

# MENTAL HEALTH CLINIC

# ISABEL HENRIQUES

## EMAIL NEWSLETTER

MARCH 2021



### WHAT'S NEW?

Our team is growing! We have two new clinical psychologists who joined our team. Catarina, Portuguese and graduated from the Faculty of Psychology and Educational Sciences of the University of Coimbra, and Gabriela, Brazilian graduated from the Erasmus School of Social and Behavioural Sciences of the Erasmus University Rotterdam.

In this edition, they will be introducing themselves.



### OUR SERVICES

Mental Health Clinic Isabel Henriques offers a variety of services to attend to its users' needs. Our interdisciplinary team can provide a combination of services to help in different areas of one's life.

We offer:

- Individual therapy
- Child and adolescent therapy
- Family therapy
- Couple's therapy
- (Neuro)psychological assessment
- Mindfulness sessions
- Mindfulness courses
- EMDR Therapy

Our services are available for people living in Portugal or in the Netherlands, online or in person at our clinic in Amsterdam. Available in English and Portuguese.



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## HOW TO TAKE CARE OF YOUR MENTAL HEALTH DURING LOCKDOWN?

How have you been through the COVID-19 pandemic? If I were to guess, I would say that you have been feeling stressed, anxious, hopeless and lonely. You are not alone. There is a mental health pandemic that came along with confinement, but which is being discussed as much. New studies show that up to 50% of the young population aged 18 to 29 years has shown signs of depression and anxiety after almost a year in confinement and social distancing rules.

Unfortunately, we still have to go on like this. We cannot change the situation the world is in, but we can change how we deal with it. We have selected a few tips to better deal with the confinement:

- **Stay away from the news when possible.** They raise our level of anxiety and stress.
- **Take care of your body.** Staying active can help control feelings of anxiety and depression. Healthy meals keep you going, which helps you regulate these symptoms.
- **Don't isolate yourself.** Enjoy the wonders of technology and keep in touch with people you love. They are going through the same situation and can also benefit from a video call or text.
- **Separate some time to relax and do something you enjoy.** Books, movies and hobbies keep our minds busy.



## OUR BLOG

Did you know that we have a blog at the website of Mental Health Clinic Isabel Henriques? In the blog you can find posts about a variety of themes related to mental health.

We write about interesting themes in an easygoing manner for people with different backgrounds.

We have written about emotional insecurity, childhood traumas, dreams, children and technology, among other themes.

They are written in Portuguese, but you can translate it easily using a translator extension in your google chrome!

You can access the blog at: <https://www.isabelhenriques.nl/blog>.

You can also follow us on our social media!



[mental.health.clinic.ih](https://www.instagram.com/mental.health.clinic.ih)



[Mental Health Clinic - Isabel Henriques](https://www.facebook.com/MentalHealthClinic-IsabelHenriques)



## **WOMEN'S MONTH:HOW IS IT TO LIVE IN THE NETHERLANDS AS AN IMMIGRANT WOMAN?**

*The perspectives of two women with different ages and cultures about how it is to live in The Netherlands as a woman and as an immigrant.*

### **M. S**

Brazilian, age 24.

"The stereotype of Brazilian women in Europe is still very predominant. Having been intensified between the 60s and 80s after the advertisements made by the Brazilian government itself to attract tourists, the image of the Brazilian woman is the black woman with lighter skin colour, with a big butt, extremely sexualized, "easy", and (therefore) not able to think for herself. It is strange to think that in a country with such high gender equality as the Netherlands, this stereotype remains.

As a white woman, I have heard tireless times from Dutch people phrases like "You don't look Brazilian" and "Brazilian? But you are white". I started by responding politely "Brazil is a country with a lot of racial diversity", but after two years years the answer became a harsh "clearly you don't know anything about Brazil".

From men, I've heard many "I love Brazilian women" and "all Brazilian women are beautiful". Often phrases like these are used as bridges to a pick-up line, even in inappropriate places, an inconvenience rarely experienced by women of other nationalities.

The worst experience was with a Turkish man who had the audacity to tell me that all Brazilian women are easy and you can do whatever you want with them.

Although these descriptions sound like a nightmare, I had many more good interactions than bad ones. And once people get to know me, they have an opportunity to break any stereotype.

After overcoming the barrier that my nationality may create, living in the Netherlands as simply a *woman* is liberating. From the simplest things such as no street harassment to more serious matters such as equal salaries and women in positions of power, the Netherlands is an incredible and extremely safe place to be a woman. Dutch women are known to be independent and sincere (even a bit too much), and expat women follow the example. Relationships, both romantic or at work are very egalitarian and gender roles do not have the weight they have in Brazil.

In my perspective and experiences so far the benefits not only outweigh the costs, they make me feel happy and safe."



## F. C

Brazilian, age 66.

In another life, I want to be born a woman again!

I am Brazilian, I was raised by 3 unmarried aunts in the interior of RN. As a teenager, I went to live at my parents' house, with two brothers and a sister.

After completing secondary school, my first migration was from the city of Natal to São Paulo.

I was a mother at the age of 20. I went back to Natal, where I spent 2 years, and then I migrated to Rio de Janeiro.

There, already married, I was the mother of 3 other girls.

At the time, my husband was working on a ship, thus giving him the opportunity to travel through Argentina, USA, Egypt and Japan on a cargo ship.

One day, while we were in Egypt visiting the Cairo Museum, I received a proposal to change husbands in exchange for 1 camel 🐪. After a while, already divorced, I returned to live in Natal with my daughters who were already a little older.

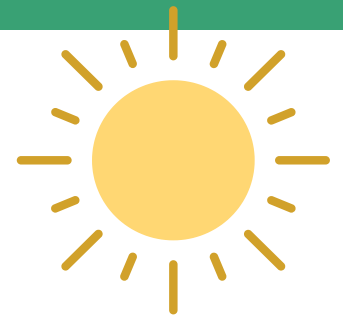
During the time I spent in my city of birth, to which I returned on several occasions, I witnessed many arrivals and departures, such as the birth of the first grandson, Lucas, the immigration of one daughter to the USA and the other to Portugal.

But the first time I immigrated was to the USA to meet my first granddaughter, Luna. Without having any knowledge of the language, there I went to another part of the world, with a broken marriage, daughters already grown up, with the grace of God, developing my forms of communication until I reached my desired place.

I am an immigrant due to fate!

After the first time, I spent a few seasons in the USA.

On one of these trips, on March 8 2006, I was presented with the gift of being able to watch the birth of the second granddaughter who was born on Long Island.



It was a unique moment! I will never forget the moment when Enola was born. I lived there for a while and then it was time to head to Portugal to meet Gabriela, my youngest granddaughter!

In the meantime, I met my Portuguese husband through a friendship website. When he saw me for the first time, still virtually, he asked me to marry him and invited me to visit him in Amsterdam-Netherlands, where he already lived at the time. And I came! As the adventurer by nature that I am, I ended up staying and I'm still here today.

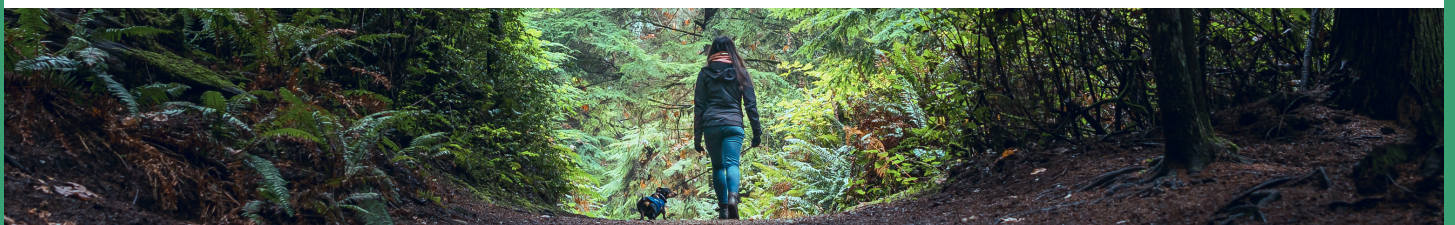
I overcame many difficulties, we can say "I killed a lion every day" (a Brazilian saying which means the person overcame difficulties every day), the language being the biggest one.

As an immigrant, I developed ways to communicate through the translator on my cell phone, photos of the products I wanted to buy, but I still lost benefits due to lack of information, and depended 100% on other people when it came mainly to documents and issues of the country's official bureaucracy.

In the midst of all this process, the life of an immigrant woman was not always easy. I met and overcame the worst challenge of all, cancer, even with the language barrier in medical consultations, in surgical procedures, when telling me how I felt at the time.

But, with the help of angels, I went through all the steps, with the greatest reward of being a woman and mother to my daughters, who combined with each other and did not leave me alone for even a second. Throughout my treatment time, they took turns within the period allowed by the visa. I was healed by the grace of God, the doctors and a huge dose of LOVE from my daughters.

After all I've been through, even so, if I have to choose what I want to be in another life, I want to be born a woman again!





## MEET THE NEW MEMBERS OF OUR TEAM MENTAL HEALTH CLINIC ISABEL HENRIQUES



The name Catarina is associated with the Greek adjective 'katharos, which means "pure". Perhaps she is not, but she is a free and light being. Working as a Psychologist, practicing yoga, reading and writing, especially poetry, are among the few habits she likes to maintain, as she hates routines.

She loves to laugh and hates being vulnerable. She loves to eat, but doesn't like to cook. She loves to have a full house, but she really likes to be alone. She loves doing theater, but hates the anxiety of opening nights. She loves bricolage, but her clumsiness often betrays her. Only the clumsiness never stopped her from doing anything. That is her secret. It is important to do things differently every day, because "everything is worthwhile when the soul is not small", as Fernando Pessoa wrote.

Hello! My name is Gabriela, I was born and raised in São Paulo, Brazil. Besides being a clinical psychologist I am also an actress. Theatre is a second passion of mine, which has changed me as a person and my way of approaching life.

I've been in the Netherlands for five and a half years, and before I have lived in England and Scotland. My time living abroad, working and studying with people from different countries have sparked my interest in cultural dynamics. I had the privilege of learning first hand about many of them.

I am excited with the opportunity to continue to work with people from different cultures!





## COOKING: THE ART OF LOVING

Cooking to love is taking a different look at caring.

Who cares loves and who loves likes to give.

I was raised in a village in the interior of Portugal, where everyone knew each other, where the days passed slowly and the smell of the countryside in the summer invaded our nostrils with a mix of fragrances that taught me about sensitivity and perception.

On Sundays the tradition was family, they gathered around the table to taste the best that each one gave of themselves, not only the food was appreciated, but also each other's company.

The art of loving, cooking, in general was done mainly by grandmother Lila (maternal grandmother).

The wood oven was lit early, before going to mass, the grain was placed in the pressure cooker and left to cook slowly.

I remember waking up on those Sunday mornings, when I slept at my grandparents' house, with the aromas coming from the kitchen. The feeling I felt was of extreme happiness, for the fantastic food, but also for the company of my cousins, grandparents and uncles. From an early age I learned that cooking was an act of loving, of happiness, of joy, of satisfaction for being able to share the best of you translated in the action of sharing.

Today, when we talk about Mindful Eating, mindfulness, awareness of the present moment, I am describing something that I have always intuitively done and today as a mental health professional, I understand its importance.

When we cook, there is time for reflection, living in the present moment, regardless of whether or not you like to cook, you enter an internal process that is called immersion. Upon entering this act of perception, immersion activates what we call awareness, touch, smells, textures and sensations that they provoke us. All of these emotions are also translated into pleasurable and less pleasurable memories / thoughts. This process leads us to a clear interpretation of reactions and a clairvoyance of the moment we soon find another part of our SELF that we normally do not know / ignore.

Receiving this mental state will then open doors to an inner world that was previously unknown. To live all these emotions completely surrendered to oneself in a healthy selfishness involving an ambiguity that is transmitted from the inside out.

From this description, those who do not like to cook can look at it in a different way, it can be seen as love because they are taking care of those they love.

The purpose of food is to nourish the body, but also the soul.

**Isabel Henriques**