



**clowns without borders
south africa**
"no child without a smile"

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Clowns Without Borders South Africa Sock Monkeys Exercise

Background

The Sock Monkey Exercise was developed by Clowns Without Borders director, Jamie McLaren Lachman, as a result of a donation in 2007 of Sock Monkeys from a Canadian organisation called Operation Sock Monkey (www.operationsockmonkey.org). Children and adults make monkeys and other animals out of socks and send them to South Africa, Haiti, and other places of crisis around the world. In South Africa, Woza Moya (www.wozamoya.org.za) has a community craft project making Sock Monkeys for Clowns Without Borders artist residencies.

The Sock Monkey exercise helps the guardians learn how to connect to their children through play. They discover that by paying attention to their children in a nurturing and loving way, their children will begin to open up and communicate to them. We use the Sock Monkey as a method of connecting through a simple form of Symbolic Play Therapy. By interacting with the children and asking them certain questions about the Sock Monkey, they often share what is important to them. As a result, the guardians learn a lot about the needs and desires of their children through the Sock Monkey while building communication, trust, and loving relationships.

About Clowns Without Borders

Clowns Without Borders-South Africa is a humanitarian organization dedicated to using arts based interventions to improve the psychosocial condition of children and their guardians in areas of crisis throughout the world.

We also seek to raise our society's awareness of conditions in these areas.

CWB-South Africa maintains a spirit of peace, joy, compassion and loving kindness in all of our endeavors.

Since 2004, CWB-South Africa has provided emotional relief to over 185,000 children and guardians with more than 450 performances and workshops throughout Southern Africa, the African continent, and the world.

Clowns Without Border South Africa is composed of clowns, acrobats, circus artists, actors, musicians, and facilitators who work together to bring laughter and emotional relief to areas of crisis around the world.

We partner with both community based organizations and larger national and international NGOs to complement existing programs for children and their guardians. Our focus is on strengthening child-to-guardian relationships within existing family structures as well as providing emotional relief from trauma.

We hope to empower communities with the means to develop a sense of wellbeing in the present and hope for the future.

For more information, please contact info@cwbsa.org, www.cwbsa.org, or +27 31 332 8141.

Suggestions for facilitating Sock Monkey exercise:

Preparation

1. Ask the participants to find a partner. They should sit in chairs facing one another.
2. Ask the guardians to close their eyes and lay their hands open in their laps.
3. Explain that you are going to place something in their hands. Something soft and safe so as not to scare them.
4. Hand out a Sock Monkey to each guardian.
5. Ask the guardians to open their eyes. Allow them the time to see the Sock Monkey and enjoy its company.
6. Now, explain that we will be modeling an activity with the Sock Monkeys that they will be doing at home with their children.
7. Ask the each pair to choose who is going to go first. That person is going to be the Child. She/he will put her/his Sock Monkey underneath his/her chair. The other person will be the Adult.

Playing

8. Introduce the Sock Monkey to your Child. Have fun with this introduction as if it were a friend that you are sharing with your Child.
9. Give the Sock Monkey to the Child. Remind the Child to be gentle with the Sock Monkey.
10. Invite your Child to play with the Sock Monkey in his/her own way. Watch what he/she does.
11. After a few minutes, call your Child back to you with the Sock Monkey.

Sharing

12. Ask your Child the following questions
13. What does your Sock Monkey like? What does your Sock Monkey not like?
14. What is your Sock Monkey's favorite thing to do?
15. What makes your Sock Monkey happy? Sad? Lonely? Angry?
16. How does your Sock Monkey know it is loved?
17. Tell a story with your child about a day in the life of the Sock Monkey from waking up in the morning to going to bed at night. It can be a fun adventure!

Reflecting

18. Spend some time reflecting as a group about this exercise.
19. Ask them what it was like to play as a child.
20. Guardians may have questions about how they will do this at home with many children. They can choose to do it with all the children all just those who are participating in the residency.
21. Review the steps. Introducing, Playing, Sharing (with questions).