



WCAIMH September Newsletter

Dear members and friends of WCAIMH,

With the advent of Spring, there seems to be increasing levels of optimism in our country, sparked by increased vaccination rates and the decline of the third wave. During this time, we hope that you will also find yourself experiencing renewed vigour and joy in your work and home lives. Our August meeting was saw a fascinating presentation by Kerry Brown about her work at Great Ormond Street Hospital with Arabic fathers who support their infants who required surgery while separated from the mothers. Her colleague, Saya Habib, an experienced translator also joined the meeting and shared her experiences of assisting cross-cultural understanding between hospital staff and families. If you were unable to attend the meeting and am interested in viewing a recording of the meeting, please let us know and we can send you a link.

September meeting

We are excited to announce our next speaker, **Dr Siobhán Sweeney**, a long-time WCAIMH member who will be presenting findings from her PhD study. Her talk is titled: **The 'good mother' construct: Informing parent-infant interventions in South Africa**. Siobhán will present findings from her psychosocial study which investigates the maternal subjectivities of mothers - living in scarcely-resourced Cape Town communities in South Africa - returning to work after maternity leave. Drawing from discourse analysis and psychoanalysis, the study explores how and why maternal subjectivity is constructed discursively and defensively in talk – how social meanings along with intrapsychic dynamics in an intersubjective encounter shape maternal experience. The thesis claims these particular mothers predominately employ an



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instrumental mothering discourse. The traditional subject position of the intensive mother – which is typically assumed to be the ‘good mother’ – is not a position available to these mothers due to their social circumstances and working role. To be seen positively in spite of their working role, mothers reconstruct the ‘good mother’ as one who mothers instrumentally. This ‘good mother’ position, however, is a precarious position that both mothers and researcher employ to defend against feelings as well as to deny (maternal) ambivalence in a problematic social system. Reflecting on the implications of these findings in this presentation, Siobhán will identify and discuss how the key findings and the process of this research may inform psychoanalytically informed parent-interventions in scarcely resourced communities in South Africa.

Siobhán is a Counselling Psychologist practicing privately in Cape Town, offering parent-infant psychotherapy and psychoanalytically-informed psychotherapy for children, adolescents and adults. In 2010, she obtained her Master’s Degree in Counselling Psychology (with distinction) and in 2016 received 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, 2016). She was awarded her 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” in 2020; and presented content and findings from her PhD at the International Conference of Psychology in 2012 and 2021, the Association of Psychoanalysis of Culture and Society 2020 conference and the 2021 World Association of Infant Mental Health. Her interests include parental or caregiver experiences, attachment and child development as well as psychosocial approaches and critical reflection of psychological interventions in South African communities. With a background in sociology, Siobhán is interested in socio-political issues and discussions addressing contextual factors, adaptive responses and cultural awareness; and her previous work experience includes counselling in community contexts and work environments in the Eastern Cape and Western Cape in South Africa.

Date: 16 September 2021

Time: 7pm

Platform: Zoom invitation

The session is **free** for members who will receive the link to the meeting via email.

Non-members are welcome to join at 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.

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September member highlight

This month, we are pleased to highlight past committee member, Mush Perrins! Below, Mush shares some information about her work and herself in her own words.



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activities and interests

Life in all forms

Thank you so much for this honour.

I remember the first time I attended the WCAIMH meetings in a quest to learn more about infant mental health; I was in awe and a bit star struck with the highly respected professionals present. We were asked to introduce ourselves, and the warm, kind and respectful ambiance made me feel truly welcome in this amazing family of professionals. This group has continued to expand my knowledge, insight and clinical reasoning, and my clients of all ages, I feel, have truly benefitted.

I am fascinated with this planet and all that it encompasses. Since I can remember, I was particularly captivated with babies, children and development. An interest in neuroscience and helping people drove me towards the allied health professional field, and I fell into occupational therapy by accident. Funny how the universe works, as this was the “Just right fit” for me. It matched my creative, out-of-the-box thinking, being busy and curious nature perfectly.

On starting my master’s journey, I revisited occupation and the history of the development of occupational therapy. Plato advocated that being involved in purposeful activities was important for well-being, which is the essence of occupational therapy. Occupational therapy has its developmental roots firmly in psychiatry, and now has many branches of specialisation. I like to have many tools in my toolbox, as people are unique, dynamic and evolving beings. As Forrest Gump said: “Life is like a box of chocolates; you never know what you are going to get.”

I studied my honours degree at UCT and started working as the only occupational therapist at the G. F. Jooste Hospital in Mannenberg, involved in adult neurology and rehabilitation, another passion of mine. The value of home-visits was reinforced after a brief stint at two adult

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People, especially family

Stories in any format

Creative activities

Travel

Food

[Philosophy in Life](#)

Have one creative thought a day

Practice random acts of kindness

rehabilitation hospitals in London, UK. After three years in adult rehabilitation, (which included a six-month solo backpacking trip around Europe where I met my future Canadian husband), I solidified that working in paediatrics was the direction I needed to continue in and luckily got to work for 14+ years at the Red Cross War Memorial Children's Hospital. I worked through the ranks and became head of the department. Quite different to the career of selling soap in a supermarket that my high school guidance teacher recommended I follow after looking at my IQ and aptitude test results. During this time period, I loved lecturing, supervising and mentoring colleagues, which has been another resonating string in my professional bow. On finding that I missed more hands-on rather than management work, my work journey continued into a home-based private practice in paediatrics for the past 23 years. Prior to Covid-19, I loved home-based assessments, as one picture does say a thousand words. Another benefit of home visits is that I am the only unusual thing the baby or child has to deal with, compared to being assessed in a strange place.

The journey of being a partner and co-parenting two amazing children, was another huge, joyful and at times challenging learning curve. Once the offspring were flying away on their own journeys, the finances and time were available to pursue a master's degree in occupational therapy. This was completed in April 2021; the thesis title being *Exploring the use of play in health promotion: Perspectives originating from the continent of Africa*.

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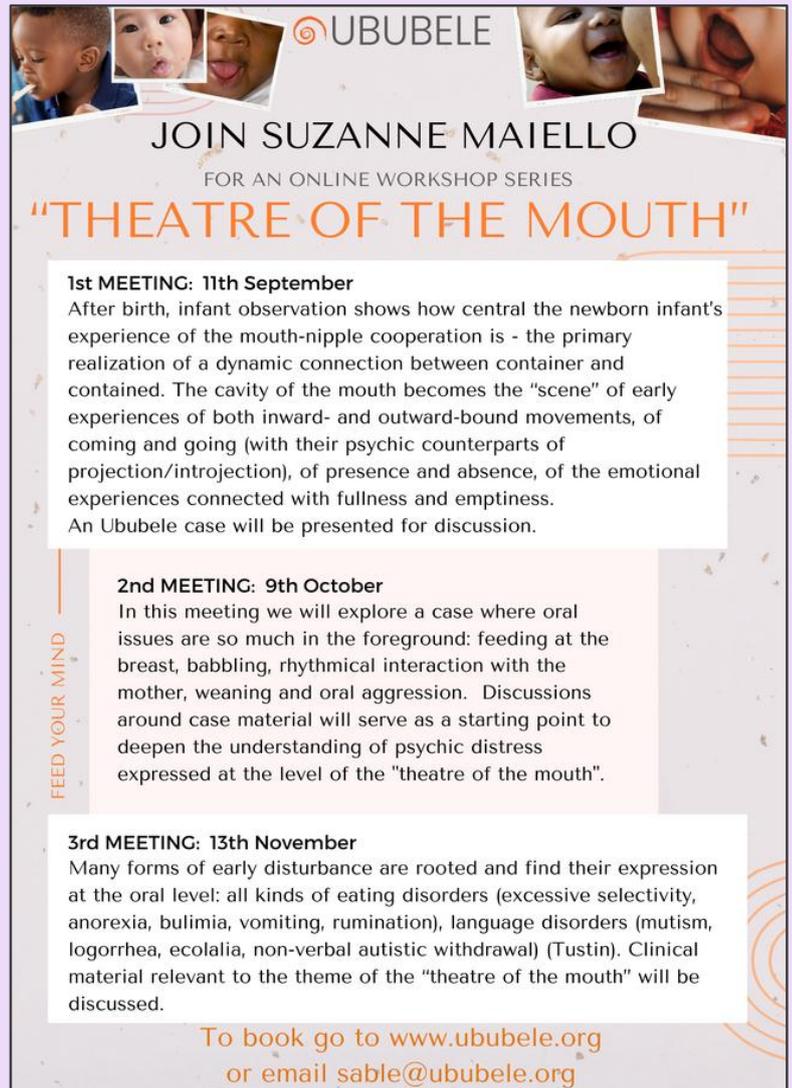
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Upcoming Events

Suzanne Maiello Workshop Series

Ububele will be hosting an exciting workshop series of three events with world-renowned psychoanalyst and psychoanalytic child psychotherapist, **Susan Maiello**, titled **“Theatre of the Mouth”**. Join Susan Maiello online on the 2nd Saturday of the month from September to November from 9h00 to 11h00 on 11/09/2021, 09/10/2021 and 13/11/2021. The series will focus on oral issues as the 'scene' of early experience. Participants will have the opportunity to engage with Suzanne around clinical material on both a theoretical and technical level. For more information and to book tickets, please follow this link: [Suzanne Maiello](#)



UBUBELE

JOIN SUZANNE MAIELLO
FOR AN ONLINE WORKSHOP SERIES
“THEATRE OF THE MOUTH”

1st MEETING: 11th September
After birth, infant observation shows how central the newborn infant's experience of the mouth-nipple cooperation is - the primary realization of a dynamic connection between container and contained. The cavity of the mouth becomes the “scene” of early experiences of both inward- and outward-bound movements, of coming and going (with their psychic counterparts of projection/introjection), of presence and absence, of the emotional experiences connected with fullness and emptiness.
An Ububele case will be presented for discussion.

2nd MEETING: 9th October
In this meeting we will explore a case where oral issues are so much in the foreground: feeding at the breast, babbling, rhythmical interaction with the mother, weaning and oral aggression. Discussions around case material will serve as a starting point to deepen the understanding of psychic distress expressed at the level of the “theatre of the mouth”.

3rd MEETING: 13th November
Many forms of early disturbance are rooted and find their expression at the oral level: all kinds of eating disorders (excessive selectivity, anorexia, bulimia, vomiting, rumination), language disorders (mutism, logorrhea, ecolalia, non-verbal autistic withdrawal) (Tustin). Clinical material relevant to the theme of the “theatre of the mouth” will be discussed.

FEED YOUR MIND

To book go to www.ububele.org
or email sable@ububele.org

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1st Marcé Africa Maternal Mental Health Conference

The Marcé Society for Perinatal Mental Health is an international, interdisciplinary organization dedicated to supporting research and assistance surrounding prenatal and postpartum mental health for mothers, fathers and their babies. The newly established Africa chapter of the society will be hosting a conference on **Thursday 16 September 2021**. Registration is free for any health care provider with an interest in Perinatal Mental Health.



The 1st **Marcé Africa Maternal Mental Health Africa Conference**

Free Virtual Conference

Thursday, 16th September 2021
17h00pm – 20h00pm: Central African Time

#TheMAMAconference
2021

The International Marcé Society
for Perinatal
Mental Health

For any further information
please contact:
Sonja du Plessis on e-mail
sonja@londocor.co.za or cell:
+27 82 455 7853

3 CPD points

To register, click here: <https://forms.gle/CeNJxZyCGyHa7xSL7>

You will receive a zoom link and further instructions from the congress secretariat.

POPIA

The Protection of Personal Information Act, 4 of 2013 came into operation from 1 July 2021. In order to comply we need your permission to keep you on our email database in order to send out newsletters which include details of our monthly talks and information or resources pertaining specifically to Infant Mental Health. We endeavour to limit our email communication to a maximum of two emails per month.

WCAIMH also makes use of Google Services for dissemination and storage of information. This is password protected and only committee members have access to it.

IMPORTANT - Please reply to wcaimhza@gmail.com informing us if you wish to STOP receiving monthly newsletters or any further communication from WCAIMH. If we do not receive communication to remove your email from our database we infer consent to remain on the WCAIMH database.

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Membership

The annual fee to become a member of WCAIMH remains **R375**. Membership allows you access to all 10 talks throughout the year. The talks take place on the third Thursday of the month and 1 CPD point is earned for each talk attended. Membership also allows for active engagement with the process of appointing a WCAIMH committee, decisions taken by the association and ultimately an affiliation to the World Association of Infant Mental Health. We are hoping that many of you renew your membership this year and that we gain many new more members to allow us to bring you stimulating talks and provide members with new platforms to access resources and information.

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Keep in Touch

We welcome any feedback or suggestions. If there are specific topics of interest that you would like us to pursue for a speaker evening, or if you would like to nominate yourself or a colleague for our member highlight section, please also get in touch. Our contact details are:

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

Facebook group:  Western Cape Association of Infant Mental Health