



WCAIMH April Newsletter

In the age of virtual engagements we have been pleased to be able to expand the reach of our monthly talks to those outside of Cape Town and to have had the pleasure of welcoming speakers from across the country and internationally.

With permission from speakers, the WCAIMH Committee is now able to record meetings and make them available for viewing or purchasing outside the time of the live meeting. We still value the live online engagement, and would therefore like to encourage members and those wishing to attend to join our monthly meetings. All meetings take place on the **third Thursday of the month, generally between 7pm and 8:30pm.**

PEMA Talk Recording Now Available

During our March meeting we had the pleasure of hosting Dr. Dana Shai. Her talk entitled *Parental Embodied Mentalizing (PEM): Keeping Baby in Mind and Body* gave an introduction to Parental Embodied Mentalizing Assessment (PEMA™), as a lens into non-verbal risk and protective factors in parent-infant dyads. Her talk also expanded to include the impact of Covid-19 and how to provide support to dyads.



Dana Shai, Ph.D. is a psychologist and a faculty member at the Academic College Tel Aviv Yaffo, Israel, and the founding director of the Study of Early Emotional Development (SEED) Center. Dr. Shai has conducted extensive research on the concept of Parental Embodied Mentalizing, published widely and has trained practitioners in the use of PEMA across the globe. For more information about Dana's work, please visit <https://www.pemworks.org/>

The talk is now available to those who missed it. The cost of the recording is R60. Please email wcaimhza@gmail.com with a request of the recording and proof of payment.

Contact us on wcaimhza@gmail.com
Juané Voges – Chairperson Salisha Maharaj – Secretary
Kirsty Gilmour – Treasurer Dijana Mitrovic – Media and Website Development

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PEMA Training

The Parental Embodied Mentalizing Assessment (PEMA™) is a 12-point tool used to assess non-verbal risk and protective factors in parent-infant (0-2) dyads. PEMA™ is based on over a decade of empirical research in which PEM has been found to be associated with parental mental health and predict infant's security of attachment, behaviour problems, and cognitive functioning in infancy and childhood. We are excited about the prospect of virtual PEMA training being planned for South African clinicians. To this end, please consider completing our brief survey in order for us to gauge interest:

https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSePMDhHSVY1-J-BVAvNiSlZeLx3F6M0VrzqD6VyD-spb0zNvg/viewform?usp=sf_link

April Speaker

We have the pleasure in having our Chair, Dr Juané Voges speak for us this month. Juané's talk is titled "**Exploring the parental mentalizing capacity of mothers with peripartum psychosis**". The talk will be based on the findings from her recently completed PhD study which aimed to examine the parental reflective functioning of women who experienced peripartum psychosis and their infants. The experience of psychosis during pregnancy and early postpartum period is often associated with early separations between mother and infant and may contribute to difficulties in forming secure attachments. The talk will highlight the ways in which this rare, but potentially devastating experience of peripartum psychosis affects these mothers' early parenting experiences.

Juané is a senior clinical psychologist at Stikland Hospital and lecturer in Psychiatry at Stellenbosch University. Since completing her psychology studies, she has worked in community settings before moving to Ireland where she worked in a child and family unit. Her interest in infant mental health was sparked after attending Ireland's first National Infant Mental Health Conference in Cork in November 2007. Since returning to South Africa, her interest in the impact of maternal psychiatric difficulties on early attachment relationships inspired her to become involved with research on maternal mental health and she was part of the Parenting from the Inside Out project.

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Date: 15 April 2021
Time: 7pm
Platform: Zoom invitation

The talk is **free** for members: Please **confirm** via email to receive the link

Non-members are welcome to join at a cost of R60.

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We would like to kindly request that you do an EFT, and not a bank deposit. Contact us if you cannot do an EFT and we can make alternative arrangements.



April Member Highlight

This month we are excited to feature **Dr. Siobhán Sweeney!**

A great passion of mine is understanding and working with children of all ages; and from 2012, I joined a number of groups - including WCAIMH - to further develop my understanding of infancy and human development. I feel privileged to do such meaningful work and, for over a decade, I have been seeing children, adolescents and adults for psychodynamic psychotherapy. I believe individuals have an innate capacity to grow and that one can continue their developmental path with in-depth understanding, valuing vulnerabilities and nurturing strengths. As a Counselling Psychologist in private practice, I also work with under-fives, infants and parents. I

have a particular interest in parental or caregiving experiences, attachment and child development as well as psychosocial approaches in South Africa; and thus, I thoroughly enjoy the informative lecture evenings offered by WCAIMH as well as the discussions addressing contextual factors, adaptive responses and cultural awareness. With a

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background in sociology, and experience in counselling low-income, factory-employed individuals, I am interested in socio-political issues and critical reflection of psychological interventions in South African communities. I am passionate about learning and broaden my knowledge in being a member of groups such as the Cape Town Society for Psychoanalytic Psychotherapy, the Cape Town Child and Adolescent Psychotherapy Group, and the Institute for Psychodynamic Child Psychotherapy.

Most of my day comprises of clinical work but I also find psychological research and academia stimulating. I have a Master's Degree in Counselling Psychology (with distinction) at Rhodes University, a Postgraduate Diploma in Children and Adolescents Therapeutic Communication through the Institute of Psychodynamic Child Psychotherapy (under the auspices of the Tavistock Clinic in London) and, in 2020, I was awarded my PhD in Psychology from Rhodes University, titled "The precarious position of the 'good mother': A psychosocial study of maternal subjectivity of working mothers in South Africa". While I am not consulting, I enjoy writing – both creative and academic, painting and outdoor active outings, such as visits to the Bush. Inspired by our uniquely beautiful country and driven by a wish to reach those outside of the consulting room, I authored and illustrated "The Big Five Feelings and the Sneaky Bug". This freely distributed e-book, which hopes to assist caregivers and children in understanding their emotional and behavioural responses to the global pandemic, has been translated into Afrikaans, isiXhosa, isiZulu and seSepedi (<http://www.siobhansweeney.co.za/resources.html>). I have a love for sharing knowledge and delight in writing papers. Nevertheless, the academic world of presentations and papers is one I have tentatively participated in, with limited experience including paper presentations (from my infant observation of a nanny-infant dyad and my PhD research) at the 2016 SAPC Couch and Country conference, 2012 International Conference of Psychology (ICP) and the Association of Psychoanalysis of Culture and Society (APCS) 2020 conference. As I build my confidence and experience, I hope to take up more opportunities of presenting my work; this includes paper and poster presentations this year at the WAIMH, ICP and APCS virtual conferences.

WAIMH Conference

Registration for the conference is now open! Please visit https://waimh.org/page/upcoming_congress for more information and the registration process

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WAIMH2021

17th World Congress

Brisbane Australia | 22-26 June 2021

*Creating stories in Infant Mental Health:
research, recovery and regeneration*

www.waimh2021.org

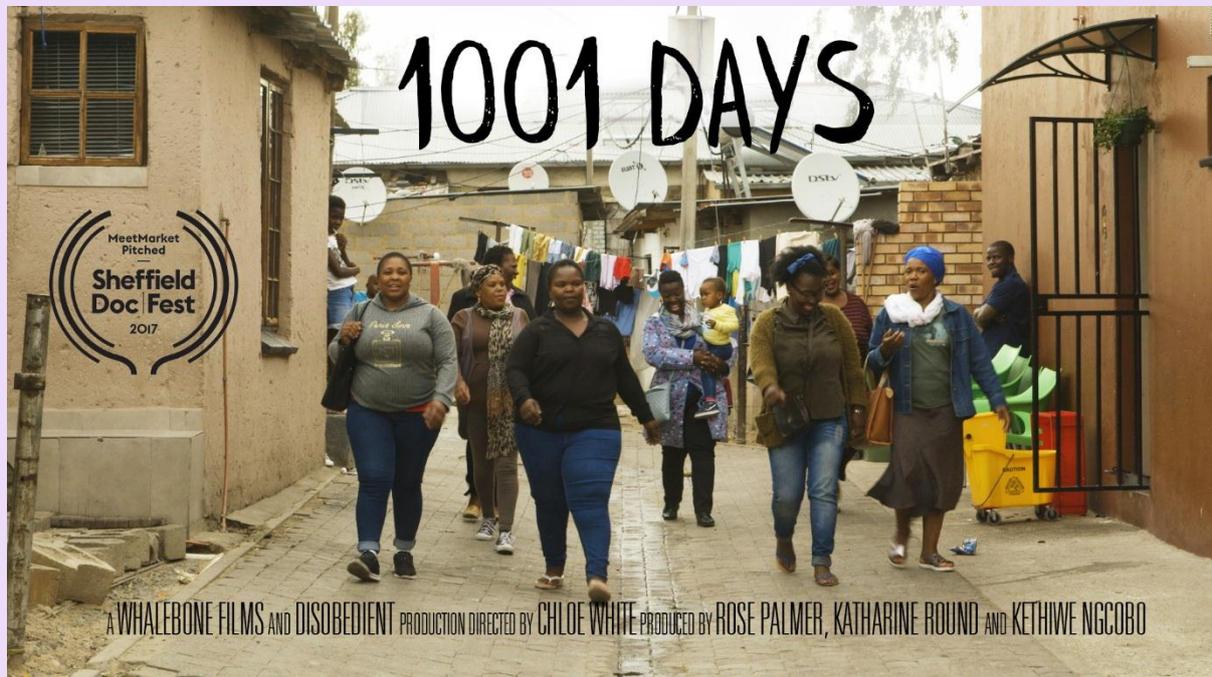
#WAIMH2021 #WAIMH #IMH

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1001 Days: A feature documentary looking for partners



By Chloe White (Director), Zikethiwe Ngcobo (Producer) and Dr Rose Palmer (Producer)

1001 Days is a feature documentary following a team of home visitors who are determined to help new mothers during the first 1001 days of their babies' lives - the most critical time in any human's life.

The Film

The home visitors are all mothers from Alexandra and work for Ububele, a charity focused on supporting infant mental health and development, particularly amongst disadvantaged groups. Each week they go from home to home through the chaotic streets of Alexandra offering emotional support to pregnant women and new mothers, who often have no one else to turn to.

Their aim is to support the relationship between new mothers and their infants. Decades of research show that during the first 1001 days the foundations of a baby's mind are being put in place and early events and relationships during this period affect the brain in ways that have lifelong consequences. Too many babies, especially those living in poorer countries, do not get the start in life they need. Focusing on food, water and security just

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isn't enough—it's been proven over and over again that supporting new mothers can help children achieve their potential.

The stories of the women in our film will bring these ideas and evidence to life. We see them there, right at the beginning, supporting new mothers who are dealing with abuse, addiction and poverty. Over three years the film captures intimate conversations between the home visitors, Zanele, Thandiwe and Khosi, and the mothers they visit, and their reflections on these visits in supervisions. Moments of hope and small victories give way to larger ones when Zanele and Thandiwe are invited to speak at the World Association of Infant Mental Health conference. This means leaving South Africa for the first time, flying halfway around the globe to Rome, and presenting their work in front of an audience of world-leading academics.

How you can help:

We have already shot all of our footage and we are planning to launch a crowdfunding campaign on Kickstarter to raise the final amount we need to finish the film. Once that is done we are determined to bring this story of hope and courage to as wide an audience as possible. And our big ambition is for the film to be used as a tool for professionals and campaigners to demonstrate the importance of the first 1001 days and of supporting new mothers and infants during this period.

We are therefore looking to build a network of individuals, groups, organizations focused on child development and child and maternal mental health who can help us in two ways:

- 1) Help us to share our crowdfunding campaign to raise the funds to complete the editing of the film and to launch and disseminate the film. We will be launching this in April 2021.
- 2) Help us to disseminate the film once it is completed, for example running a screening with your organization.

Get in touch:

We'd love to work with you so if you're interested please get in touch and we can have a chat!

Please email rose@whalebonefilms.com

Visit: www.1001daysmovie.com

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