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The Psychology Couch Newsletter

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looking back **MOVING FORWARD**

Kirsten Mynhardt - BSocSci Hons Psych Student (UP)

As the new year unfolds, we are offered an opportunity to pause and reflect—not just on the year that has passed, but on how we've grown through it. The final days of 2024 and the early days of 2025 create a bridge between where we've been and where we're going. It's a chance to both honour our progress and inspire our vision for the future.

Looking back on the year that has passed, take a moment to reflect on the significant events that shaped your journey. Were they defined by unforeseen challenges, moments of joy and celebration, or the quiet, steady progress that often goes unnoticed?

Big or small, every moment of resilience, courage, and self-compassion is worth celebrating. Too often, we overlook the strength it takes to simply show up—on good days and bad. So let this reflection serve as a reminder of your unwavering ability to keep moving forward. After all, it is not the size of the step that matters, only its direction.

While you recognise these steps, be sure to take a moment to consider the lessons you've learned along the way. Whether they arose from challenges faced or milestones achieved, these lessons are more than just memories—they are tools. Carry them with you into the new year, letting them guide you in your future endeavours and shape the way you approach new goals and opportunities. Allow yourself to be inspired. Leave behind the weight of doubts and regrets, lean on the lessons learned and the knowledge you've gained.

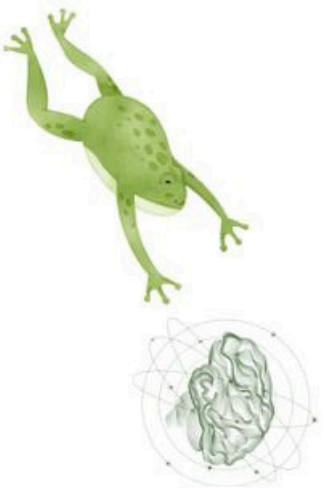
As 2025 begins, may you carry the strength of your journey and the hope of new possibilities. Here's to a year filled with growth, purpose, and joy.

From all of us here at The Couch, Happy New Year!



NeuroFrogsticity:

A new approach to addiction



A comprehensive, holistic recovery experience for those grappling with addiction

“ Not why the addiction but why the pain? ”
- Gabor Maté

At The Psychology Couch, we're excited to introduce the NeuroFrogsticity program, designed to offer a holistic recovery experience, promoting the balance between mind, body and social well-being. Our program is meticulously crafted to guide individuals through a transformative journey of healing, addressing the biological, psychological and social factors that underlie addiction. We provide a supportive and nurturing environment where significant personal growth and recovery are not only achievable but anticipated. The program guides each individual towards sustainable recovery, equipping them with new skills and strategies they can integrate into life, and reach a future beyond addiction.

Addiction involves substance use or repetition of problematic behaviours that the individual can't control despite harmful consequences. Almost 300 million people worldwide have used a drug in the past 12 months. That is 1 in every 17 people, 23% higher than the previous decade. Of that 300 million, less than 20% of people with a substance use disorder have received treatment.

Core components of the program

- **Multidisciplinary approach:** A collaborative care model integrating various healthcare professionals' expertise.
- **Customised care:** Individualised treatment plans respecting each participant's unique path to recovery
- **Family involvement:** Interventions enabling families to understand and engage in the recovery process.
- **Developing connection:** Group therapy sessions harnessing the strength of shared experiences and support to overcome addiction.
- **Trauma-informed care:** Addressing trauma is a central factor in treating addiction.
- **Emotional regulation:** Fostering strategies for effective emotion regulation.
- **Life skills training:** Occupational therapy sessions that empower participants with essential skills for everyday challenges.
- **Preparation for a life beyond addiction:** Strategies and support systems, and a deep appreciation of the complex interplay between mind, body and social aspects.

MYTH:
People struggling with addiction just need tough love. If you help them, you enable their addiction.

FACT:
Showing love and support to someone struggling with addiction is okay. However, it is important to maintain good boundaries and set limits.

We use the biopsychosocial approach which holistically combines neuroscience, psychology, psychiatry, occupational therapy and mindfulness, and harnesses the power of neuroplasticity to shift away from addiction to sobriety.

What is Neuroplasticity?

Neuroplasticity is the ability of neural networks in the human brain to change through growth and reorganisation. Essentially, our brains can be rewired to function differently by "learning, unlearning and relearning" old and unhelpful patterns of behaviour.

“ The brain is a far more open system than we ever imagined, and nature has gone very far to help us perceive and take in the world around us. It has given us a brain that survives in a changing world by changing itself. ”

- Norman Doidge

What is the Biopsychosocial Model?

The biopsychosocial model reflects the interconnectedness of the biological, psychological and socio-environmental aspects.

Our practitioners

Emily Makhlouf - Occupational Therapist

Emily is an experienced occupational therapist with a focus on neuro-rehabilitative techniques in mental health, working to improve daily functioning and cognitive performance.

Rob Hamilton - Clinical Psychologist

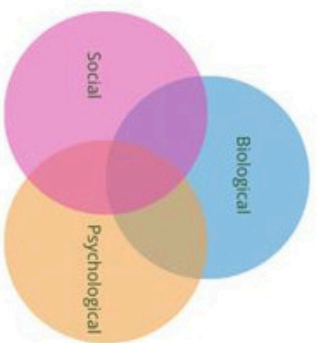
Rob has supported clients with a range of addictions for two decades. He draws on diverse approaches to addiction, particularly neuroplasticity and building resilience.

Yumna Zubi - Clinical Psychologist

Yumna integrates neuroplasticity and trauma-informed practice within traditional psychological treatment, offering a unique approach to mental health care.

Dr Vijaylyn Moodley - GP with a special interest in psychiatry

Dr. Moodley has been supporting individuals with addiction for 20 years, both in South Africa and the UK. He focuses on the detox regime and the interplay between biological and psychological components of addiction, drawing on his extensive experience in mental health treatment.



Session breakdown

Each therapy session will incorporate techniques and activities focused on neuroplasticity, including but not limited to:

- Cognitive exercises and problem-solving tasks
- Mindfulness and meditation to improve neural regulation
- Stress management workshops to reduce cortisol levels, and
- Lifestyle coaching for sleep, nutrition and exercise to support brain health.

Program support

Participants will have access to:

- One-on-one therapy sessions
- Group workshops and support networks
- Online resources and home practice exercises, and
- Regular feedback and progress assessments.

MYTH:

Overcoming addiction is a matter of willpower.

FACT:

Prolonged use of drugs and alcohol alters the brain. Changed neural pathways make it difficult for people to quit without getting the right kind of support.

Month 1: Foundation and assessment

- **Individual sessions:** Engage with our multi-disciplinary team for initial psychiatric evaluation to personalise treatments based on individual psychological and occupational therapy profiles.
- **Personalised treatment plan:** Develop a tailored treatment plan that caters to each participant's unique needs.
- **Family support groups:** Offer support and education to families, helping them understand and navigate the complexities of addiction and its impact.
- **Group therapy sessions:** Learn about the complexity and causes of addiction, its impact on the brain and start neural reprogramming.
- **Trauma and emotional regulation:** Address trauma and learn to regulate emotions, a fundamental aspect of recovery.

Month 2: Development and growth

- **Individual sessions:** Gain deeper personal insights and understanding of the self through ongoing one-on-one therapy.
- **Psychiatric follow-ups:** Regular consultations to adjust treatment plans for maximum therapeutic benefit.
- **Occupational therapy:** Progress in life skills development, emphasising practical competencies for daily living.
- **Group therapy:** Learn strategies to cope with urges and cravings and manage difficult emotions better.
- **Family support groups:** Continued support and psychoeducation to hold the system.

Month 3: Integration and preparation

- **Individual sessions:** Solidify therapeutic gains and prepare for long-term challenges through personalised therapy.
- **Final psychiatric consultations:** Fine-tune each participant's treatment plan for sustained progress.
- **Occupational therapy:** Conclude occupational therapy sessions to establish a comprehensive toolkit for success and plan for life after the program.
- **Group therapy wrap-up:** Build recovery capital and social support, and consolidate learning to prepare for post program.
- **Family support groups:** Continued support and psychoeducation to hold the system.

“ It is impossible to understand addiction without asking what relief the addict finds, or hopes to find, in the drug or the addictive behaviour. ”

- Gabor Maté



To start this transformative journey towards holistic recovery, contact us at:

011 234 0741

060 961 7882

admin@thepsychologycouch.com

www.thepsychologycouch.com



TRE[®], GIVES NEW MEANING TO 'SHAKING IT OFF!'

Ryan Cooper

TRE[®] stands for, Tension & Trauma Releasing Exercises. Developed by Dr. David Berceli (more on him shortly), who has worked for decades with trauma, in war torn countries, with soldiers, emergency workers, natural disasters victims, violence, abuse and crime survivors, to name a few, he began to question the field of trauma recovery. This resulted in the development of a revolutionary process for trauma recovery called TRE[®].



TRE[®] is based on the premise that humans possess a natural restorative capacity within our bodies, which assist in self-healing. It is a self-empowering resource, that can be learned, in order to facilitate our trauma recovery journey, that can benefit us by reducing anxiety, help us in accessing deeper relaxation, improved sleep, stress reduction, increased calmness and can compliment other practices such as exercise, yoga, meditation, mindfulness and psychotherapy.

TRE[®] was borne out of the need for people to take recovery into their own hands, something that we could do by ourselves, without the need for attending and paying for other modalities of healing. It is empowering and provides flexibility and freedom for its users. It is easily learned, can be self-applied, and integrated into our daily lives. TRE[®] has been well researched, and can be further explored by following the following link: <https://traumaprevention.com/research/>

TRE[®] practitioners are individuals who have completed training and can teach the exercises to others as well as facilitate their clients TRE[®] process. It is recommended that if you are considering the practice of TRE[®], attending between 4 – 6 sessions with a practitioner are beneficial. Certain complex trauma cases may require further sessions.

More on Dr. David, Berceli, who is the founder and CEO of TRE[®], an international author, presenter, and trainer. He holds a doctorate degree in social work, a master's degree in clinical social work, a master's degrees in theology and Middle Eastern studies, as well as being a massage therapist and bioenergetic therapist (CBT). He spent 15 years living and working in war torn countries, providing specialized trauma recovery assistance to U.S. Military personnel and relief agencies.



So, what exactly is TRE®? It is a set of seven exercises that are performed in a specific order, which are designed to allow our natural tremor mechanism to revive. You may have noticed in your lifetime, that when you get a fright or face a threat or a fearful situation, your body will start to shake. The autonomic nervous system will activate the sympathetic nervous system, and ready your body into the fight, flight or freeze response. We do not need to ask the body to do this, it does so automatically. Once we realise that we have in fact survived the threat – real or perceived – we need to regulate ourselves in order to get back into a calm, safe state.

This tremor enables us to release trauma, stress, and anxiety, by assisting the release of deep, chronic muscle contractions that the trauma has created. We begin to shake or tremor from our centre of gravity, the pelvis, which will reverberate throughout the whole body. The tremors begin at the upper thighs and work their way to the psoas muscle, it will then travel through the pelvis to the lower back and finally up the spine and into the shoulders, neck, arms, hands and possibly the face.

The tremors are evoked by an instinctual part of the brain (brain stem) and not from the more conscious neocortex. The tremors are often explained as a vibrating or shaking sensation. These vibrations are safe and can feel relaxing. Some people realise that they have felt this sensation before, earlier in their lives. The neurogenic tremor that initiates is the same response seen in wild animals once they have survived a threat through executing their fight and flight response. The shaking mechanism is observed in safety, returning the body to homeostasis.

A tremor session can last as long or as little as feels comfortable, and usually at the beginning of the process, we would tremor for approximately 12 – 15 minutes per session. You are in control of your tremor process and will learn self-regulation skills and how to stop the tremor, when you wish to do so.

When practicing TRE®, it is normal to simply experience the shaking without any emotional response. It is just as normal whilst tremoring, that an emotional reaction may surface. It is important that we stay associated with our sensations, feelings, and thoughts as we tremor, regulating the stored experience release which often lasts 30 seconds to a minute. This provides self-awareness during the process and allows us to supportively manage any overwhelm that may occur. We aim to only release the amount of tension that feels safe to us. There is no need to rush.

TRE® can be practiced daily, however, the focus is on how each individual body responds to the process, for some it is comfortable to tremor daily and yet for others once a week is enough. The body will prompt us and guide us in figuring out what works for our individual needs.

The following links provide more information.

<https://treforafrica.com/>

<http://www.traumaprevention.com/>

[Vimeo](#)

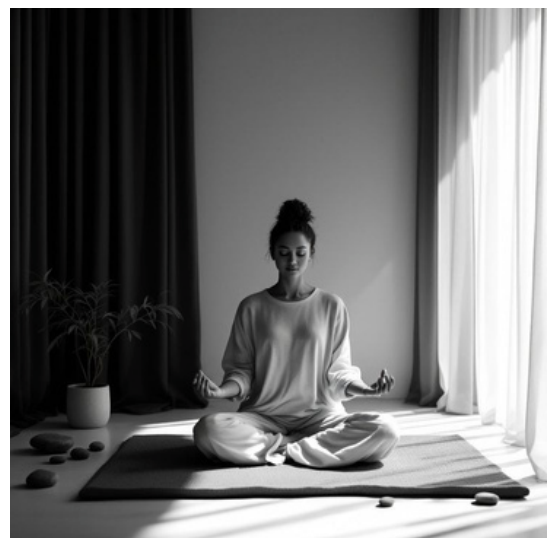
Reference:

David Berceli: The Revolutionary Trauma Release Process: Transcend your toughest times. Vancouver, Canada. Namaste Publishing.2008

David Berceli: Trauma Releasing Exercises. USA.2005

Website: <https://treforafrica.com/>

TRE® Training Information. 2018 & 2019. TRE® for Africa Foundation.



The Couch

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TRE®

GROUP THERAPY

What is TRE®?

Imagine your body as a tightly coiled spring. Throughout your life, stress, tension, and even trauma can wind that spring tighter and tighter. Over time, it becomes harder to unwind on your own, leaving you feeling tense, anxious, or stuck.

TRE® (Tension and Trauma Releasing Exercises) is like a gentle reset for that spring. It's a simple, safe way to help your body release the tension it's been holding onto. Through easy movements, you tap into your body's natural ability to let go of stress, leaving you feeling calmer, lighter, and more resilient.

TRE® was developed by Dr. David Berceli and is based on how the body naturally heals itself. The exercises gently stretch and activate specific muscles, which trigger a natural shaking or trembling process. This helps to release built-up tension in your body caused by stress, anxiety, or trauma.

Who is it for?

TRE® is for anyone who feels weighed down by stress, tension, or trauma. It's for anyone who wants to:

- Manage stress, anxiety, or burnout
- Process trauma or tension stored in the body
- Reconnect with their physical and emotional well-being
- Complement therapy or other self-care practices

What are the benefits?

As a self-empowering tool, the benefits of TRE® include:

- Relaxation and sleep
- Resilience to stress
- Improved core stability
- Stronger mindfulness
- Recovery from physical and emotional tension
- Relationships and overall well-being

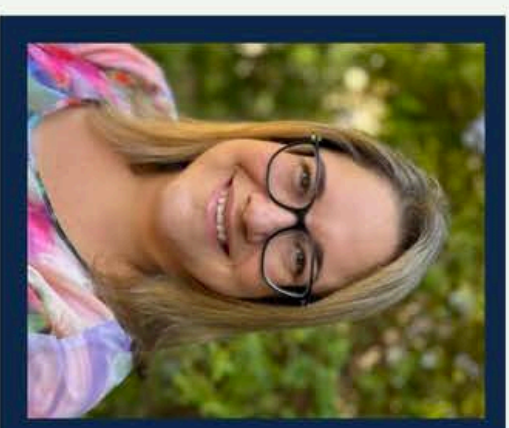
Why TRE® is Safe and Empowering

TRE® is a natural process that puts you in control. You decide how far to go during each session, and you can pause or stop at any time. While TRE® is a powerful self-care tool, it's not a replacement for therapy or medical advice. Think of it as a way to support your overall well-being alongside other care practices.

"The body holds the score. It remembers what the mind tries to forget."

- Bessel van der Kolk

Hosted by:



Clinical Psychologist

Ryan Lorraine Cooper

BA Humanities (RAU)

BA Hons Psych (RAU)

MSc Clin Psych (UL)



Group information:

6 week course with small group sessions.

Tuesdays at 17h30

Session duration: 60-90 minutes

Start date: 11 March 2025

Venue

The Couch, Block F, Homestead Office Park, 37 Homestead Road, Corner 12th Avenue, Edenburg, 2191

Cost:

R750.00 per session
(R4500 for the group)



"Trauma is not what happens to you, but what happens inside you as a result of what happens to you."

you."

- Gabor Maté

What to expect in your first session:

In your first TRE[®] session, we'll start with a gentle introduction to explain how the process works and what you can expect.

You'll then be guided through seven simple exercises, designed to gently activate your body's natural ability to release stress and tension (called tremoring).

During the session:

- You'll be fully supported every step of the way.
- We'll teach you how to self-regulate and pause the tremors whenever you need to.
- At the end, we'll take time to check in, answer your questions, and reflect on your experience.

You don't need to worry about doing anything 'right' — this is your time to relax and reconnect with your body.

What to bring:

Wear comfortable clothing that allows for movement. Bring along a yoga mat and some water. If you'd like a towel and pillow for added comfort, you can bring that along too!



"Trauma creates change you don't choose. Healing is about creating change you do choose."

- Michelle Rosenthal

Contact information:

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☎ 011 234 0741 | 060 961 7882
🌐 www.thepsychologycouch.com

• • • • •
**Click HERE
to book
your slot
(form)**

Janu-worry

By Thatohatsi Madumo

January was a tough year but we made it.

January has become such a stressful month, that it has been nicknamed “Janu-worry”. The South African Depression and Anxiety Group (SADAG) stated that much of the state of Janu-worry comes from change after a period of rest and enjoyment.

Some people worry about the uncertainty that will come with the new year, while other people worry about changes in the environment, relationships and in the economy, for instance.

the psychologycouch.com

The worrying that comes with the new year has the potential to lead to a lot of stress and anxiety. The new year may also bring new responsibilities such as a new job, new relationships, or even taking your little one to their first day at school.

In addition, South Africa faces high rates of unemployment which leads to financial struggles in January. It is important for individuals battling to reach out for help.



The World health organisation gave a few ideas on dealing with the January blues:

1. Talk to someone you trust

The WHO believes that speaking to someone you trust, whether a friend, or relative, can help. You may feel better if you are able to openly share about your struggles.

2. Look after your physical health

According to the WHO, taking care of your physical health helps improve your mental health. They suggest that being active for at least 30 minutes each day, eating, and sleeping well are crucial factors.



3. Do activities that you enjoy

Try to continue engaging in the activities you used to enjoy, such as cooking for yourself or those you love, playing with your pet, taking a walk, watching TV or reading a book.



THE BUSINESS OF PRIVATE PRACTICE WORKSHOP

Take the fear out of private practice! Bridging the gap between healthcare and business.

Starting or running a private practice doesn't have to feel overwhelming. Whether you're just starting out or looking to grow, The Business of Private Practice workshop is here to give you the tools, confidence, and knowledge to thrive.

Let us guide you step-by-step through the process and show you how to turn your passion for helping others into a successful, stress-free business.



21st and 22nd February

9am - 4pm

R7500 for the course
(4CPD points and 3
Ethics points have been
granted)



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Homestead Office Park, Block F,
Edenburg, 2191



YOLANDA GUMA

Head of HR at The Couch



YUMNA ZUBI

Clinical
Psychologist
Founder & CEO of
The Couch



BRUCE MABUZA

Founder, Principal
Consultant at DC
Consultancy and Senior
Analyst at Woolworths
Financial Services

Topics included:

- What to consider before starting your private practice
- The admin of starting private practice
- What documentation and registration you require
- Marketing and HPCSA
- Developing your own marketing strategy
- Billing and accounts (tariff codes and ICD-10/PMB's)
- How to build a business strategy
- Finance (TAX and VAT)
- Employee Assistance Programs
- Ethical dilemmas faced in private practice
- AI in business
- Do's and Don't's

The Couch

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Think.Calm



A Dialectical Behaviour Therapy (DBT) - informed program for adults

Life these days can feel like a constant storm.

The news can be overwhelming, social media can be a whirlwind, and everyday pressures can feel like relentless waves crashing down.

DBT is like building a resilient shelter to weather these storms.

With DBT, you'll learn to navigate the storms of life, not by controlling the weather, but by strengthening your ability to withstand it. You'll develop the skills to find calm amidst chaos, build stronger connections, and cultivate a more resilient sense of self.



"You can't stop the waves, but you can learn to surf."
- Jon Kabat-Zinn

What is DBT?



Dialectical Behaviour Therapy (DBT) is a skills-based approach that helps you **manage intense emotions**, **cope with stress**, **build healthier relationships**, and **achieve self-awareness**.

It serves as a **toolbox** for handling **stress and overwhelming feelings**, teaching four key skills: **staying calm**, **balancing emotions**, **improving communication**, and **being present**.

At The Couch, our DBT-informed program offers a **safe space** to practice these tools and grow at your own pace, fostering **resilience** and **enhancing overall well-being**.





Program benefits

- Greater impulse control
- Affect (emotional) regulation
- Distress tolerance
- Breaking negative behavioural patterns
- Reducing the potential for self-destructive behaviour
- Anxiety and stress management
- Building self-esteem
- Curtailing reckless behaviour
- Improved decision making skills
- Interpersonal effectiveness (personal relationship and social skills)
- Self-acceptance and awareness
- Effective communication with self and others



Who is DBT for?

DBT is especially helpful for people who want to break negative behaviour patterns and improve their mental health. It can benefit individuals dealing with:

- **Stress and anxiety**
- **Depression**
- **Low self-esteem**
- **Trauma**
- **Personality challenges**

Program information

Think.Calm is a 12 week out-patient DBT-informed program, starting on the **10th of February**

2025, facilitated by educational psychologist Melina Georgiou and clinical psychologist Shaithal Moodley at The Couch in Rivonia. Sessions will take place weekly on Mondays, from 6pm-8pm



Pricing

R16 800 for all 12 sessions (R1400 per DBT session).

Additional cost for an intake session: R1900.

A portion may be claimed back from your medical aid.

"Your present circumstances don't determine where you can go; they merely determine where you start."
- Nido Qubein

Contact us if you would like to book or if you would like more information about our services.

011 234 0741 or 060 961 7882
admin@thepsychologycouch.com
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Homestead Rd, Edenburg, 2191



Thank you for being a part of our Couch Community. Stay tuned for our next newsletter - the February 2025 edition of the Psychology Couch Newsletter.

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

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

 @the_psychology_couch	 @The Psychology Couch	 The Couch	 @The Couch (Practice of Psychology and Psychiatry).
 @the_psychology_couch	 011 234 0741	 admin@thepsychologycouch.com	 www.thepsychologycouch.com

