Room SA in Bryanston.

Although Rage Rooms have had many shying away from it, this choice of activity was enlightening. Experiencing a new unique sensation attached to a physical activity brought about much laughter and reflection. Whilst we were encouraged to “engage the rage” as a team of psychologists, we created an unforgettable memory.



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Let's talk about anger

By Yumna Zubi, Clinical Psychologist

What is anger?

Anger is a normal, healthy emotional response just like sadness, fear and joy. Anger is a secondary emotion that aims to protect us from feelings of rejection and injustice. Anger also exists on a continuum ranging from rage on one end, to irritation and impatience at the other. Frustration may be the most common form of anger that we all experience.

When a person experiences full blown anger, it can often be the least rational and least controllable of feelings. Giving in to this loss of control can feel frightening to someone who feels as though they need to "keep a grip" on themselves.

Anger becomes a problem when a person becomes out of control and it causes distress to them and negatively impacts interpersonal relationships, with symptoms such as: physical abuse, verbally abusive language, yelling and shouting at others, making threats, destroying things, raging over insignificant events, increase in heart rate, rapid breathing and sweating.

Tips on dealing with anger

Reducing the intensity of anger before dealing with it:

If a person's anger is very intense, they are probably not ready to talk to someone yet. Instead, they should try engaging in a distraction technique to help reduce the intensity of the anger until they are able to directly confront it. Since anger is such a physical sensation, physical modes of expressing it such as exercising, boxing, punching a bag, or screaming into a pillow may help reduce its intensity. People should remember that they are not their thoughts or feelings. Even though the feeling may be intense it will pass. They should not become their anger.

Understanding why they are angry, so they should really try to connect with the primary emotions that are behind the anger. Anger serves as a defence to protect a person from feeling the rejection and injustice. The moment they can connect with it and understand what they are really angry about, the more the anger symptoms alleviate, the better their ability to process and handle the situation effectively. After the anger has reduced to a moderate level, they should talk it out with someone. If possible, share with a neutral friend first before directly confronting the person with whom they are angry.

Challenging fears of what might happen if they express their anger:

Usually fears are exaggerated and unreasonable, for example they would have feelings such as, "what if I go crazy? Or what if I do something terrible?".

Remember that anger withheld for a long time may seem ominous at first. Angry feelings will diminish as soon as one allows themselves to experience them. If a person's anger is intense, they should try discharging it into an inanimate object or on paper instead of dumping it onto someone they would like to blame for their feelings.

Working on overcoming fears about alienating people that one cares about when they allow their anger to show:

Being able to appropriately communicate angry feelings to significant others is, in fact, an indication that one does care about them. If one didn't care, they would be more likely to withdraw from them and withhold their true feelings.

Communicating angry feelings assertively rather than aggressively:

It is possible for a person to convey their anger or frustration to other people in a way that respects their dignity – in a way that doesn't place blame or put them down. One way is to begin with what they say. In other words, they can use statements such as, "I feel angry when you break your agreements, instead of you make me mad when you break your agreements".

These statements maintain respect for the other person; you-statements put people on the defensive and assign them blame for your feelings. Other people don't make a person angry, they react angrily to their own interpretation of the significance of another person's behaviour. Sometimes a person may say or do something that goes against their standards of what is acceptable or just and so they feel angry. People can learn to convey their angry feelings without hurting, judging or blaming others by using effective communication skills.

**You cannot see your reflection in boiling water.
Similarly, you cannot see the truth in a state of anger.**

When the water calms, clarity comes.



Autism Awareness Month

Last month marked Autism Awareness Month which annually aims to psychoeducate the public about people with autism throughout the world.

Autism spectrum disorder (ASD) is a neurological and developmental disorder that affects how people interact with others, communicate, learn, and behave.

Autism is known as a “spectrum” disorder because there is wide variation in the type and severity of symptoms people experience.

What are some common signs?

Autism spectrum disorder begins in early childhood, whereby children often show symptoms of autism within the first two years of life.

Common signs at 12 Months:

- Less likely to respond when their name is called
- Fewer gestures than typical children
- Understands fewer phrases
- Difficulties in disengagement of visual attention
- Look at others less frequently
- Looking at others less frequently
- Minimal eye contact
- By 12 months, differences on almost every scale of a developmental assessment of 2-3 months
- A global developmental delay but just within the normal range

Common signs between 12-24 Months:

- Diminished eye contact
- Diminished social engagement
- Limited in social games and turn taking exchanges
- Preference for being alone
- Visual attention more frequently to objects than people
- Limited range of facial expression
- Less sharing of affect (smiling and looking at others)
- Unusual hand and finger mannerisms can emerge
- Walking on tiptoes
- Difficulty adapting to new situations and coping with changes in routine
- Interest in visually repetitive phenomenon
- Unusual attachment to an object
- Communicative acts are disproportionately imperative – ‘I want that!’ rather than declarative ‘Look at that!’
- Less likely to indicate ‘Look at me’ and bring an object to an adult for joint interest
- Unusual sensory interests (spinning or sniffing objects)
- Afraid of some everyday sounds
- Eats a very limited range of foods
- Overly reactive to tickling
- Limited imitative play
- Overactive and uncooperative
- Lack of interest in other children
- Extremes of temperament
- Less imaginative or pretend play
- Less complex babbling and word production
- Delay in receptive and expressive language

People of all genders, races, ethnicities, and economic backgrounds can be diagnosed with ASD. It is also important to remember that all individuals develop at their own pace, and would thus have unique needs. Although ASD can be a lifelong disorder, treatments and services can improve a person’s symptoms and daily functioning in various contexts such as home, school, work and social environments.

For more information on Autism, follow the link below:
<https://www.cdc.gov/ncbddd/autism/facts.html>



AUTISM AWARENESS MONTH

Maternal Mental Health Month

Month of Mothers

May is the celebration of motherhood, being grateful for the women who bring life into the world and play a major role in sustaining it.

Becoming a mother brings about an enormous amount of change in a very short period of time. The physical, emotional and identity changes can be very overwhelming. Having a space to process these changes and explore ways of adjusting to this new role has a great impact on a mothers' confidence and enjoyment of this new season.

Connecting with moms in a similar phase reduces feelings of isolation. Being able to share experiences and identify with one another can have a positive effect to reduce feelings of anxiety and depression. Normalizing the stressors of new motherhood helps to gain perspective and develop effective coping strategies.

Occupational Therapy groups help moms navigate this transition through holistic and practical strategies that support self-care, create gentle rhythms to care for and bond with baby, manage other roles and find one's identity as both a mom and a woman. By utilizing co-occupations moms can engage in activities they love and find ways to flow through their day intentionally, creating a sense of fulfilment.

MOM AND BABY SUPPORT CIRCLE

For mom's with babies 0-6 months

facilitated by

OCCUPATIONAL THERAPIST
SAMANTHA SLAVEN



Connect with new mummies and engage in a fun activity with baby as we discuss coping skills, developing daily rhythms and routines and more whilst navigating feelings of baby blues, anxiety and depression.

STARTING DATE: 10 June 2022

HOW OFTEN? Meet for 4 consecutive Friday mornings

TIME: 10:00 - 11:00

VENUE: The Couch (Practice of Psychology and Psychiatry) in Rivonia

COST: R 1 200

To book your space contact 011 234 0741 or email
admin@thepsychologycouch.com

THEPSYCHOLOGYCOUCH.COM

The Mom and Baby Support Circle will focus on:

- Giving moms a safe space to share their emotions and experiences of motherhood both positive and negative.
- Guiding moms to create holistic and realistic coping strategies to manage the everyday details of caring for self, baby and home.
- Gain perspective of how to adapt effectively to this new identity, process feelings of loss and engage in meaningful occupations that instill a sense of fulfilment.
- Additionally, how to navigate baby blues, anxiety and depression during the postpartum period and build a connection with baby.

MENTAL HEALTH MATTERS

Over the past two months, The Couch has been running the #MentalHealthMatters campaign in collaboration with The South African Anxiety and Depression Group (SADAG) to raise funds and awareness about Mental Health and Suicide Prevention. Here are just a few of the beautiful testimonies from members of our community:

- “Fighting Depression has made Mental health important to me as I continue navigating through medication, therapy, understanding and validating my feelings. I advocate for mental illness with the hopes of educating and healing not only myself but others and assuring them that it’s okay not to be okay.” – A.M.
- “My mental health is important: There is no health without mental health and I cannot pour from an empty cup!” – A.P.
- “Life is already challenging enough as it is. Let’s always remember the importance of fostering love, peace and kindness within ourselves.” – M.G.
- “Let’s destigmatize mental health!” – L.B.
- “To me, mental health is being vulnerable and truthful to myself and loved ones about what I do and how I feel and think.” – B.M.
- “My mental health influences how I think, feel and act. For me, maintaining my mental health is just as important as breathing.” – K.T.
- “Good mental health, for me, is about being able to manage the ups and downs of life. This also means thriving in your life and not just surviving!” – C.G.
- “For me, mental health is a balance between my mind, my body, and my relationships. Mental health cannot be separated from general wellbeing!” – K. G.
- “To me mental health means being physically, emotionally, and mentally content with yourself as a person. I believe that introspection and self-acceptance is key, but it is okay to lose balance sometimes.” – N.M.

Statements like these from members of our community that have been rising to the #MentalHealthMatters Challenge are starting conversations about the importance of mental health. It is conversations like these that can be the motivation that someone needs to muster the courage to end their silent struggle and choose to get the appropriate help they need and progress in their personal journey of healing.

Would you like to be a part of this #MentalHealthMatters conversation too?

You don’t have to be nominated to be part of our challenge. Follow the steps below:

- Take a picture of yourself with a sign that says #MentalHealthMatters
- Tag @the_psychology_couch and@sadag_official in your posts on Instagram, Facebook or LinkedIn
- Why does mental health matter to you?
- Nominate five or more other practitioners/organisations by tagging them in our posts
- To contribute towards SADAG’s toll-free helplines, make a donation of any amount to SADAG via our BackABuddy link: <https://www.backabuddy.co.za/mental-health-matters-with-sadag>

Thank you for being a part of our Couch Community. Stay tuned for next month as we share the June edition of The Psychology Couch Newsletter.

Until next time, our wish for you is to heal, learn and grow.

Stay in touch via our social media platforms:



@the_psychology_couch



@The Couch (Practice of Psychology and Psychiatry)



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