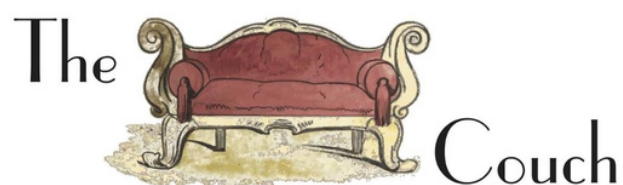


The Psychology Couch Monthly Newsletter

Heal. Learn. Grow
Psychology • Psychiatry • Wellness



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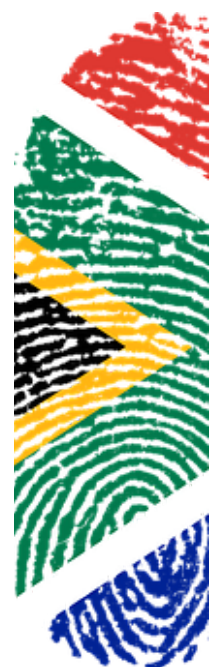
Hello; Howzit; Hallo; Lotjhani; Molo; Sawubona; Dumelang; Avuxeni; Ndaa!

The 24th of September marked Heritage Day, or what many South Africans now refer to as "National Braai Day", which has been commemorated since 1996.

South Africa is often referred to as a "Rainbow Nation" because of our cultural wealth and diversity, with the opportunity for us to acknowledge and rejoice the vibrant, unique and rich culture of South Africa.

Let us remember to celebrate each other and stand united by appreciating our differences. After all, it is in our hands to continue building and moulding a rainbow nation that appreciates and nurtures the diverse cultures which exist in the country and nation of our dreams.

Our rich and varied cultural heritage has a profound power to help build our nation.
- Nelson Mandela





SUICIDE AWARENESS MONTH

Article by Clinical Psychologist, Deborah Olusola

The COVID-19 pandemic brought many of the world's activities to a halt and significantly impacted on the mental health and well-being of people across the world. Some individuals were able to adapt, while others experienced a decline in their mental health. The pandemic had an impact on daily routines, jobs, financial statuses, and further limited access to mental health services. Now, while we are in the post-COVID era, there have been concerns about increases in suicide and suicidal behaviour.

It is important to understand that there are differences in the terms used when we talk about suicide. There is a difference between the terms 'suicide' and 'suicide attempt'. Suicide is defined as death caused by injuring oneself with the intention to die. A suicide attempt, on the other hand, is when someone tries to end their life, but is unsuccessful.

With many people having been left feeling overwhelmed and hopeless, thoughts about suicide have crossed people's minds. Some think about suicide, but do not plan or act on it, whereas for others, however, the thought of suicide has begun to seem like a real alternative to the problems they are facing. This is where the difference between suicidal thoughts and suicidal behaviour becomes evident. Suicidal

thoughts involve thinking about, or planning suicide. These thoughts can range from creating a detailed plan to briefly considering suicide.

Suicidal behaviour, on the other hand, involves actions taken with the intent of ending one's own life. For example, self-harm, taking an overdose of pills, trying to hang oneself, attempting to purchase a gun with the intent of using it on oneself, and/or writing a will or a suicide note.

According to the World Health Organisation (WHO), South Africa recorded the third-highest suicide rate in the world. Furthermore, the South African Depression and Anxiety Group (SADAG) reports that around 70% of those who try to commit suicide have a mental health disorders, with the most common disorder being depression.

The most common question that society tends to ask is: "Why would anyone want to commit suicide?" While there is no one specific answer to this question, deep emotional pain often plays a significant role in suicidal thoughts or behaviour. Other factors that play a role, include:

- A family history of violence
- A family history of suicide or knowing someone who has died by suicide
- A history of child abuse
- Neglect or trauma

- A history of mental illness
- Feelings of hopelessness
- Rejection

People deal with all of these factors differently, with some coping better than others. So, how does one know when someone is actually contemplating suicide? Some warning signs include, but are not limited to:

- Saying goodbye as if it is the last time they will see you
- Talking about death or suicide more often
- Having a negative outlook on life
- Expressing regret about being alive or ever being born

In saying this, it is not always obvious. Others may not communicate their thoughts or feelings at all and may completely isolate themselves during this time. Therefore, it can be difficult to know exactly what to do and we often feel stuck when we see someone we care about going through a difficult time.

Openly talking about suicide can help reduce thoughts of suicide and may also have a positive impact on mental health overall. People contemplating suicide often feel alone and, therefore, talking to them can let them know you care enough to offer your support or help them access professional care.

Here are 5 other ways to help someone who may be considering suicide:

The theme of World Suicide Prevention Day for September 2022 is “Creating Hope Through Action.” This reflects the need for collective action to address this urgent public health issue. All of us (family members, friends, co-workers, community members, educators, religious leaders, healthcare professionals, political leaders and governments officials) have a role in taking action to prevent suicide.

SPRING CLEANING

September is the first month of spring. It is the season of rebirth and fresh starts. This is felt in nature and in our homes, as many of us are motivated to spring clean and declutter during this time.

Staying in dirty environments can elevate feelings of stress, and have a reductory influence on the amount of physical activity we do, and so, while not everyone is excited about cleaning their living spaces, spring cleaning does have many benefits:

1. ***Spring cleaning improves our overall well-being.*** This happens because it improves our feelings of peace, focus, and accomplishment. Having a clear, clean space helps us feel more organised and in control of our surroundings. It also improves our focus by increasing our motivation together with concentration levels. Envisioning a clean environment as well as completing the task of cleaning it can make one feel accomplished.



2. ***Spring cleaning improves our mental health.***

Living in cluttered environments can make us feel stressed and often depressed. The act of removing unnecessary dirt and clutter from our lives can be a soothing experience that improves our overall mood and mental space. For some of us, however, the thought of cleaning our entire living space can seem daunting or overwhelming, and it may even feel like it's causing more stress. So, here are 5 tips to make the cleaning experience less stressful:

- Put on some music or a podcast that you like listening to
- Begin by cleaning one room at a time, don't think of everything you need to clean all at once
- In each room, organise your things into different piles (donation, trash, keep). Should this get complicated, get some help from others who can help you decide what is worth keeping or tossing.
- Having a helping hand can also quicken the cleaning process.
- Only use a few multi-purpose cleaners (Handy Andy, white vinegar) instead of buying individual cleaners for each room/surface

3. ***Spring cleaning also has numerous benefits for our physical health.***

It is a great way to stay active as we are moving around the house, tidying up the different spaces, vigorously cleaning and wiping surfaces, scrubbing tough stains, and vacuuming.

This might not be the traditional way of working out, but it does help us keep our steps up and get us moving. After some time, the dust in our carpets and couches and mold in our bathrooms could become health hazards. Therefore, cleaning up could be a great way to improve our overall physical health.

THE COUCH WELCOMES CLINICAL PSYCHOLOGIST DEBORAH OLUSOLA

The Couch is excited to welcome Clinical Psychologist, Deborah Olusola, to the team!

Deborah Olusola is trained mainly from a General Systems Approach as well as in Psychodynamic Therapy, Cognitive Behavioural Therapy, Postmodern Therapy, and African Epistemology.

Deborah has a passion for working with children, adolescents, adults, couples, and families. She focuses on anxiety, depression, anger management, trauma, grief, interpersonal relationship challenges, and those who take care of family members living with special needs or chronic or acute illnesses.



To learn more about Deborah and her work, visit her profile on our website: <https://www.thepsychologycouch.com/the-team/psychologists/deborah-olusola>

VOLUNTEER TRAINING AT THE COUCH

On the 2nd and 3rd of September, The Couch held its second volunteer training session since 2021.

This training aimed to welcome our new group of volunteers and equip them with knowledge on psychology within private practice, the importance of creating mental health awareness on social media platforms alongside ethical guidelines and experiential learning, and what to expect when assisting in a mental health setting.

A special thank you to the incredible team that was involved with putting this training together, as well as the practitioners that spent their time adding such valuable contributions.



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

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

Get involved and stay in touch via our social media platforms:



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