



WAIMH September Newsletter

Greetings to our members and friends of WCAIMH,

Our speaker for our second virtual meeting was Hilary McLea, social worker with a wealth of experience in grief and trauma counselling. Her talk provided much food for thought in working with bereaved clients, while also acknowledging the impact of grief and losses in different forms when working as therapists. Hilary also provided helpful suggestions and tips on how to practice effective self-care. For members interested in watching a recording of the talk, please email us on wcaimhza@gmail.com for access to the recording.

September speaker

We are very excited to invite you to our next virtual speaker evening where **Hetty Jonker**, an infant mental health specialist and play and family psychotherapist from the Netherlands will be our guest speaker. Hetty runs a private practice and also does freelance work providing psychotherapy in mental health institutions, and is also a teacher and supervisor. Her previous experience include working in a child psychiatric center and managing a day treatment center for young children and their parents. Hetty is a narrative family therapist with a special interest in new ways of studying young children in their families.



From this perspective, she will be presenting the infant and early childhood stories of families where there is parental somatic illness. Her talk is titled: **“Creating embodied stories: babies and toddlers in families with a chronically ill parent”**. In Hetty’s own words: *“Parents come to my practice asking help for their problems with an infant, toddler or pre-schooler, while one of the parents suffers from a disease. Sometimes they link the behavior of the child to the parental illness, but most of the time they didn’t mention the illness at all in the beginning”*.

Her role as a therapist focusses on gaining an understanding and finding ways of treatment to help these families. In her work, she has brought several methods of treatment together and will introduce the treatment SPINE: a way of finding and creating a therapeutic context where different perspectives can meet each other. In her talk, she will present case material of a one and a half year old girl who refuses to leave her mother’s lap, the six year old angry boy who is presenting his fears and inner world in play, and the five year old girl with nightmares and tantrums, who is saying terrible things as well as a 4 months old baby who is persistently crying and whose parents are not able to reassure or comfort him. Special attention will be given to the illness stories of the parents about their own disease. In the talk, she will be exploring the reciprocal influence of parental physical pain, disease and illness narratives during early family development, and the occurrence of behavioral and regulation problems in young children,



which creates depth and a sense of space. It opens up new ways of telling stories. SPINE as a therapy is successful in encouraging resilience, restoring relationships and reconstructing illness narratives, using EMDR, family play psychotherapy, parental embodied mentalizing, reflection on grief, loss, acceptance and the family in the future: creating new embodied relational stories.

We hope you will be able to join us for what promises to be a very interesting talk!

Date: 17 September 2020

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 for a **cost of R60**.

Account name: WCAIMH Standard Bank, Rondebosch

Account number: 274916401, Branch code: 051001

Please use your name and surname as a reference and email proof of payment to wcaimhza@gmail.com

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.

WCAIMH treasurer

The WCAIMH committee is a small group of 4 who work on a volunteer basis to bring out the monthly newsletter, find speakers and manage funds that we receive from members. We are also excited that this year we have had an opportunity to work more on developing ideas for a new website and have an increased social media challenge.

Each portfolio is vital to the running of the association, and we would like to make an appeal to members and friends to consider applying for the vacancy of treasurer on WCAIMH executive committee. Sadly, Barbara Kantor who has for many years been our treasurer and an integral part of our association will be leaving us. The committee would like to thank Barbara for her service and wisdom over the years.

If you are interested in taking up this position, please **email** us at wcaimhza@gmail.com.

Formation of National Association for Infant mental health

The WCAIMH committee recently attended an online meeting with members of the GAIMH executive to discuss the formation of a South African Association for Infant Mental Health (ZA-AIMH). GAIMH put forward the following proposals for consideration:

- To incorporate GAIMH-SA and WCAIMH into one national association (ZA-AIMH). The reasons for this proposal provided were:

Email: wcaimhza@gmail.com Website: www.infantmentalhealth.co.za Facebook group:



- To start a third organisation would be tedious as both have already done valuable ground work. It would be cumbersome to have 3 executives, 3 websites, 3 bank accounts etc.
- GAIMH proposed that they would change their name to ZA-AIMH, as they already have NPO and PBO status, which is a lengthy and difficult process to complete.
- There would be the subcommittees for provinces who want them and WCAIMH would then become one of the subcommittees of ZA-AIMH.
- The proposal includes the following:
 - Each sub-committee would decide on their individual needs and retain autonomy in decision making around raising and managing funds for those needs.
 - Each Sub-committee would make its own decisions about what happens in their own province, and charge members accordingly. This allows for main differences between the two associations to continue to run and for each sub-committee to retain some of their autonomy in how they operate, as well as to share resources and information across provinces
 - The national committee will not charge membership. However, subcommittees may charge an annual fee if there are additional benefits. It is envisioned that members of the Western Cape subcommittee will still be charged a membership fee for the monthly CPD accredited talks. Another possibility that is being explored is for the talks to be offered nationally if they are hosted online.
 - Create one new and updated website for ZA-AIMH. WCAIMH has researched and started work on upgrading their website, which can be incorporated into the umbrella organisation.
 - Individuals in provinces without a provincial sub-committee would be able to make use of the ZA-AIMH website for resources.
 - GAIMH is busy with a campaign to raise awareness for PND, which may serve as good PR for ZA-AIMH. A resource list, following the PND campaign, will be made available on the ZA-AIMH website.
- A national association would need a combined constitution and one member from each committee will be tasked to consider a combined constitution.

We would like to hear your feedback regarding these proposals. We have set up a survey and we request that you complete your feedback by the **30th of September 2020**. To complete the survey, please follow this link: <https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/9B7SFG9>

We wish to thank you in advance for your willingness to engage with us regarding the way forward and we look forward to your input and feedback. We anticipate that we will be able to provide feedback on the survey and additional discussions with GAIMH at our October meeting.

Upcoming events

Dr Ella Brent is presenting a webinar titled “**A Developmental Model of Mentalising**” on Zoom on the **18th of September from 9:00 to 12:30**. She will explore the origins of mentalisation, what it is and why it is so important. This model offers a framework within which to understand what can go wrong within attachment relationships, the impact on mentalising capacity, and also identify areas of focus for intervention and treatment. This developmental backdrop will be linked to presenting problems in clinical work. The three hour webinar includes notes and costs



R800, with 3 General level CPD points available. For more details and to register, their contact details are: 010 350 0350 or info@thedayclinic.co.za.

Keep in touch

We welcome any feedback or suggestions - if you would like to get in touch, here are our contact details:

Email: wcaimhza@gmail.com

Website: www.infantmentalhealth.co.za

Facebook group: 