

PsySSA's 30th Anniversary

# ANNUAL PSYCHOLOGY CONGRESS



10th PAPU Anniversary Congress



congress  
ABSTRACTS

**Wednesday, 09 October 2024**

**Paper Presentations: Assessment and Evaluation**

**Chair: Fourie J**

**08:00 – 10:00**

**Thandeki H, Tladi L, Cromhout A, Mudau T, Wissing M, Swart R & Schutte L.**

**Psychometric properties of Setswana and isiXhosa versions of the PHQ-9, GAD-7, and K6 amongst South African older adults**

Psychometrically sound local translations of screening measures for common mental health challenges such as depression, anxiety, and psychological distress are important for contextually appropriate research and practice. The aim of this study was to investigate the factorial, convergent and discriminant validity of the Patient Health Questionnaire-9 (PHQ-9), Generalized Anxiety Disorder scale-7 (GAD-7), and Kessler Psychological Distress scale-6 (K6) amongst Setswana ( $n = 586$ ; female = 419, male = 166; mean age = 64,07; SD age = 8,155) and isiXhosa ( $n = 408$ ; female = 336; male 72; mean age = 64; SD age = 9.741) speaking older adults from South Africa. The measures were translated from English into Setswana and isiXhosa using a research committee approach. Confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) was applied to the PHQ-9, GAD-7, and K6 to determine factorial validity. Correlations among the three measures as well as with selected well-being measures were calculated to investigate convergent and discriminant validity. For all scales, a one factor structure, as well as convergent and discriminant validity were supported. The scales show promise for use in the current samples, pointing towards their possible utility across cultures.

*Correspondence: Ms. Hloni Thandeki, [Hloni.Thandeki@nwu.ac.za](mailto:Hloni.Thandeki@nwu.ac.za)*

**De Beer M. Psychological test administration in different languages – opportunities and challenges**

In a multicultural and multilingual country such as South Africa with 12 official languages (11 spoken languages and sign language), the task of having psychological tests available in all the official languages is a challenging one. Traditionally, the proposed way to ensure accurate and practically useful translations of tests and test instructions has relied on a forward and backward translation processes. More recently, some changes have been recommended from a practical perspective to incorporate persons other than formal accredited translators into the process to allow, in addition to the strict linguistic requirements, for practical aspects to also be considered. Changes in translation processes for psychological assessment procedures over time will be discussed. Practical challenges will be highlighted with reference to empirical research conducted in the South African context. *Correspondence: Prof. Marie de Beer, [marie@mminitiatives.com](mailto:marie@mminitiatives.com)*

**Clayton A & Fourie J. Updating the psychometric properties of the SSAIS-R cognitive assessment for children**

The Senior South African Individual Scales - Revised (SSAIS-R) serves as a cognitive assessment tool for children aged between seven and 16, widely utilised by psychologists during psychoeducational assessments. When it was published, a dual-factor structure comprising verbal and non-verbal intelligence was described, along with the reliability of the test. Since its publication in 1991, the psychometric properties of the SSAIS-R have remained unchanged, despite best practices mandating periodic updates to the psychometric properties of tests to ensure that these properties are reflective of the population and evolving educational paradigms. Critics of the SSAIS-R underscore its outdated sample representation, which inadequately reflects the diverse cultural and linguistic landscape. This study aims to update the psychometric understanding of the SSAIS-R using a contemporary data set. Employing

the Spearman-Brown Split-half method, the study assessed the internal consistency of individual subtests. Factor analysis was conducted to determine the underlying structure of the tool, followed by Rasch modeling to confirm validity and optimise the sequence of subtest items. Updating the psychometric properties of the SSAIS-R using contemporary data allows psychologists to rely more fully on cognitive profiles obtained for children. This update facilitates accurate diagnosis and effective remediation strategies in alignment with evolving educational standards. *Correspondence: Ms. Athena Clayton, [athenac@uj.ac.za](mailto:athenac@uj.ac.za)*

### **Naude K. To unscramble the lines: the challenge of using IQ scores in an educational setting**

The purpose is to raise awareness - and to initiate conversations - amongst psychologists pertaining reference to intellectual disability in reports for juveniles. The rationale is to prevent discrimination against- or exclusion of learners, confusion amongst professionals and a possible professional image of incompetency. The concept of intelligence quotient (IQ) and its measurement has evolved since its first introduction to identify children who might need special assistance in school. Psychologists from most categories are allowed to conduct IQ tests and write reports, according to training provided by Universities and Professional Boards. An Inclusive Education system, promulgated by legislation in South Africa, provide schools designated for children experiencing barriers to learning in traditional academic settings - described as schools for learners who are *mildly/moderately-, severely- or profoundly intellectually disabled* using descriptive criteria, rather than just IQ scores for admission. These categories have different criteria as the DSM-V terms *mild, moderate, severe and profound intellectual disability*. Psychologists rely on the DSM-V description to recommend the child for placement in a

specific school - without realising the difference. Ideally a description of intellectual functioning categories should be accepted and provided on the highest levels by the Department of Health, Department of Education as well as the Profession of Psychology. *Correspondence: Mr. Karien Naude, [karienaude58@gmail.com](mailto:karienaude58@gmail.com)*

### **Chetty J, Ismail G, Taliep N, James S & Gwadiso X. Assessing and evaluating community coalitions and networks: a case study of the Local Network of Care (LNOC).**

The Local Network of Care (LNOC) was established as a collaborative force that aims to address social issues permeating vulnerable communities in the Helderberg region, Western Cape. This compassionate coalition consists of multi-sectoral, multi-skilled social actors representing various organisations, that strive towards social justice and addressing various public health challenges. To assess the effectiveness of the LNOC in achieving its short- and long-term goals, a strengths-based evaluation is being pursued. Using a cross-sectional survey design, the study aims to comprehensively examine the impact, efficiency, and overall success of the LNOC. Surveys will be administered to all LNOC members in an online format, and questions will be crafted to gain insight into goal achievement, stakeholder engagement, collaboration, partnerships, resource utilisation, resource sharing, communication, and outcomes of the LNOC. The survey data will then be analysed using statistical testing. Ultimately, the LNOC evaluation envisions optimising network functioning and building organisational capacity to facilitate transformative change and healing in vulnerable communities. *Correspondence: Miss. Jenna Chetty, [chettyjenna@gmail.com](mailto:chettyjenna@gmail.com)*

### **Fourie J & Mithal P. A collaborative psychoeducational assessment framework to support children presenting with severe intellectual disabilities**

This study explored psychometric tools for Educational Psychologists to use when assessing the cognitive and adaptive functioning of children living with severe intellectual disabilities. Psychometric assessments tend to inaccurately profile the strengths and deficits of these children as they have numerous verbal and non-verbal shortfalls. Using a generic research design, data were collected at special care centres from children's medical files (n=12). Semi-structured interviews were conducted with parents, caregivers, therapists, and education specialists. The findings reveal the value of gathering pertinent information from significant people in the child's life, preferably in their home language, and using culture-free, non-linguistics psychometric methods. The study presents a psycho-educational assessment framework that can be tailored to each child's unique condition and environmental context. The process calls on inputs from the multi-disciplinary team of professionals as they work collaboratively to support each child. This enhances the validity and reliability of the diagnostic process, leading to more accurate differential categorisation of the child's intellectual profile and adaptive functioning. Such comprehensive assessment batteries lead to goal-directed, individualised remedial plans, for the caregivers and teachers at the special care centres. This customised child-friendly approach could enhance the educational outcomes and quality of life for these children. *Correspondence: Dr Jean Fourie, [jeanf@uj.ac.za](mailto:jeanf@uj.ac.za)*

**Wednesday, 09 October 2024**

**Symposium: Clinical Psychology**

**Chair: Lockhat R**

**08:00 – 10:00**

**BrainWorking Recursive Therapy:  
Transforming Minds: From Fear to Freedom  
with BWRT. Witness the Power of Rapid  
Change using BWRT.**

Join us for an enlightening symposium on the groundbreaking application of BrainWorking Recursive Therapy (BWRT) in various clinical contexts. The symposium will feature five comprehensive presentations showcasing the efficacy of BWRT. The first presentation will showcase the rapid alleviation of Katsaridaphobia (cockroach phobia) in a single session, supported by compelling video material documenting the transformative process. Other presentations will explore BWRT's potential in addressing complex issues such as trauma and violence, with captivating case studies illustrating interventions tailored for underprivileged communities and public personalities coping with trauma and grief. Additionally, the symposium will delve into lesser-known applications of BWRT, including its effectiveness in treating Trichotillomania and supporting students in university centers for student support services. A comprehensive case study will also highlight BWRT's effectiveness in navigating grief. Through engaging presentations and discussions, this symposium promises to shed light on BWRT's transformative potential in addressing various psychological challenges. Whether you're a seasoned practitioner, researcher, or curious observer, join us in celebrating BWRT's ability to break barriers and foster holistic well-being.

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**Lockhat R. The use of BWRT to treat  
Katsaridaphobia (cockroach phobia) in one  
session**

This presentation focuses on a video case study of the use of a single BWRT session to treat Katsaridaphobia with one week and one month follow up. The presentation demonstrates the comprehensive and long

lasting effect of BWRT on the client's life.

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**Permall L. Shifting paradigms: The use of BWRT to transform student mental health and wellness at a University centre for student support services**

At the University of the Western Cape's CSSS the demand for counselling services has exceeded capacity, necessitating innovative strategies to effectively meet student mental health needs. This presentation focuses on the integration of BWRT into CSSS as a transformative intervention modality. The presentation will focus on practical examples on how BWRT has substantially improved various client presentations. Notably, BWRT requires fewer sessions allowing for more efficient resolution of student issues. Importantly, BWRT offers a distinct advantage by avoiding the protracted distress that students experience. BWRT minimises the impact of negative emotions on academic performance. *Correspondence: Mrs Laetitia Permall, [lpermall@uwc.ac.za](mailto:lpermall@uwc.ac.za)*

**Enoch S. "My Trichotillomania Story"**

CK works in 79 partner schools and in 2023 consulted with 5993 therapy clients including learners and clients. BWRT South Africa was approached to devise a specialised BWRT training programme for our Social Workers and Registered Counsellors. This presentation will focus on the type of therapy cases BWRT was used for. Our results show that equipping our counsellors with BWRT training has the potential to revolutionise the therapeutic process with positive results. *Correspondence: Dr Sharon Enoch, [drsharondenoch@gmail.com](mailto:drsharondenoch@gmail.com)*

**Lockhat R. Community Keepers (CK): The use of BWRT by an award winning NGO treating trauma in underprivileged schools**

A case presentation of a 47 year old female plagued by chronic trichotillomania for 30 years. She suffered severe emotional and psychological distress that impacted every area of her functioning, as well as her family. After 3 sessions of BWRT Level 1 she was completely released of the overwhelming urge to pull out her hair. She is currently enjoying the freedom from a debilitating disorder that held her captive for so long.

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**den Hollander D. A Future Written in the Stars: A Level One BWRT Intervention with a Client suffering from Trauma and Complicated Grief.**

A young woman who lost her family on a media publicised motor vehicle collision within her final year of her undergraduate degree suffered severe loss and traumatisation, resulting in complicated bereavement. Using BWRT Grief Protocol and Level One work as intervention of choice, this case study focuses on how through six sessions, she was able to resolve her symptoms, complete her studies, and find meaning and purpose moving forward.

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**Wednesday, 09 October 2024**

**Paper Presentations: Sexuality**

**Chair: Khan M**

**08:00 – 10:00**

**Omar S, Zulu P, Errington S & Selfe Z. Unveiling a hidden reality: exploring learner exposure to pornography**

The accessibility of pornography in the digital age has sparked concerns about its potential impact on the well-being of children and

adolescents, particularly in relation to the rising number of child-on-child abuse cases. This presentation delves into the issue of learner exposure to pornography, drawing on two recent surveys of 1773 high school learners, conducted by the Teddy Bear Foundation. The two surveys included quantitative and qualitative questions that explored the nature and frequency of pornography exposure, as well as children's motivations to access pornography and their experiences of the exposure. The findings emphasise the need for comprehensive sexuality education programmes that address digital literacy and healthy online behaviour. They also serve as a crucial call to action to empower learners to navigate the complexities of the online world.  
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**Khan M & Ebrahim S. The marital sexual experiences of South African Muslim wives of Indian descent: interpretative phenomenological analysis**

This article explores South African Muslim Indian wives' sexuality in monogamous marriages, analyzing the effect of religious teachings and cultural norms on sexual experiences using hermeneutic phenomenology. The abrupt shift from religious norms that promote chastity to the expectation of sexual activity upon marriage, together with variations in desire and sexual preferences remain relatively underexplored within Muslim marriages. Under analysis is the dynamic between intimacy, desire, and shame. Drawing on empirical research, results highlight emotional and psychological challenges faced by Muslim women during marital sexual initiation due to their interpretations of religious teachings and limited sex education. Muslim wives experience sexual desire discrepancy, negatively impacting their mental health and self-esteem. There is the invocation of gendered sexual conceptions perpetuated by

cultural conditioning which are also negotiated and subverted. Despite challenges, transformative potential in marital relationships is indicated through agentival capacity, understanding, communication, and mutual sexual satisfaction. Correspondence: Ms. Maryam Khan,  
[k.maryam7869@gmail.com](mailto:k.maryam7869@gmail.com)

**Olaseni A, Mathebula TT, Venter Z & Nel J. A study of lived experiences of sexually and gender-diverse individuals in South Africa and Nigeria**

The overall well-being and lived experiences of sexually and gender-diverse persons and communities are increasingly recognised as public health concerns, internationally, but related understandings are seriously lacking in Africa. Accordingly, the study aims to explore and understand the lived experiences of sexually and gender-diverse persons and communities in South Africa and Nigeria focusing on identifying moderators associated with wellbeing. This study aims to gather data from 250 sexually and/ or gender-diverse individuals currently living in South Africa and Nigeria, respectively (N = 500 individuals) utilising purposive sampling. In South Africa, participants will be recruited through various LGBTQ+ organisations and community mailing lists, social media sites (e.g., Facebook), and Google forms. Interested participants will complete the informed consent, and a screening survey to determine their eligibility. Eligible participants will be directed to the research questionnaire, which is designed to take 45 minutes to complete. Data will be analysed using Qualtrics. Outcomes of the study shall contribute to the body of knowledge by bringing to the foreknowledge of the psychological and social experiences of sexually and gender-diverse persons and communities. Recommendations to enhance the lived experiences of LGBTQ+ individuals living in South Africa and Nigeria will be presented. *Correspondence: Mr. Abayomi Olaseni,* [olaseao@unisa.ac.za](mailto:olaseao@unisa.ac.za)

**Khan M & Ngidi ND. Understandings of Islamic teachings on sexuality: an interpretative phenomenological analysis of the experiences of married South African Muslim women of Indian descent**

This study explores how South African Indian Muslim wives interpret Islamic teachings on sexuality. Situated within an interpretative phenomenological paradigm, semi-structured interviews were conducted with twelve participants to explore the paradox of sex education and the role of non-Islamic sources, religious books, and religious authorities in shaping perceptions. Using Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis, findings indicate that Muslim wives know their sexual rights and challenge patriarchal interpretations by referencing Prophet Muhammad's conduct with his wives. Reciprocal satisfaction is emphasized, although disparities arising from cultural influences are acknowledged. Sexuality and spirituality are perceived as inextricably linked. Explicit guidance is needed on ambiguous elements of sexual practices within Islamic teachings and Islamic sex education, untainted by culture.

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**Wednesday, 09 October 2024**

**Paper Presentations: African Psychology**

**Chair: Plaatjie Q**

**08:00 – 10:00**

**Plaatjie Q. Exploring Students' understandings of a decolonised psychology curriculum at a South African university**

Discussions about decolonisation of the curriculum resurfaced after the #FeesMustFall movement in South African universities. Despite its long history, there's little movement in its implementation.

Decolonisation is regaining popularity in academia; however little room is afforded to students to express their understanding of what the decolonisation of the curriculum entails. This was the identified gap in the literature. Thus, the primary aim of this research project was to explore students understanding of a decolonised Psychology curriculum in South Africa. The study's objectives were to explore what current understandings of decoloniality exist amongst Psychology students; this included identifying what opportunities are provided for students to engage with the process of decolonising the curriculum to make it more applicable in the South African context. Through a qualitative exploratory research design, this study sought to gather insights from undergraduate and post-graduate Psychology students. Participants were purposively sampled, and two focus group discussions consisting of 6 postgraduate and 5 undergraduate students were facilitated. The study received ethics approval, adhered to good ethical principles, and was conducted with permission from the university's registrar. Thematic content analysis was used following Braun and Clarke's (2013) analytical steps. Several themes emerged which included students' interpretations of decolonisation, Afrocentric pedagogy, power structures and individual and institutional interventions. *Correspondence: Mr. Qhawe Plaatjie, [q.plaatjie@gmail.com](mailto:q.plaatjie@gmail.com)*

**Plaatjie Q. Epistemic decolonisation through African psychology: a novel approach to psychobiographical methodology**

The integration of African Psychology with psychobiography presents a novel and decolonial approach to psychobiographical research, aiming to enrich the understanding of individual life histories within the broader socio-cultural and historical contexts of Africa. African Psychology, grounded in the continent's diverse cultural, spiritual, and communal norms, offers a unique perspective

on human behaviour and mental processes. It emphasises the interconnectedness of people with their ancestors, communities, and the natural environment, challenging the often-individualistic focus of Western psychology (Nwoye, 2015). Psychobiography, as a methodological approach, focuses on the detailed study of individual lives within their historical and cultural contexts, aiming to uncover the psychological forces that shape significant life events and achievements (McAdams, 2013). By merging African Psychology with psychobiography, researchers can adopt a decolonial stance that respects and incorporates indigenous knowledge systems and lived experiences. This integration allows for a more holistic and culturally relevant understanding of individuals and psychological phenomena in the African context. This approach would also aid in moving away from Eurocentric models that may not fully capture the complexities of African identities and experiences (Ratele, 2017). This decolonial approach not only enriches psychological research by broadening its epistemological and methodological bases but also empowers African communities by valuing and prioritising their voices and perspectives. *Correspondence: Mr. Qhawe Plaatjie, [q.plaatjie@gmail.com](mailto:q.plaatjie@gmail.com)*

**Mamutse S, Basadien T, Rinquest N & Ismail Z. Towards transformative tutoring: integrating decolonial frameworks, critical community psychology, and soft skills in psychology education.**

It is critical to transform academic tutoring practices in psychology education by incorporating decolonial frameworks, critical community psychology, and "soft skills". The current disparity between the acknowledged importance of such transformative practices and the dominant emphasis on academic support requires attention. Drawing on a narrative synthesis of relevant literature and insights from psychology tutors, this

presentation aims to investigate the limitations of current tutoring approaches and assesses the potential for improvement through the incorporation of "soft skills" aligned with the critical agenda. Firstly, the analysis reveals a widespread emphasis on academic support in tutoring, which frequently overlooks opportunities to foster critical thinking and engagement with social justice issues. Second, there is a tendency to prioritise discipline specific content and memorisation over critical thinking and important "soft skills". Finally, the imbalance may result in a mismatch between content or discipline specific knowledge and the "soft skills" required to engage critically with real-world challenges such as global inequality and conflict. In conclusion, this presentation emphasises the critical need for a paradigm shift in tutoring practices in psychology education. By combining decolonial frameworks, critical community psychology, and "soft skills", tutors can better prepare students to navigate the complexities of global challenges and actively participate in social justice initiatives. *Correspondence: Ms. Sihle Mamutse, [sihletafara@gmail.com](mailto:sihletafara@gmail.com)*

**Plaatjie Q & Knight Z. The socio-cultural context as meaning making and the importance of theory selection in terms of psychobiographical research: the case example of Miriam Makeba**

Psychobiography is study of an individual's life and experiences through established psychological theories within a socio-cultural-historical context. Using such theories, psychological interpretation is made concerning the development of the individual across the lifespan so as to understand the development of personality. The first aim of this study was to psychologically reconstruct the life of Miriam Makeba using Black feminist theory and positive psychology. Within this aim, the sub-goal was to highlight the value of the socio-cultural context as a process of meaning making. The second aim of this study

sought to use the psychobiography of Makeba to showcase the importance of the selection of suitable psychological theories so as to obtain a rich, in-depth understanding of her life within socio-cultural milieu. It was suggested that this suitability implied that psychological theories utilized should make sense of, or account, for all levels of experiences, including Black experience. The researchers applied a qualitative methodological approach to the study which is rooted in a social constructivist paradigm. We used the principle of prototypical themes and identifiers of salience, common to psychobiography, as a way to collect and analyze the data collected on her life. *Correspondence: Mr. Qhawe Plaatjie, [q.plaatjie@gmail.com](mailto:q.plaatjie@gmail.com)*

**Ezenwa M.O. Psychology in Africa: Quo Vadis; The struggle for identity**

Identity search and recognition has been acknowledged as an important aspect of the human person that nurtures self-acceptance, positive self-concept, meaning in life, and overall development. Individuals with positive self-identity are likely to be proud of their place of birth, childhood, parents, colour, race, occupation and nationality. Erickson (1963) identified identity crisis as a developmental milestone that the unfolding adolescent must resolve without which the person develops role diffusion. Key components of identity may include for the individual, who I am, my attitude to the cultural values, language, music, culture cuisines, history and the social system. Just as individuals, nations also seek and struggle for identity. With colonisation and globalisation, more economically and technologically developed nations push their values upon less advantaged ones, distorting and sometimes condemning their world views, value systems and normal development. In this sense, the discipline of psychology is not an exception. It is not clear for instance if psychology as taught and studied in contemporary Africa

largely reflects African realities, has sufficient local content that addresses the unique problems of the African people or is it a western creation that assumes universality of what is western? Given the foregoing, this position paper examines, using sample cases, the current situation of psychology in Africa in terms of its capacity to address local problems. It proposes the use of culturally relevant approaches in the study of the African people including their concept of health especially mental health and the need to identify and amplify African realities if psychology must be useful and contribute to African development. *Correspondence: Dr Michael Onyeka Ezenwa, [mo.ezenwa@unizik.edu.ng](mailto:mo.ezenwa@unizik.edu.ng)*

**Wednesday, 09 October 2024**

**Invited Symposium: Forensic Psychology**

**Chair: Gowensmith N**

**08:00 – 10:00**

**Forensic risk and recovery**

This symposium will highlight assessment and rehabilitation strategies to bridge the gaps in services and resources. We will explore challenges typically faced by providers and offer insights into assessing risk and considering complications associated with the release of forensic patients. This symposium will also focus on the assessment and impact of brain injury and provide an overview of forensic systems related to treatment and recovery in the United States. Collectively, we will highlight critical considerations in risk assessment and novel approaches to treatment and rehabilitation, particularly concerning the needs of vulnerable populations who often languish in the system. *Correspondence: Prof. Neil Gowensmith, [neil.gowensmith@du.edu](mailto:neil.gowensmith@du.edu)*

**Gowensmith N, McMahon J, Nadkarni L & Kramers-Olen A. Risk assessment in forensic populations**

Risk assessment with forensic patients (or "state patients" in South Africa) can be especially challenging. Not only must one consider risk factors present for most clinical patients, such as imminent harm to self or others, but one must also consider longer-term risks for violence and recidivism. Moreover, forensic patients can often present with additional complications like malingering, fabrication of symptoms, inadequate norms, substandard testing conditions, and various conflicting agendas from collateral sources. Despite these challenges, models have shown promise in assessing violence and recidivism with forensic patients. This presentation will briefly explore violence risk assessment measures, including actuarial and structured professional judgements (such as the VRAG, HCR-20, and PCL-R). The session will also describe various recidivism assessment approaches, including the Risk-Need-Responsivity model and the Good Lives model. *Correspondence: Prof. Neil Gowensmith, [neil.gowensmith@du.edu](mailto:neil.gowensmith@du.edu)*

**Grabowski K. Informed treatment and Colorado recovery models**

This presentation will provide an overview of treatment services in forensic mental health systems in Colorado, with a focus on innovative approaches. Forensic state hospitals serve defendants who have been adjudicated incompetent to proceed and not guilty by reason of insanity. Clinical services first focus on stabilization and individualized treatment planning in a high security setting. Treatment is individualized for clients based on their risk and treatment needs and follows a step-down model. As clients progress in treatment, they can gain privileges, and some will eventually obtain a conditional release in which they are released from the hospital but intensely monitored by a clinical team. If

individuals continue to progress, they can eventually obtain an unconditional release and live independently. Overall, treatment is complex and often lengthy, and we will discuss strengths and weaknesses of the system. *Correspondence: Dr Karen Grabowski, [karen.grabowski@du.edu](mailto:karen.grabowski@du.edu)*

**McMahon J & Gorgens K. Adding Insight to Injury: Brain Injury Screening Programs and Rehabilitation with forensic populations**

Individuals with conditions affecting cognitive functioning, including brain injuries, are overrepresented among persons in the US criminal justice system. Brain injury is a major cause of disability associated with behavioral problems that may increase vulnerability to involvement in the legal system. Denver FIRST is piloting a Brain Injury Screening Program serving at-risk populations with suspected brain injuries in Colorado's competency system. The project uses the Colorado Brain Injury Model to identify brain injuries, assess cognitive functioning, and provide recommendations and referrals that support stakeholders through (and out of) the restoration system. This model prioritizes self-advocacy for clients and also provides partners with suggested modifications to the delivery of restoration programming in light of cognitive strengths and gaps in function. This paper will discuss preliminary findings and exemplar cases highlighting the complexity and acuity of clinical presentations and the crucial need for specialized services for treatment and rehabilitation. *Correspondence: Prof. Jennifer McMahon, [jennifer.mcmahon@du.edu](mailto:jennifer.mcmahon@du.edu)*

**Wednesday, 09 October 2024**

**Paper Presentations: Health Psychology**

**Chair: Munro N**

**08:00 – 10:00**

**Munro N & Hossain AD. Eliminating cervical cancer in South Africa? Government social media messaging and the “good” girl**

Women in low- and middle-income countries are disproportionately affected by cervical cancer, a cancer that is preventable through the human papillomavirus (HPV) vaccine. In 2014, as part of the global strategy to eliminate cervical cancer, the South African government implemented a schools-based HPV vaccination programme for girls aged 9-12. The programme included extensive social media messaging around the importance of HPV vaccination for girls. Text and images from the websites and social media platforms belonging to the Gauteng Department of Health were mined for HPV vaccination messaging between 2014 and 2023. Using critical discourse analysis, discourses pertaining to "HPV vaccines as good value" for "the good (girl) citizen" to "ensure a good life" are centralised in this paper. These discourses highlight how the South African Department of Health adopts a unidimensional discursive approach to health messaging. This approach relies on the assumptions that "good" girls get vaccinated against HPV, and therefore carry the gendered burden of preventing sexually transmitted HPV infection and cervical cancer. Notwithstanding the potential for causing confusion through multidimensional messages, HPV vaccination health messaging in South Africa could adopt a more nuanced communication strategy which does not prioritise HPV and HPV related cancers as the sole domain of girls and women.

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**Nkoana SE & Sodi T. Psychological adaptation among people living with chronic medical illnesses: a case of cancer diagnosis**

Many chronic illnesses, including cancer, diabetes, cardiovascular disease, chronic kidney failure, respiratory diseases, and

neurological disorders can be life-changing and precipitate physical, psychological and social sequelae. Psychological adaptation to chronic medical illness is therefore a legitimate construct to investigate. A hermeneutic phenomenological study to investigate psychological issues associated with cancer (prostate) was conducted at a tertiary hospital in Limpopo Province, South Africa. A sample of 20 black cancer survivors, with ages ranging from 67 to 85 years (mean age = 76yrs; SD=5.3). Data were collected through in-depth, semi-structured interviews and analyzed through Interpretative Phenomenological analysis (IPA). The results demonstrated that people's beliefs and attitudes influence their illness attributions, adaptation, coping, and subsequent help-seeking behaviour. These findings highlight the importance of considering the psychological factors associated with chronic medical illnesses (in addition to the biomedical factors) for a holistic management and support for patients. *Correspondence: Prof. Tholene Sodi, [tholene.sodi@ul.ac.za](mailto:tholene.sodi@ul.ac.za)*

**Janneke N & Deacon E. Exploring diabetes-related stigma in adolescence: a critical review**

The critical review, aimed to synthesise, analyse, interpret, and reflect on previous research regarding the experiences of type 1 diabetes mellitus (T1DM) adolescents and stigma, through identifying the types of stigmas experienced and the impact of stigma on these adolescents. Three scholarly databases were used to identify data which was subjected to a rigorous screening process conducted by two reviewers. Using the Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analyses (PRISMA) method of extraction and analysis, the initial 109 articles were narrowed down to 14 articles that suited criteria. Themes were identified that shed light on the experiences of T1DM adolescents and stigma. The results indicated that T1DM adolescents experience social,

enacted, internal and self-stigma. These experiences result in suboptimal T1DM self-management and the non-disclosure of T1DM status. Negative effects associated with these experiences are linked to challenges in T1DM identity integration and decreased wellness. Through the identification of the types of stigmas impacting on T1DM adolescents, a model was developed to explain the continuous interactive nature of stigma, questioning the existence of perceived stigma, hypothesising that this is merely a process. This model can assist researchers in understanding the relationships that exists between stigmas whilst informing opportunities for intervention.

*Correspondence: Mrs Nadine Janneke, [nadine@janneke.co.za](mailto:nadine@janneke.co.za)*

### **Holland N, Isaacs S & Munnik E. Exploring the factors that influence seeking treatment from the perspective of Muslim women who have experienced postpartum depression**

Postpartum depression (PPD) is one of the most common complications of pregnancy. Women often receive the support they require only once they are able to seek treatment. However, they may be reluctant to seek the required treatment owing to cultural or religious concerns. This study aimed to explore Muslim women's accounts of the factors that influenced them to seek treatment while struggling with symptoms of PPD. This exploratory study employed a qualitative research framework using individual, semi-structured interviews (n=10), of which was applied through the lens of the Health Belief Model (HBM). The study received ethics approval and registration by the Biomedical Research Ethics Committee. Thematic analysis revealed four main themes: Understandings of and experiences living with PPD; Family members perceptions and understandings of Muslim women diagnosed with PPD; Contextual factors that impacted Muslim women living with PPD; and Mothers' recommendations for others who live with

PPD. Some of the factors inhibited Muslim women's decisions to seek treatment, some contributed positively toward seeking treatment while some factors both inhibited and facilitated their decisions to seek treatment. This study adds to the limited research on factors that impact Muslim women's ability to seek treatment.

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### **Aliche C.J & Idemudia E.S. Influence of self compassion on HIV-related stigma, health-related quality of life, and depression among HIV/AIDS patients**

People living with HIV/AIDS (PLWHA) may experience HIV-related stigma which could impact negatively on health-related quality of life (HRQoL), and also increase symptoms of depression. Self compassion is a positive personality attribute that may protect PLWHA against stigmatisation. Previous studies have not examined the influence of self compassion on the association between HIV-related stigma, HRQoL, and depression. Therefore, the present study aimed to examine whether self compassion can moderate the relationship between (1) HIV-related stigma and HRQoL, and (2) HIV-related stigma and depression among PLWHA. Participants included 371 PLWHA (Mean age = 31.44; *SD* = 9.75) drawn from a healthcare institution in Nigeria. Participants completed relevant self report measures. Results of a regression analysis showed that self-compassion significantly moderated the relationship between HIV-related stigma and all the HRQoL domains (physical health symptoms, relationship to others, cognitive symptoms, and treatment impacts). Also, the positive relationship between HIV-related stigma and depression was significantly moderated by self-compassion. We concluded that clinical efforts geared towards improving wellbeing of PLWHA should consider integrating self-compassion-based therapy as it has the potentials to decrease the

detrimental effects of stigma on the patients' health and recovery. *Correspondence: Dr Chinenye Joseph Aliche, [joseph.aliche@unn.edu.ng](mailto:joseph.aliche@unn.edu.ng)*

**Wednesday, 09 October 2024**

**Invited Address: Reshaping Psychology**

**Chair: Suffla S**

**08:00 – 08:45**

**Hagenaars P. Advocacy for a reparative psychology**

2023-2024 was dedicated in the Netherlands to the 150th Anniversary of the Abolishment of the trans-Atlantic slavery. Enslavement is a crime against humanity and one of the most serious human rights violations. Colonialism and Enslavement have far reaching consequences for mental health. Mental health care professionals (psychologists, psychiatrists, anthropologists and orthopedagogues) from both sides of the Atlantic, prepared together a series of events to raise awareness of the continuous effects -the 'Doorwerking'-, of the trans-Atlantic enslavement. They did research, wrote publications, held symposia and were actively present at various conferences and meetings. The Mission of this project was to raise awareness of the continuous effects of enslavement in contemporary society, in relationships, and on clients and therapists. Starting with Frantz Fanon who saw pathology as a consequence of colonisation and emphasised that the goal of intervention should be to restore freedom (1961), this presentation raises questions about the role psychology and psychologists can and should play in reparation of past violations. Uncovering hidden exclusionary systems, racist microaggression, and unravelling the traumatic bond between oppressors and victims, are some examples. During the year of organising events together, the diverse

group of scholars and practitioners developed a mutual understanding and trust. This kind of cooperation together, was not only an educational, but also a healing process. Psychology and mental health practitioners must recognize the pain caused by oppression and the traumatizing system and advocate to assist people seeking to regain their pride and dignity. *Correspondence: Dr Polli Hagenaars, [drsharondenoch@gmail.com](mailto:drsharondenoch@gmail.com)*

**Wednesday, 09 October 2024**

**Invited Address: Reshaping Psychology**

**Chair: Suffla S**

**09:00 – 09:45**

**Thompson A. Re-Visioning Global Psychology: Majority World Imperatives to Better Serve Humanity**

Contemporary psychology has experienced significant expansion in scope and the intricacies of global organisational dynamics as psychologists have embraced the mission of serving humanity. Despite notable advancements, the discipline continues to face a combination of historical and contemporary challenges. These include the enduring dominance of Western academic scientific psychology, epistemological issues and increasing disciplinary fragmentation. Paradoxically, the global state of poly-crisis highlights the critical need for psychological science while negatively affecting its development and application. In this address, I call for the urgent re-visioning of global psychology with the goal of the full and complete integration of contributions, perspectives, and realities of the Majority World as a prerequisite for fulfilling the discipline's promise to humanity. In doing so, I highlight the pivotal role of African psychologists and psychologies. Additionally, I discuss the imperatives for IUPsyS to promote an inclusive global psychology that is grounded in critical reflexivity, whole

psychology leadership and strengthening Members' capacity to realise the vision for a multi-polar global psychological science. I end with an invitation to participate in this bold and transformative re-visioning and associated praxis to promote psychology's evolution as a truly global science that benefits all of humanity and our natural environment. *Correspondence: Prof. Ava Thompson, [Ava.Thompson@ub.edu.bs](mailto:Ava.Thompson@ub.edu.bs)*

**Wednesday, 09 October 2024**

**Invited Symposium: Crises and Disasters**

**Chair: Baguma P**

**08:00 – 10:00**

**Baguma P, Bantu E, Hara K, Sodi T, Matoane M & Basemera M.O. Psychosocial Pandemic preparedness in limited resource settings: The case of Uganda**

Pandemics have happened throughout time but they seem to be on the increase (WHO, 2024). LICs continue to lack capacity to handle pandemics especially in psychosocial terms (MOH, 2020). LICs, Uganda inclusive, continue to rely on developed countries (Jones et al., 2008) for different forms of assistance. Capacity gaps must be filled for better handling of pandemics in the future. The pandemics have serious psychosocial outcomes at different levels. The objectives of the symposium are to discuss the psychosocial outcomes of pandemics, and how they have been handled and suggest ways of how to improve psychosocial preparedness in Uganda. *Correspondence: Prof. Peter Baguma, [peter.baguma@mak.ac.ug](mailto:peter.baguma@mak.ac.ug)*

**Bantu E. The psychosocial impact of pandemics**

Pandemics are associated with high burden and cause a lot of psychosocial outcomes. The objective of this topic is to highlight on the scope of these psychosocial problems. The findings from literature, show that impacts

include stress, sleep disorders and anger, anxiety, conspiracy theories, fear of vaccination, and stigma; behavioral changes, fear of Infection, OCD, PTSD, prolonged grief disorder, and addictive behaviors, e.g. alcohol/drug misuse (Taylot, 2022). Prati, Mancini et al (2021) add depression, general distress, loneliness, negative affect, negative functioning, social support, insomnia, burnout and suicide risk to mention but a few.

*Correspondence: Prof. Edward Bantu, [ebantu@kab.ac.ug](mailto:ebantu@kab.ac.ug)*

**Basemera M.O. Psychosocial impact on Vulnerable populations: focusing on the elderly**

Special populations that are vulnerable to mental health problems (children and adolescents, geriatric populations, children with developmental disabilities, pregnant women and patients with existing medical illnesses, SGM). The objective of this topic will be to focus on the psychosocial outcomes of special populations but singling out the elderly. Available literature seems to indicate similarity in psychosocial impact between special populations and the general population. However, these special populations at times suffer double tragedy because they are stigmatized and neglected. Available literature indicates that the elderly people suffer exacerbated feelings of confinement, loneliness, uncertainty, and anxiety, insomnia, depression, cognitive decline, and other mental health issues (Bui, et al 2021). *Correspondence: Dr Sister, Mary Oliver Basemera, [basemeramaryoliver@gmail.com](mailto:basemeramaryoliver@gmail.com)*

**Baguma P. Handling the psychosocial outcomes and improving psychosocial preparedness**

In pandemic times, there is need to develop capacity at different levels to deal with pandemic related psychosocial challenges. Regarding Preparedness in LICs, especially Uganda, capacity development should focus on psychosocial outcome assessment,

Training of psychosocial experts in interventions, application of ICT in intervention science (WHO, 2013a) protection of Health workers (2020), health system improvement, and research capacity improvement, VIZ:-Develop capacity to do primary, secondary and tertiary prevention. Policy development: Covering the issues raised above, plus improvements in financial resources and governance should be done.

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**Wednesday, 09 October 2024**

**Paper Presentations: Assessment and Evaluation**

**Chair: Van Der Merwe I**

**10:30 – 12:30**

**Van Vuuren K. The perceptions of South African psychologists towards using artificial intelligence as a behavioural analysis tool**

Due to the burgeoning demand for artificial intelligence programs that can provide users with virtual human healthcare, this research specifically focuses on the perceptions of South African psychologists towards the utilisation of artificial intelligence as a behavioural analysis tool. Situated in the diverse sociocultural landscape of South Africa, the study aims to understand how psychologists view the integration of artificial intelligence into their practice, and what considerations they deem important for this integration. Six practicing psychologists were purposively sampled, data was collected through semi-structured interviews, and analysed via reflexive thematic analysis. Findings illuminate a multifaceted landscape marked by cautious optimism, ethical concerns, and specific functional requirements. Psychologists expressed a unanimous view that artificial intelligence should not be seen as a replacement for human expertise, but should serve as a

complementary tool. This cautious optimism extends to the utility of artificial intelligence as a behavioural analysis tool. Participants further emphasised the need for empirical validation and ethical considerations, including cultural inclusivity and socio-economic accessibility. The study contributes to the discourse by highlighting the complexities and considerations in adopting artificial intelligence in psychological practice within the South African context.

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**Mudau T, Cromhout A, Thandeki H, Tladi L, Christi N, Wissing M, Swart R & Schutte L. Factorial validity of isiXhosa translations of selected measures of psychosocial well-being amongst a sample of South African older adults**

Validating measures of psychosocial well-being in local languages is essential for the development of science and practice cross-culturally. This study aimed to investigate the factorial validity and reliability of isiXhosa translations of the Affectometer-2 (AFM-2), the Mental Health Continuum - Short Form (MHC-SF), the Meaning in Life Questionnaire (MLQ), and the Satisfaction with Life Scale (SWLS) amongst isiXhosa speaking ( $n = 408$ , male =72, female =336, age = 39-90 years) older adults from South Africa. Confirmatory analyses (CFA), bifactor CFA, exploratory structural equation modelling (ESEM), and bifactor ESEM were applied to the data. The ESEM model yielded adequate fit for the AFM-2 and the bifactor ESEM model yielded good fit for the MHC-SF. The CFA model yielded adequate fit for the SWLS. A CFA model with the error variances of items 2 and 3 correlated yielded good model fit for the MLQ. All scales showed sufficient reliability scores. The results point towards the usefulness of the scales in the current sample, as well as their potential cross-cultural application. The constructs measured by these scales as well as other well-being concepts should also be explored in the present and other local and

global non-Western contexts using qualitative bottom-up approaches. *Correspondence: Dr Tondani Mudau, [55274129@mynwu.ac.za](mailto:55274129@mynwu.ac.za)*

### **Balegamire J & Ntabarusha I. Precarity of young people: Forms of parentification and family dynamics**

**Context:** Over the past thirty years or so, following recurrent wars and unprecedented sexual violence leading to acute, post-traumatic, chronic and intergenerational stress disorders in the east of the DRC, traditional social structures have been severely disrupted to the extent that young people find themselves in a precarious situation, not only materially, but also in terms of their identity. As a result, forms of role reversal are becoming commonplace that can easily be described as parentification: more and more children from families without fathers or mothers or without one of the two parents, and who do not rely on the extended family whose members are grappling with other survival challenges, are forced to take full responsibility for their younger brothers and sisters.

**Research questions:** How were these exposures to stressful and traumatic events perceived by the disarticulated communities? What were the consequences for the mental health of these communities?

**Methodology:** This phenomenon was observed in South Kivu during the survey conducted in the Miti Murhesa health zone in March 2024; this information was collected during individual interviews, FGDs and community discussions.

**Type of study and study population:** This is a descriptive cross-sectional study of a population made up of community members in 4 health zones (ZS): Miti Murhesa, Bunyakiri, Kalonge and Kalehe.

**Inclusion and non-inclusion criteria:** Community members aged at least 18 in the health area of the study zone and participating in only one activity.

**Sampling procedure:** This study used multi-stage sampling:

- At the first stage, we used stratified sampling to distribute the number of individual interviews in each health area (list of health areas in each health area); then we drew samples at random without replacement from 4 health areas (HAs) in each health area;
- In the second stage, we used systemic sampling, which consisted in calculating the sampling interval.

The quantitative survey was conducted among 467 community members, including 190 men and 277 women, and was supplemented by 26 individual qualitative interviews. 197 community members took part in the FGD (94 women and 103 men) and 202 in the community debate (110 women and 92 men).

**Results:** The results show that the participants have in common that they have experienced events as a factor of intense stress and fright. As a result, they developed traumatic behaviours, leading to substance abuse, role reversal within families, and changes in self-confidence, trust in others, social cohesion and public decency.

**Key words:** Trauma, parentification, social cohesion, disarticulated communities.

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**Wednesday, 09 October 2024**

**Roundtable: Assessment and Evaluation**

**Chair: Van Der Merwe I**

**11:30 – 12:30**

**Van der Merwe I, Erasmus P, de Klerk W, de Beer M, van Eeden R, Truter S, Verhage E & Segabutle Y. Development of a strategic guideline to design an intelligence instrument applicable to South African school learners: A multi-method exploration**

This thesis pioneered a strategic guideline that enables the design of suitable and valid intelligence measuring instruments. Consequently, psychologists and psychometrists can conduct culturally fair and reliable intelligence assessments when applying these measurements to South African learners characterised as multicultural, multilingual population within multidiverse contexts. Applicable intelligence instruments should further enable unbiased interpretation and reporting of results, yielding appropriate diagnoses and intervention plans. This allows for ethically fair assessment measurements and practices, fostering multi-ethnic equalisation and empowerment that impact both school learners and practitioners. *Correspondence: Dr Ilze Van Der Merwe, [ilzeph@vansville.com](mailto:ilzeph@vansville.com)*

**Wednesday, 09 October 2024**

**Invited Symposium: Clinical Psychology**

**Chair: Falender C**

**10:30 – 12:30**

### **Transforming Clinical Supervision in South Africa**

In this symposium, presenters will address the pressing problems in clinical supervision and clinical practice in South Africa. A review of data on clinical supervision currently in South Africa identifies critical aspects that both supervisees and supervisors have reported to be problematic. First and foremost is the limited regulatory system with respect to clinical supervision, and insufficient guidance on requirements, training and competencies for supervisory practice. Further, imbalances include few racially diverse clinicians compared to the number of clients of color even though this issue has been present, recognized, and promised to be addressed for decades. Also, training and competence in clinical supervision, ethical imperatives, are uneven and research reveals inequities,

micro-aggressions, and disregard of the impact of cultural and racial identities in the clinical and supervision processes. Presenters will present road maps to increasing competence of supervisors through proposed regulation, transformational strategies, support for training and recruitment of racially diverse clinicians, training in giving and receiving clinical supervision, attending to supervisee and supervisor issues, needs, and priorities in diverse settings. *Correspondence: Prof. Carol Falender, [cfalender@gmail.com](mailto:cfalender@gmail.com)*

### **Falender C. Clinical Supervision: Status and Transformation**

In this symposium, presenters will address the pressing problems in clinical supervision and clinical practice in South Africa. A review of data on clinical supervision generally internationally and the status currently in South Africa identifies critical aspects that both supervisees and supervisors have reported to be problematic. First and foremost is the limited regulatory system with respect to clinical supervision, and insufficient guidance on requirements, training and competencies for supervisory practice. Further, imbalances include few racially diverse clinicians compared to the number of clients of color even though this issue has been present, recognized, and promised to be addressed for decades. Also, training and competence in clinical supervision, ethical imperatives, are uneven and research reveals inequities, micro-aggressions, and disregard of the impact of cultural and racial identities in the clinical and supervision processes. Presenters will present road maps to increasing competence of supervisors through proposed regulation, transformational strategies, support for training and recruitment of racially diverse clinicians, training in giving and receiving clinical supervision, attending to supervisee and supervisor issues, needs, and priorities in diverse settings. *Correspondence: Prof. Carol Falender, [cfalender@gmail.com](mailto:cfalender@gmail.com)*

### **Kramers-Olen A. Clinical supervision: The politics of power and responsibility**

Apartheid policies in South Africa resulted in systematised, legislated and institutionalised racism. Clinical psychology training during apartheid mirrored these inequities and was characterised by separate training for Black and White students. Whilst the profession has seen some advances in redressing the inequities of the past, thirty years after achieving democracy, clinical psychologists do not reflect the demographics of the country. This presentation will consider the politics of power and responsibility (i) on training institutions to select a representative demographic of clinical psychology interns; (ii) the relational context of clinical supervision, and the power dynamics (conscious and unconscious) that affect learning and (iii) the balance of power in the supervisor/supervisee relationship and how this may affect patient care. The paper will also consider recommendations to advance the practice of clinical supervision in South Africa.

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### **Siyothula B. Transforming Clinical Supervision for non-urban psychological practice in South Africa**

Clinical supervision is generally described as a recognized process of professional support and learning that relies on the expertise of the supervisor and contributes to the individual development of the new members of the profession. The recent study of clinical psychologists' perceptions on their preparedness to confidently render services in resource-constrained settings revealed that their training did not (adequately) prepare them to work in these settings. As resource constraints are prevalent in the South African non-urban areas where the majority of the population resides, this poses challenges on the quality of clinical supervision rendered and competencies imparted to new psychology professionals expected to serve in

resource-constrained settings. There is a need for the training curricula that equips service providers with competencies to work in diverse settings and provide relevant clinical supervision to meet the needs of service providers and users in these settings.

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### **Hendricks S & Cartwright D. Clinical supervision challenges in South Africa- supervisee and supervisor perspectives**

Several critical challenges concerning internship training and clinical supervision have been documented internationally, yet there is scant research in the South African supervision literature. This paper presents findings of a cross sectional survey of supervisees' and supervisors' experiences of clinical supervision, specifically focusing on the prevalence of negative (Inadequate and Harmful) supervision events and the correlation between relational variables such as Role conflict, Role Ambiguity, Supervisory styles (SS), the Working alliance (WA), and NSEs among a sample of psychology interns in South Africa. The results suggest that a considerable proportion of interns experience negative supervision during their internship, which has a detrimental effect on their professional growth. Against this backdrop, the author briefly turns the discussion to supervisors' perspectives regarding their supervision training, and their perceived competence, confidence, and effectiveness in providing clinical supervision. The findings underscore the urgency for the South African psychology profession to establish a formal regulatory framework concerning supervision training and practices, given the absence of regulatory guidelines. Moreover, findings suggest that it is imperative that supervisors engage in reflective practice to ensure that the quality of supervision they provide is given priority. *Correspondence: Dr Shariefah Hendricks, [hendrs@unisa.ac.za](mailto:hendrs@unisa.ac.za)*

**Pillay A. Clinical supervision in South Africa's District Health System: new challenges**

Clinical supervision for psychologists in training has long been mandatory in South Africa, with certain stipulated requirements. However, the relatively new District Health System has seen the introduction of the mid-level category of Registered Counsellor appointments at Community Health Centres, many in non-urban areas. Given the current training models, and evidence in the field, it has become clear that teaching, training and support are needed in the public mental health service context, where the Registered Counsellor is often the institutions' sole mental health care provider. Seeking supervisory guidance is, then, critical when the practitioner feels ill-equipped in certain instances, and the only available support is online, from a psychologist a great distance away. Such a supervisory relationship is transient, crossing licensing registration category, and unconventional in the sense that the practitioners are not trainees. This raises ethical, professional and legal concerns, but is rooted in the reality that the care of patients, mainly in poor and indigent communities, is the primary concern.

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**Wednesday, 09 October 2024**

**Paper Presentations: Gender**

**Chair: McLachlan C**

**10:30 – 12:30**

**Jansen S, Masinga N & Abrahams. Enhancing school belonging to improve academic performance among boys at two urban schools in Cape Town, South Africa**

Learner well-being and academic performance (AP) depend on school belonging (SB) or feeling valued and accepted. Globally, boys underachieve academically, with

lowered SB metrics among South African boys and girls outperforming boys mathematically. The objective of this pilot study is to explore the relationship between SB and AP among male learners in one urban secondary and primary school in Cape Town. To enhance SB among academically underperforming learners aged 10-18, seven weekly culturally sensitive, masculinised workshops will be facilitated by two trained male facilitators. The interactive 90-minute workshops will immerse learners in the sociospiritual dimensions of learning that may increase feelings of belonging among boys. Based on their most recent school report reflecting poor AP, each school selected a convenience sample of 15 learners. This mixed-methods research technique will collect data using one post programme focus group discussion guided by interview questions and the administration of two questionnaires. The psychological sense of school membership scale will be administered before and after the programme to assess SB. In addition, a post-programme Likert scale designed questionnaire will assess group interactions and relationships. This study hopes to produce 'broad and deep' data demonstrating a positive association between SB and AP among boys. *Correspondence: Dr Shahieda Jansen, [jansenshahieda@gmail.com](mailto:jansenshahieda@gmail.com)*

**Flemming X, Bester P, Kruger L & Marais F. 'Nothing is hopeless and I am never alone'. Co-creation of a contextualised and strengths-based transdisciplinary health promotion and well-being programme with gay men in South Africa's North West province**

Health disparities and social determinants of health impede access to mental health services, especially for gay men who experience stigma and discrimination in the North West province. Additionally, they have limited gay-specific programmes, services and safe spaces, preventing them from experiencing good health and well-being

(Sustainable Development Goal 3). Although current programmes for gay men fill a gap in the health system, many have a sustained focus on HIV and risk behaviours that repudiate other mental health concerns and the strengths that could promote their health and well-being. Through a multi-phased qualitative design, the researchers developed an evidence-informed, contextualised, and strengths-based transdisciplinary health promotion and well-being programme with gay men during a PhD study. This programme identified and enhanced existing interconnected social and emotional support and care structures and the co-creation of transdisciplinary health promotion knowledge in a digital knowledge hub. The findings allowed a shift from a deficit-based approach to strengths-based mental health promotion and proposed a blueprint for clinicians and programme implementers to provide mental health promotion programmes in the province and South Africa. During this presentation, the researchers discuss the process of developing this programme (including a unique asynchronous virtual focus group platform that safeguarded participants' identities).  
*Correspondence: Dr Xander Flemming, [xander.flemming@nwu.ac.za](mailto:xander.flemming@nwu.ac.za)*

### **Moodley M & Lesch E. Closeness in father-adolescent daughter relationships: a study in low-income, rural, Western Cape communities**

'Closeness' is a concept that has been gaining traction in modern research on fatherhood, showing numerous benefits for both fathers and adolescent daughters. However, most of the existing literature on father-daughter closeness are based on quantitative studies and have been conducted in the global north with white, middle-class fathers. This study, therefore, qualitatively investigated father-daughter closeness in South African, Western Cape low-income rural communities. Guided by social constructionism, we interviewed individual members of 15 families (15 fathers

, 15 mothers, and 15 adolescent daughters) of colour about how they defined and enacted relational father-daughter closeness. Through reflective thematic analysis, three overarching themes and six sub-themes emerged from the data. The findings showed both the association of closeness with daughters' comfort in sharing personal information with fathers, as well as authoritarian parenting styles in response to risky adolescent behaviour, resulting in many daughters' discomforts self-disclosing to their fathers. These findings indicated a gap between the fathers' ideal and reality, since most mothers and daughters did not desire closer father-daughter relationships. Since traditional gender roles and socio-economic pressures contributed to this gap, this research also highlighted the many complexities of father-daughter relationships within low-income South African communities. *Correspondence: Ms. Michaela Moodley, [michaelachloemoodley@icloud.com](mailto:michaelachloemoodley@icloud.com)*

### **Flemming X & Bester P. 'We provided each other with a voice and felt that we are contributing to 'greater good'. Reflections of a gay researcher and gay participants during a meaningful 4-year PhD journey**

This reflection aims to transfer knowledge and deepen an understanding about conducting research with sexually and gender-diverse participants, based on meaningful experiences during my PhD journey. A journey that impacted all aspects and levels of my existence as a gay man, a husband, a father, a researcher and a lecturer. I reflect on my personal and professional experiences as a gay man in a heteronormative world and how these experiences motivated me to conduct my study, titled *A transdisciplinary health promotion programme for gay men: A North West province perspective*. My reflections include a summary of challenges, learning curves, increased awareness, and realisations during all stages of my research process while having to navigate, imposter syndrome, the aphorism 'Publish or perish, and my goal of

conducting contextualised, sustainable, and impactful research and #publishforimpact. I conclude with participants' reflections on the process, lessons learnt, and recommendations, such as a shift from a deficit-based approach to the strengths-based promotion of health and mental health.  
*Correspondence: Dr Xander Flemming, [xander.flemming@nwu.ac.za](mailto:xander.flemming@nwu.ac.za)*

**Lamprecht L & Errington S. Beyond behaviour: building boys' capacity for self-awareness for mental well-being**

There is growing recognition that we have a decline in the mental health of our adolescent population. What we are seeing amongst young people as a result is more externalizing behaviours that fall broadly on the borderline personality organization scale. This is particularly notable amongst boys and young men, who are known to have a higher neuro-vulnerability to stress. What we have learned from the gender equality movement is that we need to incorporate the nuances related to gender into our mental health programmes. In relation to addressing the rising numbers of boys and young men with mental health issues, the American Psychological Association, as well as the British Psychological Society have released a series of guidelines, which recognize that traditional maternal approaches need to be balanced with how males process the world. This paper aims to provide a reflective account of the theory and practical application of Fight with Insight's boxing programme for children struggling with behavioural challenges, and the reasons why it seems to constitute an effective intervention for these young people.  
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**Wednesday, 09 October 2024**

**Paper Presentations: African Psychology**

**Chair: Mayaba P**

**10:30 – 12:30**

**Melamu N, Tsabedze W & Erasmus P. We call it "Bokoa jwa tlhaloganyo": Setswana parents' perspective on autism spectrum disorder**

There is a dearth of knowledge in South Africa about the incidence, prevalence, and effect of autism spectrum disorder (ASD). Consequently, national autism data is outdated and World Health Organization (WHO) prevalence rates are being used. This study focused on Ngaka Modiri Molema District to explore the cultural perspective of ASD in the Setswana culture from a parental or caregiver perspective, specifically those who attended the World Health Organization Caregiver Skills Training WHO-Caregiver Skills Training (CST) on ASD. This qualitative study used a phenomenological design, and purposively sampled 6 participants recipients of WHO-CST. Semi-structured interviews, audio recordings, and field notes were used to collect data. The study found eight main themes: understanding autism, African perceptions on causes of autism, disobedience of one's culture or bad luck, perform a ritual or consult, ways of interacting with autistic children, creating a friendly environment, noticing signs of autism spectrum disorder and initial concerns of parents. It was concluded that there is a lack of knowledge in Setswana culture about what ASD entails and there are still some superstitious beliefs regarding ASD resulting in late diagnoses. ASD studies with larger sample sizes, including medical professionals and policymakers, are recommended.  
*Correspondence: Ms. Neo Melamu, [neojeanett97@gmail.com](mailto:neojeanett97@gmail.com)*

**Gqweta N. Psychotherapy in indigenous languages: positioning isiXhosa as a language of symbolisation**

The socio-political history of language use in South Africa is controversial and complex. This paper aims to deconstruct the historical pattern of language use in South Africa using

Postcolonial theory, African psychology, and Afrocentricity. It primarily problematizes the hegemonic use of English and legitimizes isiXhosa as a language of symbolization in psychotherapy. The paper demonstrates how psychotherapy in isiXhosa for amaXhosa requires clinicians (psychologists, psychotherapists, counselors) to respond to the sociocultural contexts of their patients. A narrative literature review approach and qualitative research paradigm are used to frame the discussion, focusing on the historical and contemporary state of language use in psychotherapy. The results reveal historical discriminatory language practices in South Africa while highlighting the ontological and epistemological assumptions of amaXhosa using the isiXhosa language. The psychology of Africans must be understood from an African worldview, and the treatment of mental health issues using isiXhosa in psychotherapy should be framed from an African psychology lens. *Correspondence: Mr. Ntokozo Gqweta, [ntokozo.gqweta@wits.ac.za](mailto:ntokozo.gqweta@wits.ac.za)*

### **Mayaba P. The role of language in constructing the identity of amaZulu**

Language plays a significant role in shaping an individual's identity. Due to language contact and language shifts, the current South African context reinforces a glocalized cultural and linguistic identification for its population. This paper takes a dialogic approach to exploring the linguistic and cultural identity of bi/multilingual mother-tongue Zulu speakers in KwaZulu-Natal. Adopting a conceptual framework that draws on the dialogical self theory, the theory of language ecology, and the model of ethnolinguistic vitality, this paper examines the dynamics of how amaZulu use language as a means for identity construction. Data were collected through focus group discussions focused on cultural and linguistic histories. Findings revealed that participants strongly identified isiZulu as a core component of who they are, although they had varying positions regarding the

contribution that English plays in their identity construction. The findings suggest that it is conceivable for interchange and integration to coexist within the same individuals who incorporate their bi/multilingual speech practices into their identities. The way amaZulu speak different languages in various contexts reflects the positioning of their individual identity and multiplicity of selves. This paper highlights the need for understanding how intricate interactions between language and culture shape the construction of bi/multilingual Zulus' identities. *Correspondence: Dr Phindile Mayaba, [yabazp@gmail.com](mailto:yabazp@gmail.com)*

### **Bitalo D, Piotrowski K & Naude L. Parental identity: fatherhood as the birthplace of self-reflection, self-actualisation and healing.**

Fatherhood is rooted in various cultural, societal, and even religious belief systems. Various scholars have advocated for a move away from stereotypical conceptualisations of fathers as financial providers. In the South African context, fathers are often perceived to be absent or uninvolved, which might hinder fathers' parental identity development. This study focused on fathers' commitment, exploration, and reconsideration in the process of parental identity formation within their sociocultural contexts. Eight emerging and early adult black South African fathers were interviewed. Reflexive thematic analysis offered a nuanced visage of fatherhood carrying both old ideologies of material provision and new-found valuing of nurturing care. The complexities in balancing ideas of fatherhood and manhood were evident in participants' struggles with aligning aspirations of being physically present and emotionally engaged fathers with the reality of being providers in financially strenuous contexts. Participants embraced the idea of a family unit as foundational and also appreciated the value of communal notions of child-rearing. While the challenging nature of fatherhood was often met with reconsideration, fathers remained firmly

committed. This qualitative inquiry into the experiences of fatherhood addresses the personal, socio-economic, and cultural aspects embedded in the formation of parental identity among black South African men. *Correspondence: Miss. Divine Bitalo, [dwbitalo@gmail.com](mailto:dwbitalo@gmail.com)*

**Makongoza M, Kiguwa P & Mayisela S**  
**Intimate partner violence in cohabiting relationships: young women's voices from rural Vhembe District, South Africa**

Intimate partner violence (IPV) is a social issue that continues to haunt humans globally. Despite the magnitude of research that has been conducted, the Sustainable Developmental Goals target 5.2, and the South African proposed National Strategic Plan on Gender-Based Violence and Femicide, South Africa experiences high incidences of IPV. In heterosexual couples, violence incidences are a concern that requires further research by scholars because cohabiting relationships are an increasing phenomenon within the African context. This study attempts to theorize from an African philosophical stance, focusing particularly on the African psychological perspective. In this study, The authors illuminate the nature and forms of violence that manifest in cohabiting relationships. This research explores participants' experiences of IPV in cohabiting relationships. The enquiry is conceptualised from a qualitative constructivism paradigm with in-depth, unstructured one-on-one interviews. Interviews were conducted with ten participants between ages 18-24 years recruited from the Thohoyandou Victim Empowerment Programme organisation in the Vhembe District, in South Africa. Thematic analysis generated themes while narrative analysis informs about participants' stories. **Keywords:** Cohabitation, voices, rural Vhembe District, young women, intimate partner violence. *Correspondence: Ms. Matamela Makongoza, [Matamela.Makongoza@wits.ac.za](mailto:Matamela.Makongoza@wits.ac.za)*

**Wednesday, 09 October 2024**

**Paper Presentations: Forensic & Legal Issues**

**Chair: Mvelase A**

**10:30 – 12:30**

**De Villiers B, Van Rensburg E & Esterhuysen K.**  
**An integrative child sexual abuse evaluation protocol for psychologists**

Child *sexual* abuse (CSA) evaluation protocols have been extensively researched. However, no uniform protocol is used, leading to confusion among psychologists about which protocol to follow. This article is the midmost of a trio of articles grounded in the D & D (Design and Development) model. The current authors conducted a previous study with a systematic literature review to identify and analyse international protocols for CSA evaluations. Sixteen protocols met the inclusion and exclusion criteria. They found various similarities but also deficits in the scientific literature regarding the phases or steps to follow. This study utilised an intervention research design to compile a proposed protocol to synthesise the core elements and address the deficits found in the previous study, formulating each phase to reflect best practice standards. The proposed protocol provides psychologists with an ethical and legally sound integrative method for CSA evaluations and is a valuable contribution to the psychological profession. *Correspondence: Dr Belinda De Villiers, [belinda@belindadevilliers.co.za](mailto:belinda@belindadevilliers.co.za)*

**Tsabedze W, Idemudia ES & Fourie E.**  
**Psychosocial factors to recidivism risk among offenders in correctional centres in Eswatini**

**Background:** Recidivism risk and criminal behaviour among released inmates is a significant concern globally due to lack of knowledge on how to prevent such behaviour. **Aim:** We focused on the influence of personality and social support on recidivism risk among offenders and investigated

mediating roles of mental health, spirituality and religiosity associations on personality traits and social support with recidivism risk.

**Methods:** Guided by cross-sectional research design and MULTI-Staged sampling technique, five correctional centres were selected.

Purposive sampling was used for 244 offenders (192 males; 52 females; mean age= 31.61). A questionnaire with demographics was used to collect data. Hypotheses were tested using structural equation modelling (SEM).

**Results:** Among personality factors, neuroticism significantly predicted recidivism risk, while extraversion and psychoticism did not. Instrumental support significantly predicted recidivism risk while emotional support. Outcomes of mediation analysis indicate that mental health, spirituality, and religiosity did not mediate the association of instrumental support and neuroticism with recidivism risk. Mediation analysis suggest that standardized total effect of neuroticism on recidivism risk was significant. **Conclusion:** Collaborative psychosocial healthcare that includes offenders' personality and experience of social support is necessary to reduce recidivism risk. *Correspondence: Dr Wandile Tsabedze, [wandile.tsabedze@gmail.com](mailto:wandile.tsabedze@gmail.com)*

### **Mvelase A & Zuma S. Sexual development in children and adults with intellectual disability in the context of forensic psychology assessments**

People with intellectual disability are vulnerable to being sexually violated. Research indicates that approximately 80 percent of survivors of sexual offences sent by the court for competency assessments show intellectual Disability. However, individuals with intellectual disability often have incomplete or contradictory information / knowledge regarding sexuality and reporting sexual assaults. Depending on the level of intellectual disability, they may experience difficulties with communicating and

understanding their own thoughts and emotions. This is not only exacerbated and influenced by their poor communication abilities, but also the presence of fear and shame associated with talking about sex and relaying sexual experiences to figures of authority and including health care workers. However, with appropriate and effective psychosocial education and support, individuals with Intellectual Disability can learn ways to respond in situations that involve sexuality and thus enhance their assertiveness and knowledge of their rights related to sexual acts. The presentation explores these issues in the context of forensic psychology and sexuality.

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### **Kwakyie-Nuako C.O., Acheampong D & Awuah K.A. The psychosocial experiences of expert witnesses in Ghanaian courts: a qualitative exploration**

Ghana's courts allow for the use of opinion evidence of expert witnesses to assist the trier of fact arrive at a determination. There has, however, not been any enquiry into the experiences of these experts and their experiences as they engage with the courts. This study employed a qualitative exploratory approach to understand these interactions. A purposive sampling method was used to select 14 participants including court actors and experts who were interviewed. This approach ensured that participants could provide rich and insightful perspectives on the topic. Qualitative data from the interviews were analyzed using thematic analysis. Transcripts were coded and common themes and patterns related to expert witness testimony were identified. The research findings indicate that there are major challenges with the use of expert testimony in Ghana such as inadequate number of experts, lack of availability of experts and long procedures required to get an expert to come to court. However, all stakeholders share the

same view on how important expert testimony is to the legal landscape of Ghana and how necessary it is to deal with the associated challenges to help improve the practice. These findings are discussed in the light of effective justice methods.

*Correspondence: Dr Charlotte Omame Kwakye-Nuako, [ckwakyeNuako@gmail.com](mailto:ckwakyeNuako@gmail.com)*

### **Steyn R. Suicide and euthanasia: a global and longitudinal perspective**

Suicide is not governed by law, unlike euthanasia, which is legally regulated in most countries. Suicide data are reliable and accessible, while euthanasia statistics are often unclear. This study evaluates attitudes towards suicide and euthanasia, investigates their relationship, and analyzes attitude trends. Using cross-sectional data from 90 countries, the study found significant differences in suicide ideation and euthanasia attitudes ( $t=14.92$ ;  $p<.001$ ;  $d=1.022$ ), with a strong correlation between them ( $r=.846$ ;  $p<.001$ ). Longitudinal analysis from 11 countries showed an increase in euthanasia support (from  $M=3.95$  in 1981-1984 to  $M=5.57$  in 2017-2022) and in suicide ideation (from  $M=2.35$  to  $M=3.37$ ). Euthanasia attitudes are more positive than those towards suicide. Both are closely linked, with growing acceptance over the past 40 years. The rising prevalence and acceptance of euthanasia, alongside suicide, underscore the need for greater mental health focus on these attitudes, highlighting their significant societal impact. *Correspondence: Prof. Renier Steyn, [steynr@unisa.ac.za](mailto:steynr@unisa.ac.za)*

**Wednesday, 09 October 2024**

**Symposium: Environmental Psychology**

**Chair: Barnes B**

**10:30 – 12:30**

**Climate and environmental psychology:  
towards a liberatory research agenda**

Global heating is one of the most pressing issues of our time. Intersecting with longstanding environmental issues (e.g., pollution, biodiversity loss, and infrastructure) and wicked social asymmetries (race, class, and gender), there is a desperate need for psychological research on global heating and environmental degradation. This symposium brings together recent research focusing on the liberatory potential of climate and environmental psychologists. The symposium will focus on youth activism, racism, justice-oriented research, conservation psychology and participatory methodologies. The symposium will focus on, among others, the following questions: what does a liberatory lens offer psychologists interested in climate and environmental psychology? What are the critical and participatory methodologies that can be used to strengthen a liberatory agenda? How can we engage in liberatory praxis without reinforcing some of the issues that we aim to critique (e.g., individualism and extractivism)? How can psychological research foreground the non and more than human world? How can climate and environmental be more inclusive of marginalised people? The symposium is likely to be of interest to psychologists from several fields including community, research, social and political psychology. *Correspondence: Prof. Brendon Barnes, [bbarnes@uj.ac.za](mailto:bbarnes@uj.ac.za)*

### **Barnes B. Racism and youth climate activism: What have we learnt about the recent image exclusion of black climate activists?**

There has been very little work focusing on racism allegations made by black youth climate activists, particularly against liberal media and climate organisations. The paper synthesises the findings of three publicised racism allegations made by black youth activists. I analysed the introduction of the allegations, apologies, media interviews, and social media commentary thereafter. The findings show that activists find it challenging to introduce racism allegations, the onus is on

the activists to prove racism, and the activists experience undermining based on age, gender and location. The apologies they received ignored important parts of the allegations and reinforced racist assumptions. I propose ideas for future work, including extending theoretical exploration of the links between individual, systemic and climate racism; strengthening our understanding of apology and racial injustices in climate activism; studying experiences and perceptions of racism challenges in youth climate movements; and developing platforms dedicated to black youth activists.

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### **Klarmann S & Barnes B. Empowering young people to be environmental stewards: using the theory of engagement in a South African capacity building initiative**

Environmental degradation continues to receive urgent attention from environmental scientists with calls to establish effective, meaningful ways of protecting biodiversity. Additionally, there is a growing movement to incorporate perspectives from youth, local and indigenous groups, whose voices typically receive less recognition as environmental stewards. Since youth have received significant attention as agents of change for environmental issues, the theory of engagement was used to frame this study of a South African capacity building outreach in the Greater Kruger region of South Africa. The research aim was to explore the influence of an outreach working within historically marginalized communities by teaching youth about conservation through building photographic skills. Photovoice and thematic analysis guided the exploration of the participants' experiences. Key themes of exclusion, long-term engagement, representation, and the importance of skills development were raised. The outreach's aims and activities offer important lessons for youth initiatives working on environmental

issues. *Correspondence: Dr Stephanie Klarmann, [steph.klarmann@live.co.za](mailto:steph.klarmann@live.co.za)*

### **Peters F & Barnes B. Ethical Considerations with People Who Are Marginalized in Climate Psychology**

Research has the potential to contribute to social justice in climate psychology. However, when conducted without due consideration of participants, it can cause more harm, remove their voices, and entrench systemic injustices. In this presentation I will discuss the ethical considerations beyond the tick box exercise and elucidate how researchers can facilitate improved ethical considerations with people who are marginalized. The research is based on the qualitative phase of a sequential transformative mixed methods research design. I used purposive criterion sampling, collected information through video conferencing, and used reflexive thematic analysis to analyze data. The central arguments I will discuss relate to the need for researchers to actively consider their positionality and its influence on the methodology because these have the power to silence people who are marginalized. Secondly, I will discuss some insights relating to reconsidering the ethical protocols when working with people who are marginalized in relation to confidentiality and anonymity. Lastly, I will propose some points for engagement for ethical research in climate psychology with people who are marginalized.

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### **Hendricks L. Embracing Earth: New materialism as a decolonial tool in climate research**

Climate change presents an urgent need to redefine psychological research within environmental contexts. This presentation outlines a liberatory research agenda rooted in decolonial and new materialist frameworks, aimed at addressing the complex interplay

between ecological crises and colonial legacies. By challenging anthropocentric narratives and integrating indigenous epistemologies, this approach rethinks human-environment interactions, emphasizing the active role of matter and interconnectedness in ecological systems. New materialism offers a powerful tool for decolonial work in climate research. It rejects the traditional separation between humans and nature, a dichotomy often perpetuated by colonialist ideologies, and instead promotes an understanding of matter as dynamic and entangled with human existence. By recognizing the mutual influence between human and non-human actors, new materialist perspectives facilitate an equitable and symbiotic response to climate challenges, empowering marginalized communities by validating their relational worldviews and practices. The presentation will explore how new materialist theories can be effectively applied in arts-based participatory research to engage diverse communities, promote cultural sustainability, and drive transformative action. Case examples of transdisciplinary health studies will be used to showcase how integrating theoretical insights with participatory and arts-based approaches can inspire an interdisciplinary dialogue that advances both environmental justice and sustainable psychological practice.

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**Wednesday, 09 October 2024**

**Invited Address: Reshaping Psychology**

**Chair: Suffla S**

**10:30 – 11:10**

**Zamani A. Role of psychology in national development**

The paper examines the role of psychology in national development and the extent to which

psychology has been utilized by the different cadres of leadership to impact human and socio-economic and political development, Noting that a major indicator of national development is the sense of autonomy and personal freedom for innovation decision making and problem solving blended in the disposition of the collective to self-reflect and take responsibility for the outcomes of their decisions and actions. In the neo-colonialist context, scholars and pan Africanists have advocated for the complete detachment from the colonial mentality for full Africanization of ideologies that define governance and socio-political process that impact positively on citizens. The paper reviews attempts by African Governments to achieve this within the context of the various initiatives by African Union Heads of Governments. It questions how much contributions the discipline of psychology has made to these processes. The paper concludes by evaluating the contributions of psychology to African development on the basis of indigenous theoretical precincts or euro-centric paradigms. *Correspondence: Prof. Andrew Zamani, [zamandeza@gmail.com](mailto:zamandeza@gmail.com)*

**Wednesday, 09 October 2024**

**Invited Address: Reshaping Psychology**

**Chair: Suffla S**

**11:10 – 11:50**

**Bulhan H. Emancipatory Brief Therapy—  
Liberating Self from Oppression within and  
without.**

EBT is a treatment approach designed to help persons free themselves psychologically and behaviorally from social, political, or relational systems that undermine their well-being, compromise their integrity, diminish their potential, and/or leave them stuck in pathological states of learned helplessness and unwitting cooperation with oppression, subtle or blatant. Although benefiting from

time-tested and cross-cultural therapeutic approaches for changing human behavior, this approach stands in contrast to the established Euro-American approaches that, at best, ignore or minimize the pervasiveness of oppression in interpersonal and social life and, at worse, justify or promote it in therapy and everyday living. Building on the seminal insights of Dr Frantz Fanon and other critical thinkers, Emancipatory Brief Therapy rests on a conceptual model analyzing oppression in everyday living. It selects foci and sequences of self-liberating action suitable to each person's goals and life situation. The approach has individual, family, group, and public health applications. Cognizant of the well-documented alienation and high dropout rates of the non-European populations from Eurocentric treatment modalities, EBT is designed to be relevant, effective, and brief in number and length of sessions, leaving options for subsequent booster or consulting sessions. *Correspondence: Prof. Hussein Bulhan, [drbulhan@hotmail.com](mailto:drbulhan@hotmail.com)*

**Wednesday, 09 October 2024**

**Invited Address: Reshaping Psychology**

**Chair: Suffla S**

**11:50 – 12:30**

**Farah A. The reshaping of psychology after Gaza war: a critical perspective**

This paper is intended to present a critical perspective on the reshaping of psychology in the aftermath of the Gaza war. The paper explores how the Gaza war will shape our understanding of several key psychological concepts, including collective trauma, resilience, collective memory, the need for security, the concept of normality, cognitive dissonance, cognitive adaptation, and socio-psychological dynamics of living in a war zone. The paper investigates the need to understand the factors that influence the application and the modification of different

psychological principles. Moreover, the paper explores how the Gaza War can reshape psychological research by gaining deeper insights into the human behavior under extreme stress. *Correspondence: Prof. Adnan Farah, [afarah@uob.edu.bh](mailto:afarah@uob.edu.bh)*

**Wednesday, 09 October 2024**

**Invited Address: Challenges facing Psychology**

**Chair: Pillay J**

**10:30 – 11:15**

**Foster L. Psychology Applied to Sustainable Development**

As we reach the halfway point of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) remain a vital global framework. However, progress has been uneven, with many targets lagging due to the COVID-19 pandemic, escalating conflicts, and growing climate instability. In this invited address, Professor Lori Foster will explore the important role of psychology in advancing sustainable development. As the world shifts its focus from purely economic metrics to a more holistic view of development, there is increasing recognition of how psychological principles and behavioral science contribute to achieving sustainable development. Drawing from her experience working with governments and international organizations, including the United Nations, Professor Foster will highlight successful applications of psychological insights in policy and program development. She will demonstrate how psychology can help design effective interventions that support people, the planet, prosperity, peace, and partnerships. *Correspondence: Prof. Lori Foster, [lfoster@ncsu.edu](mailto:lfoster@ncsu.edu)*

**Wednesday, 09 October 2024**

**Invited Address: Challenges facing  
Psychology**

**Chair: Pillay J**

**11:30 – 12:15**

**Stevens G. On violence: troubling our assumptions and expanding our theoretical vistas**

The last 100 years bear the ignominious distinction of being the most violent in recorded history, through acts of terror, organised extermination and war, continuously enabled by the prevailing political and social systems, as well as new technologies. How do we understand this seemingly pivotal aspect of the human condition that remains one of the most intractable features of our time? In this address, I examine some of the key contemporary limitations associated with viewing violence purely through the dominant lenses of either being a psychosocial/health antecedent, or outcome, within psychology. The paper selectively highlights several important considerations: (1) a critique of the ontological assumptions embedded within hegemonic approaches to understanding violence at present; (2) advocating against 'interventionism' as an epistemological framing that may foreclose our theorizing of violence; (3) and a proposition to reconsider how violence is frequently deployed as a strategic social resource, in three contemporary examples – human migration, community violence, and war. In each instance, I suggest that violence is made possible because of varying economies of morality that are in circulation around and within enactments of violence, that either legitimise or delegitimise violence. In addition, I argue that violence is a situationally contingent set of negotiations, performances, embodied enactments and affects that draw on subjectivities such as class, race, gender, nationality, religion, history, citizenship, etc. I

conclude by suggesting that an interdisciplinary approach is most suited to understand what the necessary pre-requisites for violence are, as well as how violence offers us an analytic window into the social world through the kinds of 'work' that it accomplishes. *Correspondence: Prof. Garth Stevens, [garth.Stevens@wits.ac.za](mailto:garth.Stevens@wits.ac.za)*

**Wednesday, 09 October 2024**

**Paper Presentations:  
Industrial/Organisational Psychology**

**Chair: Mukwawaya O**

**13:30 – 15:30**

**Ugwu L & Idemudia ES. Remote work and work-life balance during and after COVID-19: A systematic review and meta-analysis**

In the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic, the surge in remote work has changed the nature of work, creating diverse hybrid patterns of work post-COVID-19. It has prompted an examination of its effects on work-life balance, a cornerstone of employee well-being and organisational efficacy. This systematic review and meta-analysis, registered under PROSPERO (CRD42024510598), delves into this pressing issue by methodically analysing data from 1016 studies, distilling 35 for review, and further scrutinising 21 through meta-analysis. The research meticulously explores the complicated dynamics between remote work practices and their influence on individuals' ability to balance professional obligations with personal life. Attention was given to psychological well-being, job satisfaction, productivity, and work-family conflict, which were as a result of remote work. These findings are synthesised to guide evidence-based policies for enhancing work-life integration in the evolving work environment post-pandemic. Offering insights into the transformative potential of flexible work arrangements, this study contributes to

formulating strategies that support sustainable work-life paradigms, and diverse workforce. Through this comprehensive analysis, the research emphasises the importance of adaptable work models in promoting a healthy equilibrium between work demands and personal life, thereby facilitating resilient and productive workforce in the face of ongoing and future challenges.

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### **Janik M & Dames M. An examination of psychological well-being and burnout of primary and secondary school educators in the Omaheke region of Namibia**

Teaching is regarded as a most stressful career path, with a high incidence of burnout. The National Association of Namibian Teachers Union states that many of the country's educators want to leave the profession due to unattractive work conditions. This study aimed to examine psychological well-being and burnout of educators in the Omaheke region, one of the academically poorest performing regions in Namibia. In this quantitative study, a socio-demographic questionnaire, the Ryff's Scales of Psychological Well-Being, and the Copenhagen Burnout Inventory were used to collect data. The sample consisted of 217 educators from 14 primary and secondary schools. The results revealed that 22% of educators in the Omaheke region experience high levels of burnout whilst 18% report low psychological well-being. Primary and secondary school educators experience the same levels of burnout and psychological well-being. Having worked at the same school for 5-9 years is the only biographical variable that has a significant association with burnout. The psychological well-being subscales of Environmental Mastery and Personal Growth correlate moderately negative with all the subscales of burnout. Burnout has the strongest effect on overall psychological well-being. The study recommends interventions like increasing

coping strategies of educators and providing therapy, workshops and coaching.

*Correspondence: Dr Manfred Janik,*  
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### **Mukwawaya O. Job satisfaction and organizational commitment: insights from employees of a tertiary institution in South Africa**

This research report investigated job satisfaction and organisational commitment at a tertiary institution in South Africa. Evidence from the obtained data shows that employees are generally satisfied to work for the university hence it seems to suggest that they are also committed to work for the university under study. The research was quantitative in nature. A convenient sample size of (114) was utilised in the execution of this research. The sample was drawn from both administrative and academic staff of the institution. Data were collected with the aid of self-constructed questionnaire and data was analysed using Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS) version 23.

**Key words:** Job satisfaction, organizational commitment, employees, tertiary institution.

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### **Agyemang C.B, Coleman R & Parimah F. Ghana Psychological Association: our strategic journey to psychological governance and national development planning table**

This paper traces the historical development of psychology in Ghana as a discipline of study and practice by highlighting three main periods (1960 - 1990; 1991-2011; 2012-Date) of psychological science development. The paper then focuses on the organization of academic-practitioner psychologists leading to the formation of Ghana Psychological Association (GPA) and dovetails on experiences along the journey as lessons for newer associations. The paper further

addresses GPA's internal processes and programmes as part of advocacy to eradicate mental health stigma and promotion of mental wellbeing. We further discuss GPA's role in the establishment of relevant regulatory bodies and contribution to legislation and public policy. Finally, the paper addresses GPA's strategic pathway to psychological governance as lessons for other national associations and suggest priority areas national associations can contribute meaningfully to national development.

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**Komesuor J & Meyer-Weitz A. Work-related challenges and their associated coping mechanisms among female head porters (Kayayei) in Ghana**

**Background:** While internal migrants (Kayayei) in Ghana have been perceived as a vulnerable group faced health-related challenges, there has not been enough research on the impact of their work on their health and well-being. This study investigated the lived experiences of the Kayayei to identify the health-related challenges associated with their work as well as the coping mechanisms they adopt in dealing with these challenges. **Methods:** We conducted exploratory qualitative research among Kayayei in Agbogbloshie-Ghana. We purposely sampled 21 participants for interviews and 10 participants for focus group discussions (FGD) using an interview as well as FGD guides respectively. Interpretive Phenomenology Analysis was used to identify themes and sub-themes. Statements from participants were presented as quotes to corroborate their views. **Results:** The work-related challenges identified in the study were physical health, mental health, accommodation, and social challenges. Religion, recreation, social support, resilience as well self-medication were the coping strategies adopted by the study participants. **Conclusion:** The study concludes that in order to attain the

Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) which advocates for better health for all and also urges governments to facilitate orderly, safe, regular, and responsible migration and mobility of people by 2030 to improve their health and general well-being.

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**Wednesday, 09 October 2024**

**Paper Presentations: Clinical Psychology**

**Chair: den Hollander D**

**13:30 – 15:30**

**Wilson S & Molokoe K. Systematic review of the relationship between ADHD and anxiety: perceptions of healthcare professionals**

Attention-Deficit/Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD) and anxiety are frequent mental health issues that often occur together, this presents substantial challenges for individuals and healthcare professionals globally. This systematic review aims to examine how healthcare professionals in South Africa perceive the relationship between ADHD and anxiety, addressing a notable gap in current knowledge. A qualitative desktop search was conducted, utilising electronic databases and published books from 2010 to 2024. Eligible studies focused on perceptions, beliefs, attitudes, or experiences regarding the comorbidity of ADHD and anxiety among healthcare practitioners. Data analysis followed systematic analysis methods to interpret and draw conclusions from the data. The review reveals a recognised relationship between ADHD and anxiety, with anxiety commonly emerging as a comorbidity of ADHD. Challenges in accurate diagnosis and effective treatment of ADHD and comorbid anxiety in South Africa were identified, emphasising the need for comprehensive assessment protocols, culturally sensitive interventions, and multidisciplinary

collaboration. The findings underscore the importance of tailored approaches to support individuals with ADHD and comorbid anxiety in the South African context. This review contributes valuable insights to inform clinical practice and policy initiatives aimed at improving the management of ADHD and anxiety in this population. *Correspondence:* Miss. Savannah Wilson, [sav.wilson29@gmail.com](mailto:sav.wilson29@gmail.com)

### **Maepa M. Association of risk-taking and self-harm behaviours with depression and anxiety among school-going adolescents: preliminary findings**

**Introduction:** The global rise in mental health issues among adolescents is a concerning trend. This study aims to explore the connection between risk-taking behaviour and self-harm behaviours and depression and anxiety in school-going adolescents.

**Methods:** A purposive sampling technique was employed to select a preliminary sample of 139 adolescents with an average age of 15.63 from high schools in Tshwane, South Africa. Participants completed a questionnaire that assessed risk-taking behaviour and self-harm behaviour, depression, and anxiety. The collected data were analysed using Pearson correlation coefficients.

**Results:** The study's findings indicate a statistically significant positive correlation between risk-taking behaviour depression  $r(139) = .211, p < .01$  and anxiety  $r(139) = .201, p < .01$ . The findings further revealed a statistically significant positive correlation between self-harm behaviour depression  $r(139) = .708, p < .001$  and anxiety  $r(139) = .628, p < .001$ . Furthermore, positive correlations were observed between substance abuse and anxiety and depression.

**Discussion:** The results of this preliminary sample suggest a substantial correlation between a risk-taking behaviour and self-harm behaviour and occurrence of depression and anxiety in adolescents. This underscores the need for further exploration and

understanding of the factors contributing to mental health challenges in this population in resource-strained communities.

Keywords: risk-taking, self-harm, anxiety, depression, adolescents. *Correspondence:* Prof. Mokoena Maepa, [mokoenamepa@gmail.com](mailto:mokoenamepa@gmail.com)

### **Frieslaar C & Ismail H. Imposter phenomenon: Myth or verity? An exploration into the perceptions of healthcare professionals.**

Imposter phenomena refer to an individual's experience with doubts and insecurity regarding their intellect, success, and ability. Despite verified evidence of their competence, these individuals are unable to internalise their achievement and are apprehensive and fearful of the possibility that the luck and oversight that allowed them to achieve their esteemed position and roles will be exposed. Unrecognised under the *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders (DSM)*, imposter phenomenon has elicited controversy regarding its formal definition, nature, and possible characterisation as a pathological mental disorder. It is associated with harmful consequences amongst high-functioning and achieving individuals, inclusive of burnout and comorbid depression and anxiety. The current qualitative exploratory study developed an in-depth and comprehensive understanding of the perceptions, held by five healthcare professionals within KZN, regarding imposter phenomenon. Through 15-minute, semi-structured interviews, the research produced a concise understanding of whether imposter phenomenon is considered a misconstrued narrative, told to explain an individual's experience with self-doubt and low self-esteem, or if it exists as a lived and recognisable expression of psychopathology. Reflexive thematic analysis and the self-discrepancy theory was employed to interpret and understand the perspectives of each healthcare professional. As a developing

study, the findings and discussions are ongoing.

Keywords: Imposter phenomenon, healthcare professionals, self-discrepancy theory, perceptions, self-concept. *Correspondence: Miss. Callagn Frieslaar, [callagnfrieslaar@gmail.com](mailto:callagnfrieslaar@gmail.com)*

### **Pillay A. Psychology's sound of silence at Trump's rage displacement onto people with mental illness**

Donald Trump's behaviour of repeatedly castigating marginalised groups, usually those attempting to migrate into the US, has drawn criticism over the years, but insufficiently so. More recently he has widened his target and, in his speech following his conviction on 34 felony counts, he took aim at people with mental illness. This presentation focuses on two related areas. Firstly, examining the use of displacement as a psychological defence, especially from a developmental perspective. Secondly, it interrogates the extent to which professional bodies are responding, or rather not responding, to these attacks on vulnerable groups. Organisations representing psychology, psychiatry and mental health appear largely silent in the face of these attacks on the group for whom we constantly claim to advocate. *Correspondence: Prof. Anthony Pillay, [anthony.pillay@kznhealth.gov.za](mailto:anthony.pillay@kznhealth.gov.za)*

### **Madukwe A, Ejoke U, Smitha D & Nwufu J. The moderating role of substance use in psychological capital and mental health of inter-tribal faculty in Nigeria**

This cross-sectional study assessed the predictive relationship between psychological capital and mental health of 2400 inter-tribal faculty members of six universities in southern Nigeria. The moderating role of substance use in relationship outcomes was assessed. Also, mental health data categorized according to the four dimensions of PSYCAP (hope, efficacy, resilience, and optimism) were compared to assess patterns

of mental health indicators of faculty members were distributed in the region. The psychological capital questionnaire (PCQ-24), the Alcohol, Smoking and Substance Use Involvement Screening Test (ASSIST), and the Symptoms Checklist-90 (SCL-90) were used to assess psychological capital, substance use, and mental health. Analysis was performed with a generalized linear model and structural equation modeling. Findings showed that high levels of PSYCAP had a strong positive relationship with mental health in all participants. Problematic substance use was negatively related to mental health, this finding was common among faculty members working in their states of origin. PSYCAP levels of faculty members working in Federal Universities were higher compared to faculty members working in State Universities. The study provided insights for policies toward enhancing the mental health of faculty members in Nigeria through PSYCAP-based interventions, university-based counselling, and rehabilitation services for those who need it. *Correspondence: Dr Ann Madukwe, [annemichael2002@yahoo.com](mailto:annemichael2002@yahoo.com)*

**Wednesday, 09 October 2024**

**Presentations: Developmental and Educational Psychology**

**Chair: Roux J**

**13:30 – 15:30**

### **Johnson A & Coetzee B. What are South African primary school learners' perceptions of mental health and mental health related stigma?**

Given the urgency to address the growing mental health burden amongst children and young people in South Africa, there is a need to intervene early through universal school-based prevention programmes. Intervention programmes like these usually require basic mental health knowledge. Further, for

adequate implementation, mental health related stigma needs to be addressed. As such, we sought to explore children's perceptions of mental health and mental health related stigma using in-depth interviews and case vignettes. Participants were 25 children aged 10 to 14 years. Participants were recruited from 2 primary schools in the Western Cape between September 2019 and September 2021. Interviews were semi-structured and transcribed verbatim. Data were analyzed thematically using ATLAS.ti v9. We identified four superordinate themes related to our study aims: (1) understanding of mental health terminology, (2) scope of emotional vocabulary, (3) ability to identify a mental health condition, and (4) understanding of mental health related stigma. Participants were familiar with mental health terminology and could identify basic emotions. However, stigma was poorly understood but nonetheless identified as impacting on help-seeking. The findings highlight the pressing need to destigmatise mental health conditions in order to support timely disclosure, help-seeking and future intervention efforts. *Correspondence: Ms. Aimee Johnson, [aimeejohnson1985@gmail.com](mailto:aimeejohnson1985@gmail.com)*

#### **Zalanckas T & Butt D. Investigating Therapists Perceptions on The Role of Art Therapy on Children Within a South African Context.**

Art therapy is used as a therapeutic intervention when other standard verbal psychotherapies and medications have failed. Art therapy is the creative expression of the child via art-making through which artefacts become present. Therapists then use these artefacts to help children explore their feelings, reconcile emotional conflicts, manage stress, and foster self-awareness. The current qualitative exploratory study has developed an in-depth and comprehensive understanding of the perceptions, held by five

licensed therapists within Durban, South Africa. Through fifteen-minute semi-structured interviews, the research produced a concise understanding of the possible advantages or potential disadvantages of art therapy as well as its possible strengths or weaknesses. These findings will be used as a guide on whether or not art therapy should be used by therapists as a way to assist and enhance children's mental health during sessions. A thematic analysis was employed to interpret and understand these perceptions of each licensed therapist. As a developing study, the findings and discussions are ongoing. *Correspondence: Miss. Tara Zalanckas, [tarazalanckas46@gmail.com](mailto:tarazalanckas46@gmail.com)*

#### **Mashaba M & Hendricks L. Scoping the literature: arts based interventions through health applications**

With the rise of digital development and widespread access to mobile devices, even in rural areas, digital interventions have become feasible (Mindu et al., 2023). Several studies have shown positive outcomes from arts-based interventions delivered digitally. For instance, Feen-Calligan et al. (2023) demonstrated success in relieving stress and improving coping skills among youth resettled as refugees through online arts-based intervention by conducting one session a week for 8 weeks. Similarly, Léger-Goodes et al. (2023) showed effectiveness in reducing anxiety in primary school children through a videoconference-led arts-based intervention that was implemented for 10 weeks (each involving one 45-minute session per week). This current study aims to develop an arts-based e-health intervention for low-resource settings to enhance the resilience and coping strategies of young women living with HIV (YWLHIV) and improve their mental health outcomes, as well as evaluate the scalability of the intervention as a public mental health research approach. Before embarking on the study, we conducted a rapid scoping review of the literature. This presentation will share the

findings of the ongoing review and share with the psychological fraternity opportunities for conducting digital arts-based interventions.

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### **Mtshweni B. Perceived social support and sense of belonging: the mediating role of academic anxiety among first-generation university students**

This study investigated the mediating effects of academic anxiety on the relationship between perceived social support and a sense of belonging. The sample consisted of 240 undergraduate first-generation students (FGS) at a South African university (female = 72.5; mean age = 28.14;  $SD = 5.10$ ). They completed a survey questionnaire on perceived social (friendship and family) support, academic anxiety and sense of belonging. The results showed that perceived family support significantly predicted sense of belonging. Additionally, academic anxiety significantly mediated the relationship between perceived friendship support and sense of belonging. Moreover, academic anxiety significantly mediated the relationship between perceived family support and sense of belonging. The results demonstrate that friendship and family support resources foster a sense of belonging among FGS by quelling the effects of academic anxiety. *Correspondence: Dr Bongani Mtshweni, [mtshwebv@unisa.ac.za](mailto:mtshwebv@unisa.ac.za)*

### **Roux J. Self-efficacy and anxiety in in a group of 6–10-yearold isiXhosa-speaking learners**

Studies have found the incidence of anxiety symptomology amongst South African children to be high. Research illustrates the efficacy of intervention programmes aimed at minimising the symptoms of anxiety through increasing self-efficacy. Timely intervention requires the availability of reliable and valid screening tools. However, many anxiety and self-efficacy measures currently used in the South African context are not adapted for use within our multicultural context. Considering

the lack of standardised measures in South Africa, this study aimed to explore whether the Spence Children's Anxiety Scale (SCAS) and the Self-Efficacy Questionnaire for Children (SEQ-C) can serve as reliable screening measures in a sample of isiXhosa South African children. Quantitative data analysis was used to investigate the psychometric properties of the translated versions of the SCAS and SEQ-C and to determine correlations between anxiety and self-efficacy. Qualitative focus group interviews were conducted to explore how participants understood the translated versions of the questionnaires, and whether cultural and/or linguistic differences influenced how participants understood and therefore answered the questions. The results indicate that measures developed in Western countries cannot necessarily be used reliably amongst all population groups in South Africa and stresses the need for the development of culturally appropriate tests. *Correspondence: Ms. Jeanine Roux, [rouxjeanine14@gmail.com](mailto:rouxjeanine14@gmail.com)*

**Wednesday, 09 October 2024**

**Symposium: Sexuality**

**Chair: Nel J**

**13:30 – 15:30**

### **Launch of the revised Practice Guidelines for Psychology Professionals Working with Sexual and Gender Diversity – Version 2: An evidence-based tool for ethical and affirmative LGBTQIA+ praxis in (South) Africa**

In 2017, the Psychological Society of South Africa (PsySSA) published the first set of formal practice guidelines for psychology professionals working with sexual and gender diversity. This was a historic moment by PsySSA. These guidelines were rooted in the principles of affirmative practice, intersectionality, and human rights, and remain the first and only set of guidelines in

South Africa, and the African continent more broadly. These guidelines have become a broad tool for LGBTQIA+ advocacy both within the discipline and across South African health professions education, including global health contexts. In 2022, five years later, we began a process of updating and revising these guidelines to incorporate new evidence, scholarship, current debates, and practice-informed insights. This symposium will formally launch the revised guidelines and include presentations from the core team of researchers who were involved in producing this document - the PsySSA LGBTI+ African Human Rights Project. We argue that the PsySSA Guidelines, while rooted in an African and Global South context, has relevance beyond a regional focus, and can indeed be a tool for global health advocacy, especially at time of increasing moral panics and anti-queer legislation that seeks to reverse the historic gains made by LGBTQIA+ scholars and activists. *Correspondence: Prof. Juan Nel, [nelja@unisa.ac.za](mailto:nelja@unisa.ac.za)*

**Pillay S. What's new in the revised PsySSA Practice Guidelines (2024)? Theoretical framings, pragmatic considerations, and areas of controversy**

This presentation will provide an overview of the revised, and second, version of the *Practice Guidelines for Psychology Professionals Working with Sexual and Gender Diversity in South Africa*, developed by the African LGBTI+ Human Rights Project, and published by the Psychological Society of South Africa (PsySSA). These guidelines emerged from a two-year process of (re)development that included a scoping review of relevant research, a review and comparison of similar guidelines in other countries, a consultative feedback process with subject experts and practitioners in the field, a survey of mental health professionals, and drawing on lessons from the field, including three-years of training psychologists and social workers in the use of the

guidelines. Taken together, these guidelines and their contexts of application now represent the latest evidence and best practices in the field of LGBTQ+ psychology in/for Africa. These guidelines draw on a rich tapestry of theoretical work, centering human rights, affirmative care, intersectional, and decolonial frameworks. Pragmatic considerations for a (South) African and global health context are discussed - balancing regional demands with international concerns. Several areas of contestation remain, given the fast-moving, intersectoral, interdisciplinary, and emergent areas of scholarship and practice that inform LGBTQ+ guidelines development. *Correspondence: Mr Suntuosh Pillay, [suntuoshpillay@gmail.com](mailto:suntuoshpillay@gmail.com)*

**Victor C. Knowledge, patterns of usage, and practitioner feedback of the original PsySSA practice guidelines**

Reflecting on South Africa's LGBTQIA+ guidelines (PsySSA, 2017), this presentation explores their impact on psychological practice and the wider mental health community. Two processes were employed. The first was a national online survey focusing on psychologists' awareness, engagement, and application of the guidelines, conducted from February to April 2023. This was part of a larger international study of affirmative practices amongst mental health practitioners in South Africa, including social workers, psychologists, psychiatrists, nurses, and occupational therapists. The second was qualitative feedback from 14 original team members who contributed to the guidelines' development. This presentation examines key findings relevant to revising the practice guidelines, addressing both structural and content-related aspects. This includes highlighting the importance of utilising different ways to ensure representation and inclusion of diverse but relevant stakeholder groups and people in the revision and dissemination of the guidelines.

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**Msweli S. Mapping the psychosocial evidence across Africa: A qualitative evidence synthesis of LGBTQIA+ research (2001 – 2021)**

This paper presents the complete findings of the first scoping review to gather and synthesise all review-level research articles published about LGBTQIA+ people in Africa from 2011 to 2021. Our primary aim with this overview was to consolidate and describe existing reviews in terms of geographic representativity, populations being studied, conceptual focus, methodological characteristics, findings, and recommendations. Fourteen electronic databases were searched. The initial search yielded 204 references and only 9 met all inclusion criteria. Only 10 African countries are specifically named in the final 9 reviews: Benin, Botswana, Ghana, Kenya, Lesotho, Namibia, Nigeria, South Africa, Uganda, and Zimbabwe. No review focused on intersex or asexual people. The results, therefore, are relevant primarily for LGBT+ people. South Africa produces the most amount of LGBT+ research, followed by Nigeria. Four qualitative themes were identified and discussed: (1) Criminalisation, discrimination, and stigma of LGBT+ people create a culture of fear and violence; (2) LGBT+ people experience substantial health disparities and inequities in accessing healthcare; (3) Sexual and gender minority women are excluded in research and interventions; and (4) LGBT+ affirmative practice training is urgently needed to improve diversity competence, and sensitivity. These findings can help advance an affirmative global public health agenda in and for Africa. *Correspondence: Dr Sakhile Msweli,  
[mmsweli.s@yahoo.com](mailto:mmsweli.s@yahoo.com)*

**Venter Z & Dlamini T. How the South African guidelines speak to (or speak back to) existing guidelines in other countries**

Globally, psychologists increasingly rely on guidelines to navigate LGBTQIA+ issues. Since APA's 2001 guidelines, many nations, including Australia, Britain, Ireland, and New Zealand, have developed their own. Yet, these are scarce in low- to middle-income countries. This presentation examines South Africa's unique guidelines in comparison to global counterparts like APA's 'Guidelines for Psychological Practice with Transgender and Gender Nonconforming Clients' (2015) and 'Guidelines for Psychological Practice with Sexual Minority Persons' (2021). It also considers publications like the International Labour Organisation's 'Inclusion of LGBTQ+ persons in the world of work' (2022). The discussion explores how guidelines address challenges like gender-based violence and prejudice, advocating for the safety and well-being of sexual and gender-diverse individuals. Additionally, it investigates how guidelines incorporate intersectionality and diverse cultural backgrounds, both locally and regionally. Lastly, it examines if South Africa's guidelines inspire similar initiatives in other African countries. Understanding these dynamics is essential for fostering inclusive mental health services globally.

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**MacLachlan C. Interplay of Practice Guidelines: Advancing Gender Affirming Healthcare in South Africa**

The evolution of practice guidelines in psychology and healthcare has profoundly influenced gender-affirming healthcare in South Africa. This paper examines the interplay between the South African Practice Guidelines for Psychology Professionals Working with Sexual and Gender Diversity and the Southern African HIV Clinicians Society Gender-affirming Healthcare Guideline, emphasizing their roles in providing ethical and accountable support for sexually and gender diverse clients. As a clinical psychologist deeply involved in guideline

development, the author reflects on their experiences as a co-chair of the Gender-affirming Healthcare guidelines team and their contributions to the World Association of Transgender Health's Standards of Care version 8. Their involvement in WPATH and the Professional Association of Transgender Health South Africa provided valuable insights into gender-affirming healthcare nuances. This presentation elucidates collaborative efforts between guideline development teams, stressing interdisciplinary collaboration's importance in advancing gender-affirming healthcare. It highlights guidelines' impact on healthcare worker training and underscores ongoing commitments to ethical and inclusive practices. Overall, this paper provides a comprehensive exploration of South Africa's practice guidelines, showcasing their pivotal role in advancing equitable and accessible healthcare for sexually and gender diverse individuals. *Correspondence: Rev. Chris McLachlan, [doinghopeweddings@gmail.com](mailto:doinghopeweddings@gmail.com)*

**Madlala N. Can affirmative practice guidelines help end human rights violations? A case study of the Department of Correctional Services in Gauteng**

**Background:** Among other human rights violations that thrive behind the walls of prisons are the victimization and discrimination of offenders who identify as LGBTIQ+.

**Aim:** To understand the experiences of LGBTIQ+ prisoners in South African prisons, and its implications for the provision of affirmative care by psychologists in the prison system.

**Methods:** Twenty-five participants were interviewed about their lived experiences of being sexually-and gender diverse while in prison.

**Results:** While the Department of Correctional Services (DCS) has taken steps to address the rights of LGBTIQ+ offenders, significant challenges persist, namely the

negative treatment of LGBTIQ+ offenders by correctional personnel. The results of the study show the prevalence of systemic homophobia and transphobia.

**Discussion:** The findings highlighted the complex dynamics between diverse sexual and gender identities, their performance, and the restrictive correctional culture and policies. Interventions instituted by the DCS to address these historic challenges include the development of the SOP on the management of LGBTIQ+ offenders and investing in sensitivity training on LGBTIQ+ issues for correctional personnel. Both these initiatives are still in their infancy and require tremendous support. The PsySSA Practice Guidelines are an ideal tool for use in DCS to help realise the objectives of these initiatives. *Correspondence: Dr Nkanyiso Madlala, [nkanyisom36@gmail.com](mailto:nkanyisom36@gmail.com)*

**Discussant: Sharon Horne**

The future of LGBTIQ+ psychology in (South) Africa: reflecting on the role of guidelines as an advocacy tool for scholars, activists, and practitioners.

**Wednesday, 09 October 2024**

**Symposium: Decolonial Psychology**

**Chair: Malherbe N**

**13:30 – 15:30**

**Radical Healing in and Beyond Communities: A Decolonial Reading**

Violence has always served as a central mode of governance in South Africa. Resultantly, suffering and, indeed, colonial wounding remain widespread and even normalised in South African society. Most of the psychological sciences have been largely inattentive to the structural nature of social suffering in South Africa, prioritising instead a Eurocentric, oftentimes colonising bio-

psychosocial model that takes the individual as the source and centre of all suffering. In this symposium, discussants reflect on their involvement in a community-based research project. Undertaken across three South African communities, the project sought to challenge the inadequacies of dominant psychological models while, at the same time, considering what it means to privilege indigenous and situated knowledges and decolonising healing praxes. The research has so far revealed that radical healing assumes an expansive, even contradictory, array of practices and formations. Presenters will offer reflections on the project, and engage specific conceptions of radical healing in communities, namely: Hope, Spirituality, Lekgotla, and the Archive. In this, the symposium aims to expand upon how people understand and theorise practices of healing within and against systems of coloniality in South Africa.

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### **Morkel J, Suffla S & Malherbe N. Hope and Healing: Narratives of Resistance in Local Communities**

In a world marked by the enduring impacts of colonial violence, marginalised communities continue to bear the brunt of the resultant psychological and material suffering. Yet, in the midst of such suffering, we continue to witness remarkable stories of healing. This kind of healing transcends singular resistance by weaving together hope and healing within and against broader structural issues. While some consider hope to be intrinsic to human nature, the significance of hope remains contested. In circumstances of structural violence, we can think of hope as premised on not only recognising the legacies of slavery, colonialism and apartheid, but also actively resisting these lasting structures through creative, collaborative and transformative action. In this project, resistance was enacted through community mobilisation, protest, and refusal, amongst others. These acts of

resistance represent important elements of hope and healing that centre the stories, actions, dreams and visions of individuals and communities who continue to be marginalised. Ultimately, these acts of resistance are not just for the sake of resistance. They portray a radical hope in the pursuit of justice, equality and human dignity. We discuss here the intersections of hope, creative forms of resistance, and healing in relation to ongoing social suffering.

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### **Dumani N, Suffla S & Malherbe N. Suffering and spirituality: visions and practices of healing**

Coloniality is rooted in ideological beliefs that uphold and advance the superiority of Eurocentric ways of knowing, thereby legitimising the oppression and dehumanisation of marginalised groups, perpetuating ongoing social suffering. From this purview, a range of healing interventions have been formulated to support individuals and communities in addressing such suffering. However, these often rely on Eurocentric knowledge systems that typically adopt an individualistic approach that pathologises people's experiences, limiting their effectiveness in addressing the specific needs of those affected. Consequently, these knowledges oftentimes neglect the structural forces underlying social suffering, potentially leading to some individuals enduring even deeper social wounds. Radical notions of healing seek to challenge dehumanising colonial knowledges and practices. We draw from a radical healing orientation to consider the ways in which spirituality may foster healing. In the project, participants exemplified enactments of spirituality in healing through prayer, arts, music, storytelling, social connectedness, nature, and relying on a higher power. In this presentation, we delve into the concept of spirituality and its significance in healing,

while shedding light on how spirituality can foster critical awareness of oppression, as well as shape the envisioning of collective liberation and justice. *Correspondence: Ms. Noxolo Dumani, [dumann@unisa.ac.za](mailto:dumann@unisa.ac.za)*

**Ngwenya N, Suffla S & Malherbe N.  
Constructions of healing through living archives**

With the aim to expand on a holistic understanding of healing, we consider the ways that healing is constructed and practiced in informal settlement contexts. In the context of the excessive level of structural violence, to which systems such as slavery, colonialism, and apartheid have subjected Black communities - as well as the epistemic violence and epistemicide that have repressed and erased Black people's cultures - beliefs and practices, we engage radical healing through the archive. Archives have historically been used to establish the dominance of Western constructions through the dispersal and erasure of indigenous knowledges. Indigenous constructions of healing are therefore typically not recognised or preserved in official archives, and when they are, they are often disembodied from their living contexts and people. This highlights the need for the surfacing of a living archive on healing. Accordingly, in this presentation we will examine the ways by which the marginalised voices, knowledges, and practices of radical healing may be privileged through the Black archive. *Correspondence: Ms Nomagugu Ngwenya, [noma.li.ngwenya@gmail.com](mailto:noma.li.ngwenya@gmail.com)*

**Mavundla B, Suffla S & Malherbe N. Lekgotla as an onto-epistemic healing response in communities**

In this presentation, we employ the Sesotho concept of Lekgotla as an endogenous framework for thinking about how communities convene to collectively deliberate and address both shared

challenges as well as community discord. We conceptualise discord within communities as existing within a historical perspective and that have been generated across difference. This reading enables us to treat discord within communities as sociogenic wounding generated by historical conditions and current marginalising socio-economic and political processes. Lekgotla is thus understood here as a healing process in itself that may enable communities to act together to address challenges, weave together fragmented experiences, and move towards bridging discord. However, healing understood through the lens of lekgotla does not provide definitive understandings of healing or solutions. Rather - and given the collectivist principles of lekgotla - healing is understood as also requiring collective reflection and action, all of which are to be rooted in the experiences of those affected.

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**Wednesday, 09 October 2024**

**Paper Presentations: Social Psychology**

**Chair: Nkosi J**

**13:30 – 15:30**

**Nkosi K. Money in Black: young black professionals and money-cultures**

Money is a complex idea human beings have ever invented, and the same can be said about race. This research explores money and race as constructs that impact how we interact with the world. What people believe money is and how it is used is associated with the history of a person or group, which is influenced by historical constructions such as race, gender, geography, and other factors of subjectivity. This study addresses how black people relate with the construct of money at both a collective and individual level. The research will look at the link between

institutional influences, individual and group behaviours by using a variation of data. This study uses interviews with young black professionals and explores the relationship with processes of exchange, investments, saving, debt, consumption, and other processes in the end of the teleological (i.e. meaning making processes) sequences of money. This would include the creation of value, exchange, ideas on savings, debt, investments, and other money activities for racialised subjects. In other words, the focus is on the social psychology and affective dimensions of money habits and behaviour amongst black professionals, as a way of theorizing the psychology of racialized money cultures. *Correspondence: Mr. Kagiso Nkosi, [2378542@students.wits.ac.za](mailto:2378542@students.wits.ac.za)*

**Maphosa S. Stigma and Disability: A permanent imprint on the mind of a child with disability**

During early development, as children integrate into society and become members of social groups, they develop not only social identity and bonds with family and peers, but also social preferences, prejudices, and intergroup biases. Increasing familiarity with individual characteristics of the immediate family and surrounding social circle makes children aware of multiple ways people are grouped in the society. Perception of disability is an important construct affecting not only the well-being of children with disabilities, but also the moral compass of the society. Negative attitudes toward disability disempower children with disabilities and lead to their social exclusion and isolation. The current review explored the perception of stigma and disability through the Theory of Mind, which is defined as the ability to understand that others' perspective, knowledge, beliefs, thoughts, and intentions may differ from one's own. Understanding the perception of disability from an early age and the potential factors influencing stigma attached to disability, would allow for the

design of effective interventions. These interventions would improve children's attitudes toward peers with disabilities, reduce intergroup biases, and promote social inclusion, thereby building resilience for children with disabilities.

**Keywords:** stigma, permanent imprint, Theory of Mind, perception of disability, childhood.  
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**Gwadiso X, Somhlaba NZ & Jackson K. Young university-going men's perceptions of the #MenAreTrash movement and its impact on their masculinity.**

The #MenAreTrash movement has seen many strides and has gained much traction and support from society. Although the societal issues of gender-based violence were a huge concern way before the time of social media, the #MenAreTrash movement can be seen as a more recent attempt to address the issues of Gender-Based Violence (GBV), and Intimate Partner Violence (IPV). There are many ways in which young university-going men have been impacted by the movement (which includes being influenced through new ways of viewing their masculinity in a mostly patriarchally defined society), thus necessitating an ongoing involvement of young university-going men in conversations encompassing both the movement and psychosocial issues surrounding GBV. The study explored young university-going men's perceptions of the #MenAreTrash movement, its impact on their behaviour and finally on their sense of masculinity. The study was ontologically and epistemologically located through the use of constructionism and interpretivism as frameworks defining the lens of the study. Methodologically, this study was an explorative qualitative study which utilised individual interviews to collect data. The participants were young university-going men from a University in the Western Cape, and they were recruited through purposive sampling strategies. The sample size for the

study was 12 participants. *Correspondence:*  
Mr. Xolisa Gwadiso,  
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**Sutherland E & Lesch E. South African  
Widowed Fathers' Constructions of  
Fatherhood**

Literature and research indicate that spousal loss negatively affects the remaining spouse and the child (or children). They are compelled to make critical adjustments psychologically, emotionally, logistically, socially, financially and parentally. Yet the experiences of widowed fathers with age-dependent children have been neglected in research. Moreover, most of the limited research has been conducted in the global north with middle-class, Caucasian Euro-American men. It, therefore, cannot be assumed to apply to South African widowed fathers as fathering and fatherhood are viewed as social constructs that may manifest differently across various socio-cultural contexts. Guided by social constructionism and the theory of caring masculinities, this qualitative study addressed that gap by interviewing 17 purposively sampled South African widowed fathers to explore their constructions of fatherhood, as well as specific challenges and commitments expected of widowed fathers. Thematic analysis produced the following themes (i), Altered paternal parenting roles: sole primary caregiver (ii), Altered reality: new priorities, maintaining parental consistency, structure and discipline (iii) Challenges: logistical, financial, parental (iv), Support: social, work and family. The findings show that widowed fathers need longer-term support after the passing of their partner to assist them in navigating a radically altered personal and family landscape. *Correspondence:* Mrs. Elna Sutherland, [elna@sutherlandqs.co.za](mailto:elna@sutherlandqs.co.za)

**Wednesday, 09 October 2024**

**Symposium: Educational Psychology**

**Chair: Erasmus P**

**13:30 – 15:30**

**How Practitioners can use Psychological  
Resources to Address the National  
Mathematics Crisis**

Reports on the 2023 National Senior Certificate (NSC) Examinations outcomes reveal a national mathematics pass rate of 63.5%. Yet, further examination of these pass rates shows that only 3.4% of learners who wrote mathematics passed with distinction (Mweli, 2023). With under 5% of the Matric group of 2023 having achieved above 80% in their final mathematics examination, these rates are concerning for South Africa's future as a digital leader. Simply contributing mathematics performance to a single factor, such as higher innate intelligence or teaching efficiency, neither motivates nor encourages learners to exhibit any effort nor reflects the multi-faceted complexity of mathematical learning (Harris, 2018). Therefore, to appreciate the variability in factors that underlie mathematics performance in high school learners, this symposium's value lies in evaluating the dynamic interplay between several behavioural and environmental factors. This symposium comprehensively covers a number of factors to be considered for mathematics performance. In highlighting the factors that best contribute to math achievement, the symposium empowers practitioners to disentangle this complex concern and guide pupils to achieve their potential in mathematics. *Correspondence:* Dr Petro Erasmus, [Petro.Erasmus@nwu.ac.za](mailto:Petro.Erasmus@nwu.ac.za)

**Rajab P & Motileng B. The value of  
developing positive study orientations to  
impact mathematics achievement**

Simply contributing maths marks to intelligence does not account for the multi-faceted reality of maths performance. The current study investigated the value of both cognitive and behavioural factors in predicting mathematics performance, as well as the interactions between these factors. A quantitative, cross-sectional design was employed. 187 grade nine learners completed the Ravens' Standard Progressive Matrices and the Study Orientation towards Mathematics to establish their fluid intelligence, and study attitude, mathematics anxiety, study habits, problem-solving behaviours and study milieu respectively. Pearson correlation coefficients established the relationships between fluid intelligence, study orientations towards mathematics, and maths marks. These factors were also included in a linear regression and dominance analysis to compare their relative weights in influencing maths performance. Study attitude and fluid intelligence were found to be the most dominant, significant factors in the model, explaining 39% of total variance ( $R^2 = .390$ ,  $F(6, 180) = 19.2$ ,  $p < .001$ ). Moderator regressions between fluid intelligence and each of the study orientations further found that fluid intelligence and study orientations independently influence mathematics performance. This study concludes that educators and parents should support curriculum change that encourages positive attitudes towards Mathematics and create supportive environments conducive to effective learning. *Correspondence: Dr Pakeezah Rajab, [pakeezah93@gmail.com](mailto:pakeezah93@gmail.com)*

**Erasmus P, Rajab P & Stols A. Emotional intelligence-based development initiatives: Recommendations to promote overall and Mathematics-specific academic performance**

With adolescence comes important challenges, including transitioning through school careers; from subject selection to academic performance in challenging subjects like Mathematics, to career planning. It is

known that during phases of transitioning, adolescents are more likely to perform poorly due to adjustment difficulties. However, it is proposed that utilising emotional intelligence (EI) and personality strengths could indirectly guide adolescents through such difficulties to reach their potential. This paper demonstrates the value of EI for adolescents when considering academic performance in difficult subject areas. The results from two studies conducted with adolescents in the South African context will be discussed. The first study focuses on Mathematics-specific performance and includes correlates with EI (EQ-i: Youth Version;  $n=435$ ). The second study included an updated EI measure (EQ-i Youth;  $n=284$ ) which predicted subject-specific and general academic performance. Analysis techniques included correlational and regression-based dominance analysis, which confirmed the relationship between EI and academic performance, with Self-Expression being found to be the most dominant predictor of Mathematics mark. When considered alongside other interventions, these findings have implications for the construction and evaluation of development initiatives that advance academic performance in general, but also Mathematics-specific teaching and learning initiatives. *Correspondence: Dr Petro Erasmus, [Petro.Erasmus@nwu.ac.za](mailto:Petro.Erasmus@nwu.ac.za)*

**Erasmus P. Mathematics – Using the Whartels TM Play method to develop brain awareness and EQ in pre-and primary school learners**

This paper motivates and describes how play could be implemented to develop the concept of brain awareness along body awareness in pre-and primary school learners. Research informed models of play therapy uses the therapeutic powers of play to help young children to learn to regulate the nervous-system and in doing so being able to form more secure attachments, develop mindfulness and emotional intelligence. By

creating safe environments for the child to explore and play with the world of mathematics, it creates positive schemas. The child not only master maths concepts but develop a positive study orientation towards maths and develops maths resilience. Research findings indicate that emotional intelligence, study orientation, motivation, resilience can predict not only the mathematics achievement of middle adolescents but are also linked to increased likelihood of taking advanced mathematics courses. Developing emotional intelligence and study orientation in mathematics may be a vital missing link in maths achievement and should start at a very young age when the brain is still developing. Children learn through play. Young children also need to be creative when discovering the world of maths. The Whartels™ Play method uses play therapy principles to develop not only maths concepts but EQ, self-regulation, study orientation and maths resilience.

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**Erasmus P, Roulstone A, Bahnmuller J & Morsanyi K. Maths Whartels - What counts in early mathematics achievement? Calculation fluency predicts concurrent maths achievement**

This study examined a range of paper-based group-administered screening tasks to see which maths skills were most associated with concurrent maths achievement when controlling for age, socio-economic status, motor speed, and language background. Participants were Grade 2 children (N=150) from two primary schools in South Africa. Correlational and multiple regression analyses revealed that the best predictor of concurrent maths achievement was a novel one-minute paper and pencil group-administered addition calculation fluency task. Findings demonstrated that fluency in basic addition calculation skills was an effective predictor of maths achievement. As a result, individual

differences in basic addition skills may provide a strong indicator of exceptionally low or exceptionally high mathematical performance. Moreover, our findings suggested that the one-minute calculation fluency task may provide an effective screening tool to support educators with the responsibility of identifying learners with exceptionally low or high mathematics achievement. *Correspondence: Dr Petro Erasmus, [Petro.Erasmus@nwu.ac.za](mailto:Petro.Erasmus@nwu.ac.za)*

**Wednesday, 09 October 2024**

**Paper Presentations: Teaching, Training and Curriculum Transformation**

**Chair: Franciscus G**

**15:45 – 17:00**

**Witbooi S. Reviewing a South African clinical psychology training curriculum during the 21st century: looking back to move forward**

Globally, mental illness is increasingly a leading cause of disease burden and particularly impacts low and middle-income countries (LMICs). Individualistic, Euro-American, and biomedical mental health approaches cannot be solely and uncritically utilized in LMICs without engaging the socioeconomic, cultural, and historical contexts integral to meaningful mental health understanding and intervention. The "relevance debate" in South African clinical psychology questions the profession's ability to be aptly responsive to the population's mental health needs. The training curriculum of clinical psychologists at universities acts as a means through which the profession constructs, reproduces, and expresses itself, providing an opportunity for an increasingly relevant clinical psychology practice in South Africa to be stimulated. An on-the-ground analysis of developments in clinical psychology training over time can reveal shifts

towards a more relevant clinical psychology praxis, or a lack thereof. This instrumental case study utilises a mixed methods sequential explanatory design to critically review the evolution of a South African clinical training curriculum from 2001 to 2023 - analysing changes and consistencies in training and surfacing the local and international contextual factors and processes acting on the curriculum. The identified patterns and insights can be mobilised towards an increasingly relevant South African clinical psychology curriculum and profession. *Correspondence: Miss. Simthandile Witbooi, [simthandilew@gmail.com](mailto:simthandilew@gmail.com)*

**Franciscus G, Symington & Byne-Ross K. Working with the statutory bodies BPsych. Equivalent programme: a reflection of a private institution in Cape Town**

The BPsych. Equivalent qualification is aimed at producing competent, ethical and professional Registered Counsellors who can meet the needs of South Africa in order to make primary psychological services available in diverse settings. This qualification is critical in providing good quality psychological care at primary health care level. In addition to the academic modules, the students are placed in sites for the practicum phase of the programme. The students are required to spend about six months or the equivalent of hours where they are trained in a variety of skills needed to become a Registered Counsellor with the Health Profession Council of South Africa (HPCSA). Our institution has been offering the programme since 2016. Managing the program involves addressing governance issues to meet CHE and HPCSA accreditation requirements. However, challenges, primarily in the practicum phase, persist. While local studies often focus on students' and coordinators' experiences, this paper concentrates on the custodians' reflections, detailing the management of the entire process over the past seven years. The paper covers collaboration with statutory

bodies and practicum sites, highlighting challenges faced in working with various stakeholders. The presentation includes our expectations and suggestions to bodies, aiming for continued program success and community impact. *Correspondence: Mrs. Geraldine Franciscus, [geraldinef@cornerstone.ac.za](mailto:geraldinef@cornerstone.ac.za)*

**Chitanga J, Sobotker N & Adams-Adonis N. A reflection of teaching statistics skills to Psychology students at a private institution**

This study offers a reflective analysis of teaching statistics in the context of Psychology at a private institution. Pursuing postgraduate studies in Psychology becomes essential for those aspiring to contribute to professional mental health care in the country. It is a common challenge that many students, despite their interest in psychology and aspirations to work in mental health, often struggle with research and statistics modules. Numeric data and analysis are not typically anticipated in their career paths. However, research methodology, which includes a significant focus on quantitative research designs and statistics, remains a core module at undergraduate and postgraduate Honours levels. While existing studies have focused on the teaching and learning of statistics in other fields, there is a noticeable gap in the exploration of this aspect within the social and health sciences. The findings uncovered that many psychology students are surprised upon encountering modules that emphasise research and statistics. There appears to be a prevalent anxiety surrounding numeric information among these students. This study sheds light on the challenges and perceptions surrounding the teaching of statistics in psychology, emphasising the need for innovative approaches to engage students and alleviate anxiety associated with numerical data. *Correspondence: Mr. Jabulani Chitanga, [jabulanic@cornerstone.ac.za](mailto:jabulanic@cornerstone.ac.za)*

**Wednesday, 09 October 2024**

**Paper Presentations: Violence, Police & Correctional Services**

**Chair: Nkosi G**

**15:45 – 17:00**

**Mhlangulana A, Hussien TS, Adams M & Hole L Black women and technology-facilitated gender-based violence: a decolonial feminist exploration**

With the complexity of access to technology, we have been confronted with different forms of violence against individuals and collectives. As such, there is a growing research interest in exploring and understanding the impact of technology-facilitated gender-based violence (TFGBV) against marginalised communities. Existing literature covering TFGBV mostly centres violence observed on social media platforms and manifestations of different forms of violence including, but not limited to, hate speech, digital sexual harassment, image-based sexual abuse, sexual aggression, unsolicited comments based on the individual's gender, sexuality or the intersection of both. The Hub for decolonial feminist psychologies in Africa (The Hub) has recently started looking at this phenomenon by centering black women & gender non-conforming persons experience. As black, predominantly women and gender non-conforming (GNC) researchers, we centre the identity of black women in this research because we recognize the intersectional nature of GBV, and we wish to extend our research resources to the growing research and knowledge production on TFGBV. We also recognize the need to explore the ways in which GBV enters digital spaces in SA, given our country's context. Thus, we propose a decolonial feminist approach to exploratory research on TFGBV as means to address the issues outlined. *Correspondence: Miss.*

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**Kabane V, Viljoen B & Minty Y. The experiences of the mental health care users and their family members when interacting with the South African Police Services: a qualitative study conducted at Chris Hani Baragwanath Academic Hospital**

In South Africa mental health users (MHCU) may rely on the South African Police Services (SAPS) to access health care. The mental health care act (No 17 of 2002) has defined the role of SAPS. The experiences of MHCU are not well described in literature. The objectives of the study are 1) to obtain detailed description of MHCU and their families when interacting with the members of SAPS 2) describe the attitudes of the SAPS members towards MHCU, as experienced by MHCU themselves and their families 3) to identify what was individually meaningful to MHCUs and their families regarding their experience with the SAPS. A qualitative descriptive phenomenology approach was adopted for this study to obtain in depth rich data from the participants. Data were collected through 15 semi-structured interviews including 5 inpatients, 5 outpatients and 5 family members. Common themes were derived using thematic analysis. Insights gained from this study can be utilised in subsequent research to overall improve the nature of these described interactions.

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**Hughes C, Errington S & Omar S. The therapeutic power of paws: examining the impact of therapy dogs in courtrooms for children testifying in child abuse cases**

This paper presents the TeddyPups Project, a therapy dog initiative run by Top Dogs as a part of the Teddy Bear Foundation's Court preparation programme for children testifying in child abuse cases. The paper provides a descriptive account of the effectiveness of therapy dogs in supporting children who have experienced trauma and are involved in legal

proceedings. It also introduces the use of transitional objects in the form of knitted dogs, as a part of the therapeutic method. Anecdotal evidence relating to the efficacy of combining the evidence-based therapeutic effects of trained therapy dogs, with the established presence of knitted dogs for comfort in the court room (where therapy animals are not yet permitted), will be discussed. The preliminary evidence suggests that therapy dogs have a positive impact on reducing anxiety in traumatized children during courtroom appearances, and sheds light on the potential for integrating animal-assisted interventions within the legal system to create a more supportive environment for vulnerable children. *Correspondence: Dr Conor Hughes, [conor.hughes@webafrica.org.za](mailto:conor.hughes@webafrica.org.za)*

**Wednesday, 09 October 2024**

**Paper Presentations: Educational Psychology**

**Chair: Crause E**

**15:45 – 17:00**

**Crause E, Blomerus L, Visagie G, Raubenheimer G, France T, Fisher G, Cross V, Marais I & Mare C. Navigating the spectrum: innovations in ASD management within the Western Cape education sector**

This paper delves into the Western Cape Education Department's (WCED) strategies for Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) management, spotlighting the integration of standardized assessment and diagnostic frameworks to enhance understanding of ASD within the province. It emphasizes the collaborative efforts between the education and public health sectors in addressing ASD, underscoring a holistic approach to intervention. A critical analysis is offered on the distinct management strategies required in rural versus urban settings, reflecting on the unique challenges and solutions for each.

Moreover, the paper explores the WCED's initiatives in future-proofing access to psychological services, ensuring that students with ASD receive consistent and tailored support. Through examining these areas, the paper aims to illustrate the WCED's commitment to inclusivity and excellence in education for students with ASD. It calls for ongoing innovation, collaboration, and adaptation to meet the diverse needs of students across the spectrum, proposing a model for public education systems worldwide to support neurodiversity effectively. *Correspondence: Dr Ewald Crause, [ewald.crause@westerncape.gov.za](mailto:ewald.crause@westerncape.gov.za)*

**Pillay J. School staff awareness of psychosocial support available as per the Integrated School Health Policy (ISHP) in South Africa**

**Background:** In 2012, the South African government initiated the Integrated School Health Policy (ISHP) to serve as a national guideline on providing school health and support services. However, under-resourced government schools are still not sufficiently equipped to address their learners' psychosocial challenges.

**Aim:** This study aimed to assess which psychosocial interventions implemented at the schools the school staff are aware of.  
**Setting:** A total of 50 school staff members from five under-resourced primary schools in [location masked for blind review] completed a feedback questionnaire designed by the investigators.

**Methods:** This descriptive study follows a quantitative descriptive design. A comparative descriptive analysis between schools using frequencies, percentages, and graphs was used to analyse the results.

**Results:** Results indicate that a school's staff's ability to support their learners varies per school and is based on their school's compliance to training their teachers on the school safety protocols and is not affected much by external training. Schools which

follow ISPH regulations on staff training of protocols, better equip their teachers to observe psychosocial challenges their learners face.

Conclusion: Despite the availability of guidelines, this study observes a gap in educators' observations of mental health concerns or external stakeholders responsible for non-physical assistance. *Correspondence:* Prof. Jace Pillay, [jacep@uj.ac.za](mailto:jacep@uj.ac.za)

### **Mahlangu P. The effect of life-design-based intervention on further education and training phase learners' career indecision**

The study explored the effect of life design intervention on learners in the FET phase who attend an urban school in the district of Nkangala in the Mpumalanga Province of South Africa. The focus of the study was on life design counselling approach as the appropriate approach for enhancing career decision-making of learners. A qualitative research design was chosen to study the research topic. Intervention research was therefore used to answer the research questions. The intervention activities and techniques that were used were drawn from the Career Interest Profile (CIP, version 6) (Maree, 2017) and the life design intervention strategies including structured and semi-structured interviews. Other techniques of qualitative data gathering that were used include participants' drawings, collages, and lifelines. Thematic Analysis (Clarke & Braun, 2013) was used to analyze the data. The findings revealed that life design-based intervention increased participants career decision-making capacity and their career adaptability in respect of the four dimensions of career adaptability, namely concern, control, curiosity, and confidence. The findings of the study suggests that learners' career decision-making challenges were resolved and they were able to make informed career decisions. *Correspondence:* Mr. Peter Mahlangu, [mahlangupeter10@gmail.com](mailto:mahlangupeter10@gmail.com)

**Wednesday, 09 October 2024**

**Invited Address: Psychological Assessment**

**Chair: Maree D**

**15:45 – 16:20**

### **Laher S. Changing mindsets: Psychological assessment futures in South Africa**

Psychological assessment has been integral to psychology but its applicability has often been debated, especially when assessments developed in the Global North are used globally. The universalist assumptions of these assessments have been challenged, recognizing the impact of cultural differences influenced by individual, community, and broader social and political conditions on assessment. In South Africa, the history of psychological assessment reflects not only Western influence but also complicity in apartheid. Despite the significant changes that occurred in the 1990s in assessment, issues of access and distribution persist. The COVID-19 pandemic prompted a swift transition to online assessments, which increased access but also highlighted and perpetuated existing inequalities. After three decades of democracy, it is crucial to reconsider the role of assessment in South Africa. This paper draws on peer-reviewed research and personal experiences to provide a historical overview of both global and local assessment practices, focusing on South Africa's unique journey. It discusses current challenges and progress in psychological assessment, emphasizing the need for inclusion, indigenization, and innovation. The paper advocates for an agenda that prioritizes accessibility, relevance, and responsiveness to societal needs in South African psychological assessment, aiming to create a more equitable and effective system.

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**Wednesday, 09 October 2024**

**Invited Address: Psychological Assessment**

**Chair: Maree D**

**16:20 – 17:00**

**Ehigie B. Call for increased psychometric practice in Africa**

Psychology is the scientific study of the mind and behavior, hence psychologists are actively involved in the study and understanding of mental processes, brain functions, and behavior. By inference, the science of psychology centers on psychometrics, which is the measurement or quantification of behavioral properties or constructs. While it is much easier to understand and appreciate the measurement of physical properties, it is a herculean task quantifying human behavior; because of its complexity and dynamism. Considering the challenges faced by most nations in Africa, especially in terms of behavioral dispositions to corruption, terrorism, cultism, banditry, inter-ethnic, communal and religious conflicts, and the like; the call for more scientific approach to understanding the behaviors of Africans would require the use of home-made psychological tests. In an environment where African scholars rely more on foreign psychological tests, the practice of the profession becomes limited in effectively capturing the behavior of Africans. Trying to understand how Africans behave, why they behave the way they do, prediction and modification of their behaviors is a great challenge for the psychologists. There is therefore a call for conscious intensive advocacy, training and practice in the field of psychometrics.

Psychologists in Africa are more exposed to foreign developed and standardized psychological tests than locally manufactured tests. Consequently, students in higher institutions tend more to studying variables

that these tests capture, in the African environment, even when their prevalence may be low. Due to limitedness in tests to capture the unique behavioral problems in Africa, many pertinent “African behavioral problems” are left unstudied. Practitioners in the field also find it difficult to address some behavioral issues due to unavailability of psychological tests. It is on this note that this paper would promote the importance of locally developed psychological tests that would readily capture prevalent behaviors in African, and outline some tips on how to develop and validate psychological tests for African use. *Correspondence: Prof. Benjamin Ehigie, [benosang@yahoo.com](mailto:benosang@yahoo.com)*

**Wednesday, 09 October 2024**

**Paper Presentations: Community Psychology**

**Chair: Sigamoney R**

**15:45 – 17:00**

**Sigamoney R. Exploring narratives of coping and resilience with socio-economic and emotional challenges in a group of Zimbabwean migrants: a qualitative study**

The research explores the narratives of coping and resilience relating to the socio-economic and emotional difficulties of Zimbabwean migrants residing in Johannesburg. Social constructionism was utilised following subject matters used to be supported by way of a study method. The themes were based on the participants' narratives. Thematic analysis was undertaken to analyse the data connecting it literature. The sample generated a rich account of the participants' experiences. awareness of themes, such as the challenges and coping in trying times of migration, as well as an in-depth interpretation of their resilience. A qualitative research method was employed using Purposeful sampling. Semi-structured in-depth interviews with three (3)

male and three (3) female. were used. the thematic analysis method was used to analyse the data. Results from this study will influence the progress of a unique review and support programme for the migrants who have endured socio-economic and emotional challenges. The results disclosed the reasons for migrating to South Africa, the challenges in the country of resettlement, socio-economic and emotional challenges, and the strategies used to cope and become resilient Zimbabwean migrants coped with resilience by utilising social networks, religion, self-regulation, and mobile technology. Key terms: coping, resilience, socio-economic, emotional, migrants, Zimbabwe.

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**Agyei F, de-Graft Aikins A, Osei-Tutu A & Annor F. Building mental health competent communities: insights from a critical social psychological study in Ghana**

Resource-poor communities are disproportionately affected by mental disorders. Improving mental health in these areas requires building their mental health competence. However, there are limited studies in the African subregion to inform interventions. This study integrates the social psychology of participation and community mental health competency models to analyze mental health competencies in Jamestown and Usshertown, two urban poor communities in Accra, Ghana. The study explores three features of community mental health competency: symbolic, material, and relational competencies. Mixed-method data were gathered from 384 survey respondents and 77 qualitative participants. Findings revealed three key insights. Symbolic competence is high, with significant awareness of prevalent mental health disorders and multilevel risk factors. Mental illness stigma and empathy coexisted, with cognitive-emotional representations influencing the legitimization of disorders.

Material competence is extremely low, with structural poverty, housing challenges, and joblessness exacerbating mental health struggles and care quality. Relational competence is also low, despite high bonding social capital, with limited bridging and linking social capital. Existing partnerships offer opportunities for strategic alliances. The study underscores the critical need for culturally tailored interventions to build mental health competence in resource-limited communities. Keywords: mental health competence, community mental health, social psychology of participation. *Correspondence: Mr Francis Agyei, [fagyei@uhas.edu.gh](mailto:fagyei@uhas.edu.gh)*

**Thomas N & Hendricks L Holistic Actions for Preventing Pregnancy in Youth under 12 years (HAPPY12): A community collaboration in Cape Town**

Teen pregnancy in South Africa (SA) is escalating, but even more so for girls under the age of 12 years. In SA, there are additional cultural and economic aspects that need to be considered. This community collaborative social impact initiative was designed to create sustainable interventions to increase knowledge about pre-teen pregnancy in primary school learners across Cape Town. It follows a 2022 pilot study, which informed the current intervention. We actioned this intervention at three primary schools and layered it with a parenting initiative, followed by a creative health festival- which will take place in June 2024. The school programme includes an interactive six-week programme on self-confidence, body awareness, drugs, sexual reproductive health, bullying, gender-based violence, suicide, sex, and communication. Several lessons were learned in the pilot phase including that children under 12 are not aware of the sexual reproductive clinical services available in their communities as they are not usually targeted in these interventions. Additionally, children were open to talking about their experiences

and asking questions related to their sexual health, but parents felt uncomfortable. This project hopes to provide a scalable and sustainable model which can be implemented in primary schools across the Western Cape.

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**Wednesday, 09 October 2024**

**Roundtable: Health Psychology**

**Chair: Mathole S.H**

**15:45 – 17:00**

**Mathole SH, Bell C & Havenga C. Exploring creative ways of doing psychotherapy with stroke patients**

This presentation focuses on psychology as not just a science but also an art that allows creative ways to work with individuals who may be differently abled, such as individuals who have suffered a cerebrovascular accident (stroke). From the perspective of a psychologist who works in a physical rehabilitation hospital, emphasis is made on the importance of mental health services for stroke patients, highlighting how crucial it is to take a holistic approach to recovery (physical symptoms, social factors and mental factors), as this approach positively impacts overall recovery. When stroke patients don't receive adequate mental health support, their overall recovery can be hindered and patients can experience reduced motivation to pursue rehabilitation. The virtuous cycle of psychological care is explained, as well as the role of psycho-pharmacological intervention and how these positively contribute towards recovery. Ways of working with patients who have aphasia and apraxia are also discussed, as well as conditions that may warrant an individual being unsuitable for psychotherapy. Lastly, a section on navigating relationships and sexual functioning post stroke is discussed (sex counselling). *Correspondence:*

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**Wednesday, 09 October 2024**

**Invited Symposium: Clinical Psychology**

**Chair: Suffla S**

**15:45 – 17:00**

**Decoloniality, Woundedness and Healing: Psychology 30 years On**

In this 30th anniversary celebration of psychology in South Africa, we ask: how do we attune our souls, minds and bodies to our woundedness and healing? What kinships, solidarities, and communities remain important as part of our envisioning of decolonized futures? We come together in this symposium to wrestle with woundedness and healing registers via the lens of decoloniality. In South Africa's immediate transition into democracy, the burning question of how a country heals itself from its traumatic past was an urgent one. It is no less urgent today. The landscape has certainly changed but also remains the same in significant ways. In addition to grappling with the losses generated by a traumatic past, we must also contend with the losses generated by experiences of modernity. The injunction to 'move on' from the past and instead grapple with modern pressing concerns misses the mark: which is that woundedness and healing remain very much interwoven in multiple temporalities of past, present and future. The decolonial turn demands that we remain attune to intergenerational grappling with the different gains and losses of post-apartheid South Africa. It demands that we interrogate racialization, classed and gendered logics that remain insidious and recalcitrant in their ability to place a stranglehold on healing. It also demands that we think imaginatively on how we

understand, depict and live with life both in its affirming and debilitating forms.

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**Clark J. My wounded walk home: My 30-year sojourn to a decolonial feminist praxis of psychology**

As a way of reflecting on multifaceted woundedness and the possibilities of healing, this presentation reflects on critical points of my 30 year personal-professional journey through psychology. I explore what it means subjectively to be both 'within and against' systems (including those of professionalisation) experienced as oppressive and violent. I trace my path to decolonial feminist praxis and the ways in which my current work on healing justice and the radical well-being of Black womxn challenges the parameters of psychotherapy and psychology more generally.

*Correspondence: Dr Jude Clark, [Judeclark7@gmail.com](mailto:Judeclark7@gmail.com)*

**Williams R. Elisions, denial, and numbing: past and present in collective trauma and wellbeing**

It is undeniable that a past defined by racial oppression has severely impacted South Africa's collective psyche. In addition, we are presently besieged by – violence that is affecting communities daily, high poverty, hunger and unemployment levels, institutional corruption, crises in basic services related to health, housing, water, electricity and education, a growing inequality gap, and ongoing powerplays between political parties who are failing to prioritise governance. This presentation will consider: The implications of this past and present for collective psychosocial wellbeing? What levels of wounding, psychological distress, and trauma psychology is ready to respond to? What elisions, denial, and numbing, are we not acknowledging nationally and

professionally? *Correspondence: Miss Rejane Williams, [rejane@iafrica.com](mailto:rejane@iafrica.com)*

**Kiguwa P. Thinking with and against African Psychology**

In this presentation, I think with Sara Ahmed's idea of futurities and hope to elaborate on some of the promises but also the possible misrecognitions of African psychology as a panacea of our historical harms and trauma. In other words, I think with and against African psychology to argue for an approach to healing that is, ironically, rooted in suspension of hope, whether embodied in movements espousing decolonial and African-oriented movements. *Correspondence: Prof. Peace Kiguwa, [peace.kiguwa@wits.ac.za](mailto:peace.kiguwa@wits.ac.za)*

**Wednesday, 09 October 2024**

**Roundtable: Ethics**

**Chair: Du Rand D**

**15:45 – 17:00**

**Du Rand D & Cherrington A. Self-care as an ethical act to restore relational harmony and collective well-being.**

Feedback from last year's roundtable discussion on self-care as an ethical responsibility in community psychology highlighted the need for mental health professionals to have more platforms for sharing experiences, challenges and creating collective self-care practices. This current roundtable is a response to this feedback. Central to community psychology and Indigenous epistemologies are concepts like mutual care and compassion, reciprocity, interconnectedness, harmony and collective healing and well-being. This roundtable, will reframe self-care not merely as an individual endeavour, but as a reciprocal service to oneself and others, acknowledging the interconnected empowerment that nurturing oneself has on relational well-being and social

harmony. Indigenous communities have long used practices like talking circles to foster mutual care, compassion and collective healing. The aim of this roundtable is to enact a sharing circle to create an inclusive holding space of mutual respect, acceptance and care in which stories of coping and self-care can be shared. The act of being, sharing, and belonging is thus intended to foster hope and wellbeing for those who are often in the frontlines of holding it for others but seldom for themselves or each other. Participation is encouraged and various forms of expression, including silent reflections are welcomed.

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**Thursday, 10 October 2024**

**Invited Address: Intervention**

**Chair: Bawa U**

**08:00 – 08:45**

**Balayulu, O. Psychology in DR Congo, from 1954 to the present days**

From 1954 to 2024, 70 years of existence of Lovanium, a pioneering university in the DRC under the colonial yoke, within Faculty Institute of Psychology and Pedagogy attached to the Faculty of Philosophy and Letters. Several Belgian studies of the period reveal colonial objectives and interests, characterized by intentional biases of the authors (Maistriaux, d'Ombredane). The Institute of Psychology and Pedagogy of Lovanium had favored studies of measurement and appreciation of the intelligence of the Congolese, no significant difference with the white man. In 2002, the clinical psychology option appeared at the University of Kinshasa, 48 years after work and school psychology options. Already in 1983, six clinical psychologists from the CNPP and seven others created the Association of Clinical Psychologists of Zaire (UPCZ). The

term "UNION" symbolizing the struggle of a profession. In 2003 creation of the profession of clinical psychologist, publication Official Journal/RDC n°7 and 8/2004. All these official documents make the UNPC the first association of officially recognized psychologists in the country. In 2017 UNPC joined PAPU (Pan-African Union of Psychologists). In 2019 UNPC and PAPU are organizing an international conference in Kinshasa. A member of the UNPC sits on the executive committee of PAPU.

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[oleabalayulu@gmail.com](mailto:oleabalayulu@gmail.com)

**Balayulu, O. La psychologie en RD Congo, de 1954 à nos jours**

*De 1954 à 2024, 70 ans d'existence de Lovanium, université pionnière en RDC sous le joug colonial, dedans Institut facultaire de psychologie et pédagogie rattaché à la faculté de Philosophie et Lettres. Plusieurs études Belges de l'époque révèlent des objectifs et intérêts coloniaux, se caractérisant par des biais intentionnels des auteurs (Maistriaux, d'Ombredane). L'Institut de Psychologie et Pédagogie de Lovanium avaient privilégiées les études de mesure et appréciation de l'intelligence des Congolais, pas de différence significative avec l'homme blanc. En 2002, est apparue l'option psychologie clinique à l'université de Kinshasa, cela 48 ans après options psychologie du travail et scolaire. Déjà en 1983, six psychologues cliniciens du CNPP et sept autres créent association des psychologues cliniciens du Zaïre (UPCZ). Le terme « UNION » symbolisant la lutte d'une profession. En 2003 création profession du psychologue clinicien, publication Journal Officiel/ RDC n°7 et 8/2004. Tous ces documents officiels font de l'UNPC la première association des psychologues du pays reconnus officiellement. En 2017 UNPC adhère dans PAPU (Union PanAfricaine des Psychologues). En 2019 UNPC et PAPU organisent à Kinshasa une conférence internationale. Un membre de l'UNPC siège au*

comité exécutif de PAPU. Correspondence:  
Prof. Olea Balayulu, [oleabalayulu@gmail.com](mailto:oleabalayulu@gmail.com)

**Thursday, 10 October 2024**

**Invited Address: Intervention**

**Chair: Bawa U**

**09:00 – 09:45**

### **Falender C. Transformative Change through Clinical Supervision with Cultural Humility**

Mental health needs in South Africa are significant. An estimated one out of every eight people currently have a diagnosable mental health condition (Sorsdahl et al., 2023); one in six adults met diagnostic criteria for depression, anxiety, or substance use in a 12-month period (Herman et al., 2009; Sorsdahl et al., 2023). In addition, there is a significant and severe shortage of providers: .97 public sector psychologists and .31 public sector psychiatrists per 100,000 uninsured in the population who include a historically marginalized, culturally, racially and linguistically diverse client population. As Pillay and Nyandini (2020) concluded in their follow-up to a study by Pillay and Siyothula (2008), no increase in admissions of black students had occurred even though the Health Professions Council of South Africa had set a target for increasing training numbers of black African students two decades prior.

In their study of South African clinical and counseling supervisors' perceptions, Hendricks, Cartwright, and Cowden (2021) concluded that currently, individuals begin supervising prematurely, without formal training or readiness. This impacts quality of care, attitudes towards psychological intervention.

Addressing this crisis, clinical supervision through a frame of cultural humility has potential to be an agent of change. In South

Africa, data on admissions and completion of graduate training indicate critical need for attention to multicultural diversity recruitment, familiarity and comfort with cultural diversity in mental health, and availability of services, distinct needs of the client population, and demographics generally. Introducing the study of psychology early in elementary school curriculum is a good entry point.

Mental health needs in South Africa are significant. An estimated one out of every eight people currently have a diagnosable mental health condition (Sorsdahl et al., 2023); one in six adults met diagnostic criteria for depression, anxiety, or substance use disorders in a 12-month period (Herman et al., 2009; Sorsdahl et al., 2023). However, there is a severe shortage of mental health providers: only 0.97 public sector psychologists and 0.31 public sector psychiatrists per 100,000 uninsured individuals in the population, which includes a historically marginalized, culturally, racially, and linguistically diverse client population (Pillay & Nyandini, 2020). Despite the Health Professions Council of South Africa setting a target to increase the training of Black African students two decades prior, Pillay and Siyothula (2008) found no increase in admissions of Black students.

Hendricks, Cartwright, and Cowden (2021) concluded that in South Africa, clinical and counseling supervisors often begin supervising prematurely, without formal training or readiness, impacting the quality of care and attitudes toward psychological intervention. Addressing this crisis, clinical supervision through a frame of cultural humility has the potential to be an agent of change. Data on admissions and completion of graduate training in South Africa indicate a critical need for attention to multicultural diversity recruitment, familiarity and comfort with mental health, availability of services distinct to the client population's needs, and

demographics generally, including introducing the study of psychology early in the elementary school curriculum.

Strategies to address interest in psychology training through use of a competency-based supervision model in the frame of cultural humility are presented to enhance accessibility, value attached, and perceived relevance of mental health treatment and career development. *Correspondence: Prof. Carol Falender, [cfalender@gmail.com](mailto:cfalender@gmail.com)*

**Thursday, 10 October 2024**

**Paper Presentations: Counselling Psychology**

**Chair: Maree K**

**08:00 – 10:00**

**Maree K. Narrative career counselling in context: Connecting theory to practice**

Theoretical background: Current career counselling approaches in Global South countries especially no longer meet the needs of people adequately. An updated response to changes in the world of work is urgently required.

Purpose: This paper discusses narrative career counselling in diverse contexts and highlights the need to integrate qualitative and quantitative approaches.

Research design: The outcomes of a number of group career construction research projects conducted in developing country contexts are examined.

Findings: The qualitative outcomes revealed that with regard to the participants, the psychological 'self' as autobiographical author benefited most from the interventions. The quantitative findings revealed that the female participants benefited more from the intervention than the male participants.

Conclusion: Adapting career construction counselling to contexts that differ from the context in which the career construction

counselling was originally developed and enacted is essential.

Implications for future research: Future research should investigate the application of group career construction counselling with larger groups, using instruments based on career construction counselling theory developed locally. Moreover, given the impact of events such as the Covid-19 pandemic and successive industrial revolutions, special emphasis should be placed on enabling people to draw on their stories (autobiographicity) to navigate repeated transitions in occupational contexts.

*Correspondence: Prof. Kobus Maree, [kobus.maree@up.ac.za](mailto:kobus.maree@up.ac.za)*

**Melrose S & Chitanga J. A critical reflection on the use of family play genogram for psychological therapy**

There is a growing realisation and call for a holistic framework to family systems thinking. Concepts such as individuation, attachment, identity, parenting and parenting styles are conceptually intertwined as systemic intra- and interpersonal processes. As a result of this, there is a proposal for comprehensive integration across family science. The genogram is a fundamental part of many disciplines and a useful tool but is found to be an underexplored resource. It can be applied in a way that transcends a particular discipline or approach and offer insight into the holistic relational world of an individual. By using miniature play items, the use of the genogram is expanded into the realm of play therapy. This essentially then combines play therapy and family therapy. The world of play is the child's natural world of processing. For the adult, this allows for a creative and non-threatening way to explore complex emotions they may find challenging to verbalise. The process of selecting an item for each member included in the genogram and the reasoning behind these choices allows for metaphorical insights which brings growth and healing. This paper presents the practical application of the

Family Play Genogram to illustrate the reflections of participants. *Correspondence:* Mrs. Sharon Melrose, [sharon@smelrose.co.za](mailto:sharon@smelrose.co.za)

**Maree K. Counselling for career construction for a postgraduate black woman experiencing career indecision: Single-participant intervention research**

**Theoretical background:** Counselling for career construction was used to analyse and interpret the data gathered.

**Purpose:** The purpose of the research was to examine the effect of integrative career construction counselling on resolving the career indecision of a postgraduate black woman experiencing confusion regarding her self- and career identity.

**Research design:** Purposive sampling was used to select an adolescent experiencing career indecision; an explanatory, single-participant study design was adopted; and an integrative, QUALITATIVE-quantitative methodology was employed as the research lens. The *Maree Career Matrix* was used to establish the participant's career interests and confidence, and the *Career Interest Profile* was used to elicit her multiple micro-life stories and her key life themes.

**Findings:** The intervention helped the participant choose an appropriate career (promoted her psychological self as social actor), improved her goal-setting capacity and sense of self (promoted herself as motivated agent), and especially improved herself as autobiographical author.

**Conclusion:** The current study confirms the longer-term value of the approach discussed here for a postgraduate black woman experiencing career indecision.

**Recommendations for future research:** Future research should examine the short- and especially the longer-term effects of the approach described here in diverse career counselling contexts. *Correspondence:* Prof. Kobus Maree, [kobus.maree@up.ac.za](mailto:kobus.maree@up.ac.za)

**Symington S & Chitanga J. Establishing relationships in the counselling process: utilising video games during sessions with adolescents and tweens**

The purpose of this paper is to critically reflect on the utilisation of pre-selected and age-appropriate video games as a tool to establish alliance with tween and adolescent clients during counselling sessions. The paper draws on empirical work that addresses the challenges when working with tweens and adolescents, in building rapport and enhancing relationships as the grounds for counselling interventions to be effective. Literature supports the complex nature of counselling tweens and adolescents, who often feel coerced into counselling. Grounded in the Gestalt Play Therapy model, a multiple case study design was used. The sample consisted of 5 purposefully selected cases, involving clients between the ages of 10 and 15 years. Using thematic analysis to identify patterns in the data, we identified that using video games as a tool to establish relationships was found to be valuable. Related themes showed that clients felt more comfortable in the counselling space, more eager to engage with the counsellor and generally more open to exploring their emotional challenges and co-create interventions that could help support them in their daily lives. Overall, using video games (with parents' knowledge and consent) facilitates a strong alliance that advances the relationship between counsellors and adolescents. *Correspondence:* Dr Serahni Symington, [serahnis@cornerstone.ac.za](mailto:serahnis@cornerstone.ac.za)

**Ramadie K. Evaluating the efficacy of school-based bullying intervention programs in South Africa: a systematic review and meta-analysis**

**Background:** Bullying in schools is a pervasive issue with detrimental effects. In South Africa, diversity presents unique challenges in addressing bullying. This study systematically

reviews and meta-analyses the efficacy of school-based bullying intervention programs to provide evidence-based recommendations.

**Methods:** This systematic review and meta-analysis followed PRISMA guidelines, searching databases for studies up to December 2023. The protocol was pre-registered (CRD42023494696). Inclusion criteria were studies evaluating school-based interventions reducing bullying behaviours. Study quality was assessed, and a meta-analysis estimated the interventions' overall effect size.

**Results:** Forty-one studies met the inclusion criteria, and the original papers were published between 01/2000 and 12/2023. Findings suggest that school-based interventions can reduce bullying incidence. Analysis reveals variations, with social-emotional learning and peer mentoring showing promise. Subgroup analysis indicates differences based on demographics.

**Conclusion:** School-based interventions are crucial for mitigating bullying's impact in South African schools. Tailored approaches considering diverse contexts are essential. Further research exploring long-term effects and cost-effective nationwide implementation strategies is needed. *Correspondence: Dr Kedibone Ramadie, [khido.ramadie@nwu.ac.za](mailto:khido.ramadie@nwu.ac.za)*

**Thursday, 10 October 2024**

**Paper Presentations: Educational Psychology**

**Chair: Theron L**

**08:00 – 10:00**

**Theron L, Haffajee S & Moretti M. The usefulness of eConnect: critical reflections from a sample of South African child and youth care workers**

eConnect is an evidence-informed program to support health parent-child attachment that was originally developed in North America. This paper reports South African child and

youth care workers' experience of the usefulness of eConnect in a formal care setting where most of the children have experiences of multiple traumas. Drawing on reflexive thematic analyses of interviews and arts-based activities with 11 child and youth care workers from a care facility (Johannesburg, South Africa) who completed the eConnect program, we report their lived experience of eConnect's usefulness. While the findings show caregiver appreciation for the program's capacity to teach the principles of attachment and support the development of practical connection skills, they also point to its limited contextual fit. Taken together, these findings nudge psychologists to be sensitive to situational and cultural dynamics when using evidence-informed programs developed outside of Africa in African contexts and to harness Africa values to optimize program efficacy and best enable care workers. *Correspondence: Prof. Linda Theron, [Linda.theron@up.ac.za](mailto:Linda.theron@up.ac.za)*

**Crause E. Overcoming resource constraints: innovative AI solutions for public sector psychology services**

In the context of the Western Cape Government's Education sector, this paper explores the transformative potential of Artificial Intelligence (AI) to migrate psychological services from traditional models to community-based approaches, particularly within under-resourced areas. It delves into AI's role in improving the accessibility, efficiency, and effectiveness of psychological support in public education, leveraging case studies and empirical evidence to showcase how AI insights guide resource allocation and service provision to meet diverse student needs accurately. Additionally, the paper navigates the ethical landscape of AI deployment, highlighting the critical importance of privacy, consent, cultural sensitivity, and the prevention of algorithmic bias. Advocating for a collaborative framework among psychologists, knowledge-

management experts, and policymakers, it aims to create an integrated ecosystem where technological and human expertise converge to enhance public sector psychology services. This initiative seeks to ensure every child has access to mental health support, underpinned by innovation, efficiency, and data-driven strategies, marking a step toward inclusive and effective psychological service delivery within the education sector. *Correspondence: Dr Ewald Crause, [ewald.crause@westerncape.gov.za](mailto:ewald.crause@westerncape.gov.za)*

**Marais I & van Heerden A. Positive behavioural intervention in resource-constrained educational environments: applying the Circle of Courage Model**

Within the South African context, entrenched socio-economic disparities, historical injustices, and fragmented family structures converge to create a landscape wherein children confront a multitude of stressors, hindering their emotional well-being and often giving rise to behavioural challenges. The pervasive presence of enduring trauma exacerbates these difficulties, frequently resulting in disruptive behaviours, academic disengagement, and a notable erosion of self-worth among students. Recognising the unique challenges posed by limited resources, systemic interventions become imperative to address behavioural complexities effectively. This presentation delves into the critical domain of positive behavioural intervention within resource-constrained educational settings, viewed through the lens of the Circle of Courage (CoC) Model. The CoC Model, rooted in principles of positive youth development, highlights the fundamental needs for emotionally healthy youth: belonging, mastery, independence, and generosity. Beyond addressing behavioural challenges, this intervention aims to target children's unmet needs, instilling in them a sense of being loved (belonging), capable problem-solving skills (mastery), empowerment to exert their will

(independence), and the importance of helping others (generosity). Drawing from real-world applications of the CoC Model at the Positive Behavioural Intervention Resource Centre implemented within WCED Districts, this presentation elucidates how can foster holistic growth and resilience among students, even amidst resource limitations. *Correspondence: Mrs. Ilouise Marais, [Ilse.Marais@westerncape.gov.za](mailto:Ilse.Marais@westerncape.gov.za)*

**Thursday, 10 October 2024**

**Roundtable: Educational Psychology**

**Chair: Theron L**

**09:00 – 10:00**

**Campbell M, Crause E, Munro N, Benyon D & Dlamini S. Considering career pathways for counselling psychologists**

South African Counselling Psychologists do not experience clear career pathways after completion of their professional training and internship. In many instances the lack of alternative pathways push Counselling Psychologists into private practice settings as unintended career options. While challenges in defining a clear professional identity and scope of practice have further compounded these difficulties, there are professionals who have managed to carve out interesting career trajectories outside of or alongside private practice settings. This round table discussion gives 5 Counselling Psychologists an opportunity to share their career journeys, their challenges and learnings along the way, as we reflect on the broad range of competencies our category encompasses. This round table discussion is facilitated by the South African Association of Counselling Psychologists (SAACP) as one of three networking opportunities executed over the year to build connection for South African Counselling Psychologists. *Correspondence: Prof. Megan Campbell, [m.campbell@ru.ac.za](mailto:m.campbell@ru.ac.za)*

**Thursday, 10 October 2024**

**Paper Presentations: Decolonising & Transforming Psychology**

**Chair: Ratele K**

**08:00 – 10:00**

**Maphosa TT & Dlamini S. Rhodesian hauntology: Zimbabwe's coloniality dilemma**

With many trying to give a prognosis of Zimbabwe's plethora of problems, the country has become a caricature of failure and a reference point of poor governance. Many analysts have tried casting their intellectual lot to make sense of Zimbabwe's many issues to no avail. The country is not only stagnating but continuously denigrating. The necro-politics that were at the core of Rhodesia survive to the post-colonial dispensation. In this paper I will therefore try at giving a historically conscious and contextualized diagnosis of Zimbabwe's problems. I will investigate what I propose is Zimbabwe's coloniality dilemma. I here contend that Zimbabwe's collective consciousness is crippled by an embedded colonial nostalgia. I will engage all the above by firstly considering the issues of Zimbabwe's redundant education system and how it sustains coloniality. I will then consider the country's political posture of nationalism and how it continues to fail the average citizen. I will then engage Zimbabwe's lack of socio-economic imagination that invariably leads to colonial nostalgia. I will conclude the paper by trying to theorize what Zimbabwe will need to transcend its necro-politics. *Correspondence: Mr. Thabolwethu Tema Maphosa, [mpthta093@myuct.ac.za](mailto:mpthta093@myuct.ac.za)*

**Fadda A & Rafaely D. Colonial methodologies: a discourse analysis of medical students' talk about psychology**

The historical tension between the natural and social sciences and the associated discourses of superiority and inferiority are

still prevalent today in academia and practice. This study analyses the discourses that medical students at a South African university employ in their talk about psychology to demonstrate the function of these discourses and locate them within historical debates surrounding the social and natural sciences and, more importantly, to identify the ways in which psychology is locked into Eurocentric assumptions of rigour and empiricism. This research utilises discursive psychology to examine five online discussion board entries detailing medical students' understanding of psychology. The findings suggest that definitions of psychology subvert the discipline under the guise of bolstering its value in ways that are comparable to colonial methodologies, thereby reconstituting and reinforcing historical notions of othering in social scientific discourses. This research therefore contributes to debates on the current role and position of psychology in South Africa and helps to destabilise dominant scientific discourses within and against which psychology is enacted in the academy. Through a critical interrogation of such hegemony, this study aims to forge new ways of doing and thinking psychology in South Africa. *Correspondence: Miss. Arianna Fadda, [ariannafadda8@gmail.com](mailto:ariannafadda8@gmail.com)*

**Metsing MK & Mithal P. Ancestral callings: a Culturally Responsive Pedagogy (CRP) approach and the role of teachers in three secondary schools**

This Case study presentation centres on adopting a culturally responsive pedagogical (CRP) approach in support of learners in three Secondary Schools who experience ancestral callings. This qualitative study employs in-depth interviews and focus group discussions, involving educators and learners affected by ancestral calling. Drawing from local scholarship (Mkhize & Ntšekhe; Nkosi & Dlamini, 2023) have highlighted the necessity for teacher support in a culturally diverse learner population experiencing different

socio-cultural phenomena like ancestral callings. In addressing the support needs of teachers, recent South African studies (Zulu & Khumalo, 2023) underscore the importance of culturally responsive pedagogies and professional development initiatives. The presentation relies on Mthembu & Ndlovu, (2023) concept of culturally responsive pedagogy as an emphatic educational approach that embraces learners' cultural capital and validates their experiences. The paper argues for the urgent inclusion of teachers in the dialogue concerning learner's ancestral callings, asserting that this can only be achieved through open dialogue, adequate professional development, and appropriate curriculum integration. *Correspondence: Dr Momi Kemoneilwe Metsing, [Momzeneiro@gmail.com](mailto:Momzeneiro@gmail.com)*

**Ratele K & Adams G. Beyond the whitestream gaze on well-being: a decolonial Africa-centering psychological perspective**

From #RhodesMustFall to #BlackLivesMatter, an important component has been concerns about epistemic injustice and the corresponding need to decolonize knowledge institutions. With a specific focus on well-being, in this presentation we draw upon an Africa-centering standpoint and perspectives of decolonial theory to illuminate one manifestation of epistemic injustice that is particularly important in psychology and related disciplines: the *coloniality* of the modern individualist lifeways that increasingly inform both descriptive and prescriptive standards for everyday life in the modern global order. We locate this understanding of an Africa-centering standpoint among various approaches to the project of African psychology. Rather than turn a whitestream theoretical lens to the study of an African object, an Africa-centering psychology takes African experience as a foundation on for re-thinking whitestream theory-in-general. We suggest that dominant models of well-being are not the just-natural expression of human

nature, but instead depend on levels of affluence sustained through colonial plunder. Although the self-expansive personal growth associated with these lifeways can promote optimal individual experience for a well-situated few, they may do so at the expense of a viable existence sustainable at the level of humanity in general. *Correspondence: Prof. Kopano Ratele, [kratele@sun.ac.za](mailto:kratele@sun.ac.za)*

**Msomi N & Akhurst J. 30 years after apartheid: a community psychology perspective of an NGO's techniques of resistance in Makhanda's educational landscape**

Although South Africa has achieved considerable steps in development over the last thirty years, post-apartheid South Africa faces noteworthy challenges which differentially affect the persistently marginalised majority. According to the country's National Planning Commission, education is central to achieving the overarching democratic goals of eliminating poverty and reducing inequality. This case study takes a community psychology perspective on education; more specifically the education-development nexus wherein Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs) are centrally positioned. This paper situates a local NGO, GADRA Education, within the country's socio-political and educational landscape. Through a Foucauldian discourse analysis of GADRA's annual reports between 2012 and 2021, and individual narrative interviews with 13 organisational members the Organisation's apparatus of resistance, formulated as situated praxis, is identified. The organisational members' narratives revealed the apparatus's impacts on the subjectivities of youth in Makhanda in engendering hope and driving educational change in the city. These techniques have wider applicability for education-development practitioners concerned with transformative change in their educational locales. This paper illustrates the African-centred community

psychology principles and modes by which NGOs can operate in solidarity with the persistently marginalised majority, and thus contribute to shaping our imagined educational futures. *Correspondence: Ms. Nqobile Msomi, [nqobilemsomi08@gmail.com](mailto:nqobilemsomi08@gmail.com)*

**Thursday, 10 October 2024**

**Symposium: Forensic Psychology**

**Chair: Gowensmith N**

**08:00 – 10:00**

### **Be at your best in courtroom expert testimony**

Courtroom testimony is often required of mental health professionals, regardless of specific discipline. But testimony can be intimidating and unfamiliar -- often contentious, grueling, uncomfortable, and antagonistic. And at the same time, the stakes are often quite high for everyone involved. Fortunately, lessons from forensic as well as sport and performance psychology can help experts prepare for courtroom testimony. This symposium will discuss the literature that supports effective testimony, explore the most compelling and clear ways to provide psychological evidence and information, and provide opportunities for in vivo practice, role play, and feedback for participants to hone their testimony skills. *Correspondence: Prof. Neil Gowensmith, [neil.gowensmith@du.edu](mailto:neil.gowensmith@du.edu)*

### **Gowensmith N, Nadkarni L & Kramers-Olen A. Lights, camera, action! Success in expert testimony**

Regardless of specialty, many mental health professionals will be called on to testify in court at some point in their careers. Such an experience can be nerve-wracking and intimidating. Court protocols and procedures may be unfamiliar, conditions may be adversarial, and yet the stakes can be high for

both the expert and the person and/or case at issue. Experts in forensic psychology are especially attuned to the rigors of expert testimony, with hearings being especially contentious and with media attention often focused on the proceedings. It is important that the expert witness be as ready as possible for these situations. This session will describe the typical court process and how witnesses are qualified, examined, and cross-examined -- and how to adequately prepare for success in these unfamiliar and uncomfortable situations. *Correspondence: Prof. Neil Gowensmith, [neil.gowensmith@du.edu](mailto:neil.gowensmith@du.edu)*

### **Gowensmith N, Henderson-Metzger L & Kramers-Olen A. Practice makes perfect: Skill building for expert testimony**

Expert testimony in a court setting can be a trying experience, with nerves on edge and anxiety high. Courtroom protocols and expectations can be unfamiliar and intimidating, and yet the stakes are often high for the expert and the case or patient at issue. It is critical that experts be at their best "when the spotlight is on." This skill-building workshop will utilize lessons and techniques learned from sport and performance psychology, often successfully utilized in theatre, sport, and the military, to create the right conditions for optimal performance on the stand. The session will use role-plays and audience participation to provide mock experiences and immediate feedback for participants. *Correspondence: Prof. Neil Gowensmith, [neil.gowensmith@du.edu](mailto:neil.gowensmith@du.edu)*

### **Grabowski K. How to Communicate Psychological Findings in Expert Testimony**

The goal of psychologists' expert testimony is to accurately, clearly, and effectively convey psychological findings to the court and trier of fact in order to assist in legal proceedings. This presentation will summarize extant research about expert witness testimony

effectiveness and jury perceptions and provide real-world guidance to practitioners in how to translate this literature into their forensic practice. Specifically, guidance for how to testify about complex psychological topics, such as psychological testing and diagnostic criteria, will be discussed with examples. *Correspondence: Dr Karen Grabowski, [karen.grabowski@du.edu](mailto:karen.grabowski@du.edu)*

**Thursday, 10 October 2024**

**Symposium: Health Psychology**

**Chair: Roomaney R**

**08:00 – 10:00**

### **Current health psychology research in South Africa**

The purpose of this symposium is to report on current health psychology research in South Africa. The presenters are members of the Health Psychology Division. The topics are varied, and presentations include the presentation of research relating to diabetes, health literacy, mothers with HIV, Covid-19 vaccines, and paediatric adherence. While these are only a few areas of research currently being conducted in South Africa, they give the audience an overview of a few current broad areas and we hope will further stimulate interest in the field.

*Correspondence: Dr Rizwana Roomaney, [rizwanaroomaney@sun.ac.za](mailto:rizwanaroomaney@sun.ac.za)*

### **Roomaney R, Salie M, Snow M & Popovac M. Psychosocial differences between participants who took Covid-19 vaccines and those who did not take the vaccine.**

There are limited studies examining psychosocial factors impacting acceptance of the Covid-19 vaccines among the South African population. We compared differences in General attitudes towards vaccines (GATV), health anxiety, Online health seeking

behaviour (OHSB) and subjective well-being between participants who reported having taken a Covid-19 vaccine and those who did not take a vaccine. The data reported were collected online between April 2022 and March 2023. Participants were recruited using social media and completed a web-based e-Survey. The survey contained a battery of measures including the GATV scale, short-form health anxiety index, a measure of OHSB and the World Health Organization 5 measure of subjective wellbeing. Data were compared using analysis of variance. A total of 485 people accessed the survey, but only 135 participants completed the survey. Most of the participants (70.4%) reported that they took the COVID-19 vaccine. We found significant differences between those who took the vaccine and those who did not take the vaccine in terms of GATV, subjective well-being, and health anxiety but no significant differences in terms of OHSB. The findings provide insight that may indicate to psychologists where interventions may be beneficial in support of vaccination.

*Correspondence: Dr Rizwana Roomaney, [rizwanaroomaney@sun.ac.za](mailto:rizwanaroomaney@sun.ac.za)*

### **Mostert S, Martin J & Van Wilk C. Health literacy amongst a South African Navy sample**

The South African Navy (SAN) is an arm service within the South African military whose members have operational responsibilities that require them to maintain healthy lifestyles. SAN members have access to health surveillance and intervention services which help manage their health. This paper explores the health literacy (HL) levels of a group of SAN members. HL refers to the ability to access, understand, and use health information to make informed decisions about health. The significance of being health literate is evidenced by practising health-promoting behaviours and implementing precautionary measures to mitigate the development of chronic diseases. HL was

explored using the Health Literacy Questionnaire (HLQ) with a sample of 987 (n=987) SAN members. The HLQ includes nine subscales each measuring a different domain of HL. This presentation will present the findings from each of the nine subscales. Findings show that SAN members generally present with high levels of HL. The presenters will also reflect on the value of using the HLQ within a South African context.

*Correspondence: Dr Sonja Mostert, [sonja.mostert@up.ac.za](mailto:sonja.mostert@up.ac.za)*

**Saal W, Thomas A, Laurenzi C, Mangqalaza H, Kelly J & Toska E. Adversity triggers resilience: understanding resilience among adolescent girls and young mothers affected by HIV in South Africa**

**Background:** While the syndemic of HIV and motherhood may exacerbate vulnerabilities, it may also trigger opportunities for resilience. Little is known about the strategies adopted by adolescent mothers affected by HIV when facing adversities.

**Methods:** Between 2020-21 we recruited 15 young mothers at risk of or living with HIV from the HEY BABY longitudinal cohort study, for semi-structured interviews, some of which included cognitive interviewing for the adaptation of a resilience measure.

Participants lived in urban, rural and peri-urban areas in the Eastern Cape Province, South Africa. Thematic analysis was used to explore emerging themes and interpret patterns.

**Results:** Interviews provided extensive insight into the experiences of young mothers and the personal and relational support accessed from their caregivers, intimate partners and their children's fathers. Caregiver support included childcare to support mothers' return to school or work. Intimate partner support included partners' sharing in the responsibilities of the home and with the child.

**Conclusions:** Research and programming with adolescents and young mothers living with

and affected by HIV requires careful consideration of context-specific needs to enable resilience-centred interventions. These interventions need to support them in age- and life stage- appropriate ways, as needs may differ by HIV and motherhood status.

*Correspondence: Dr Wylene Saal, [wylene.saal@spu.ac.za](mailto:wylene.saal@spu.ac.za)*

**Kruger S, Deacon E, Van Rensburg E & Segal D. Development and Evaluation of the Flourish Diabetes Programme for Adjustment to Closed-Loop Technology Among Adolescents Living With Type 1 Diabetes**

This paper aims to describe the development, content, and evaluation of a positive psychology intervention - Flourish Diabetes Programme. The intervention aims to promote adjustment to closed-loop technology among adolescents living with type 1 diabetes. The development of the programme was guided by a qualitative study with adolescent participants, qualitative document analysis and utilising the design and development model. The programme underwent refinement via the Delphi method with eleven experts from various fields of diabetes. The Flourish Diabetes Programme is an online, interactive website designed for adolescents living with type 1 diabetes who are using closed loop technology. The programme spans 7 weeks. The participating experts identified the strengths of the programme, as well as adjustments needed. The findings from the Delphi panel assisted with the refinement and finalisation of the programme. The feedback received indicates that the programme has the potential to benefit adolescents in their adjustment to closed-loop technology. The different fields of diabetes in which the experts work assisted in gaining a broad understanding of adolescents' adjustment to closed-loop technology and refining the programme to provide a holistic programme for adolescents. The Flourish Diabetes Programme serves as a foundational step toward evidence-based interventions,

grounded in data and theory.  
*Correspondence: Dr Sylvia Kruger,*  
[sylviakruger94@gmail.com](mailto:sylviakruger94@gmail.com)

**Thursday, 10 October 2024**

**Symposium: Educational Psychology**

**Chair: Wickord LC**

**08:00 – 10:00**

**Approaches to the assessment of developmental and educational outcomes**

The symposium deals with different approaches to the assessment of developmental and educational outcomes.  
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**Saunders M, Quaiser-Pohl C, Welsch M.  
Assessing mental-rotation ability in primary-school children in Tanzania**

The cultural relatedness of spatial skills (Berry, 1966) and the culture-fairness of visuo-spatial abilities have been discussed also in the African context (Gonthier, 2022). However, research on mental rotation ability in African countries is still lacking. An intervention study was conducted in a public primary school in Marangu, Eastern Tanzania. The sample consisted of  $n=49$  fifth graders (age:  $M = 11.59$ ;  $SD = 0.674$ ). A computerized mental-rotation (MR) test was administered before (pre-test) and after the game phase (post-test), and after four weeks (follow-up test). The mental rotation test consisted of items based on different stimuli: animal figures, letters, gender-stereotyped and gender-neutral objects, and abstract figures like cubes, pellets, and tetrahedra. Items were programmed by PsychoPy® software and administered on a Microsoft Pro 8 Surface® tablet. The test instructions and the questionnaires were translated into Swahili. Results show that test performance depends

on the stimulus type (concrete vs. abstract), the rotational axis (in picture-plane vs. in depth), and the familiarity with the objects used for the items. In particular, the role of culture in in-depth rotations as well as the culture-fairness of mental rotation tests with abstract stimuli such as geometric figures like cubes and polyhedra will be discussed.

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**Quaiser-Pohl C, Waburg W, Lars B. Board games in East African schools – enrollment and effects**

Although the role of playing chess for cognitive development has been proven, a similar impact of other board games has not yet been studied and research on the outcomes of games in African countries is still missing. An intervention study was conducted in a public primary-school in Eastern Tanzania, in which 49 fifth-graders, 20 boys and 29 girls, took part in a guided intervention with board games focusing on spatial thinking. The pupils were divided into two groups of approximately equal size. The groups played the games for about 40 minutes every school day over 5 weeks. The children were allowed to decide freely which game they wanted to play. Systematic observations based upon video recordings showed a visible change of children's behavior over the game phase. In the beginning, the children often switched between games and tried to explore each game. At the end of the game phase most children had a favorite game which they now played almost exclusively and they tried to develop play strategies. The children also realized that they could move around freely in the classroom during the project - unlike in class. They often stood up to watch others play. The findings are discussed within the theoretical frameworks of games and play.  
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**Wickord L.C & Muthusi S. Digital addictions – cross-cultural differences and similarities regarding digital addictions and the impact of personality**

Digital addictions are on the rise worldwide and are an increasingly common topic in both scientific and popular research. The study conducted focused on digital addictions, specifically problematic smartphone use, social media addiction and gaming addiction in the context of different cultures. To this end, data was collected in Asia, Africa and Europe for an international, cross-cultural comparison of the constructs and the impact of personality on these was analyzed. For this purpose, the MPPUS-10 was used in Malaysia, Kenya and Germany to survey problematic smartphone use, the BSMAS to survey social media addiction, the GASA-7 to survey gaming addiction and the BFI-10 to survey personality. The sample consisted of 600 adolescents and young adults, 200 from each country. The results showed that digital addictions were represented in every country and that there were only minor differences in the manifestations of addictions between the cultures. Furthermore, different personality factors were found to influence the different constructs in the different countries. This shows that digital addictions appear to be a universal construct and that personality is a decisive factor in the development of digital addictions. *Correspondence: Dr Lea-Christin Wickord, [lwickord@uni-koblenz.de](mailto:lwickord@uni-koblenz.de)*

**Muthusi S, Zahedi A & Sommer W. The Influence of Food Narratives on the Food Preference among Kindergarten Children**

Modern society has in its diet, foods that are increasingly high in sugar and fat, in addition to ultra-processed food, diets which pose threats to human. There is therefore an urgent need to shift towards healthier and plant-based diets. If eating behavior is to become healthier, changing taste preferences is one possible approach. Such taste

preferences may play a central role especially in children's eating behavior. Since story telling has been part of Africa's culture, this research tested the feasibility of utilizing positive food narratives as an instructional tool to promote healthy eating habits among kindergarten children. After assessing the frequency of consumption of healthy and unhealthy for a week, we placed the children randomly in a control group or the experimental group. The experimental group, in a manner adhering to principles known to captivate and engross young minds effectively, was told a positive story about food, while the control group is told a story without any food involved. Afterwards, the frequency of consumption of healthy and unhealthy foods was assessed again for two weeks. The findings demonstrated that the food narratives had a direct positive effect on food preference. The study therefore has implications for educators, parents, and policymakers. *Correspondence: Prof. Steve Katembu, [stevemutsi@gmail.com](mailto:stevemutsi@gmail.com)*

**Thursday, 10 October 2024**

**Symposium: Clinical Psychology**

**Chair: Pillay A**

**10:30 – 12:30**

**The District Specialist Mental Health Teams (DSMHT): A new era in mental health service provision?**

The symposium outlines the relatively new concept of the District Specialist Mental Health Team that has been introduced by the Department of Health in an effort to optimise service delivery. These teams have been appointed in some provinces, and are at various stages of developing and implementing their respective mandates and strategic objectives. The presenters, from different districts, will discuss the vision, roles and strategic objectives of the specialist

teams, and specifically the psychologist. The presentations will explore the plans, work and progress of the teams, as well as the challenges encountered. A critical discussion on the ideological framework and targets of this model is envisioned, within the context of a social justice agenda that seeks to develop and implement progressive policies. The key strategy of advocating and achieving equity in mental health service delivery, especially for those reliant on the public mental health system, must be seen as a central goal.

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### **Rawatlal N. The role of the District Specialist Mental Health Team (DSMHT): The Johannesburg (JHB) Health District**

The inception of the DSMHTs was a response to the Life Esidemeni tragedy. The development of a mental health (MH) recovery plan focused on the establishment of DSMHTs in all 52 health districts in the country. The broad aim of the MH recovery plan is to ensure the accessibility of MH services to communities and to strengthen district MH services. Gauteng comprises five districts i.e. JHB, Tshwane, West Rand, Ekurhuleni and Sedibeng. In addition to the DSMHTs, there are two other human resource teams described in the MH recovery plan, i.e., a Clinical Community Psychiatry Team (CCPT) focused on service delivery and a Non-Governmental Compliance Team (NGCT) focused on support and monitoring of licensed NGOs within each district. Each district in Gauteng has partially established teams currently. The overall objective of the present presentation is to outline the roles and responsibilities of the DSMHT; to update progress of MH services since the inception of the DSMHT, CCPT and NGCT and to describe the integration of MH services within the primary health care (PHC) program in JHB.

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### **Pillay S. Building the ship while sailing it: Reflections on coordinating public psychology services in eThekweni, KwaZulu-Natal**

From September 2023, the Department of Health in KwaZulu-Natal appointed four Chief Clinical Psychologists to form part of a newly established District Specialist Mental Health Team, as envisaged in the National Mental Health Policy Framework and Strategic Plan (2013, 2023). In this presentation, I reflect on my appointment for region 1 in KZN (eThekweni and iLembe). I will discuss the challenges and opportunities of being in a job that had previously not existed at the district-level, and how adapting to this new space and crafting a role and identity for me was essential in getting buy-in from my colleagues on the ground, based at hospitals and clinics. In light of the impending National Health Insurance (NHI) and the envisioned roles of these teams in the NHI rollout, I conclude by providing ideas for how chief psychologists across the country can play a key role in providing strategic leadership for coordinating psychological services to improve health equity, mental health advocacy, action-oriented research, and intersectoral collaboration. *Correspondence: Mr Suntuosh Pillay, [suntuoshpillay@gmail.com](mailto:suntuoshpillay@gmail.com)*

### **Mulutsi N. Can the District Specialist Mental Health teams be seen as mental health directorates at a district level? - Lessons from Tshwane district in Gauteng province**

The 2013-2023 National Mental Health Policy Framework and Strategic Plan revised to 2023-2030 provides for the establishment of the District Specialist Mental Health Teams (DSMHTs) in provinces. The composition of these Teams includes Psychiatrists, Clinical Psychologists, Social Workers, Occupational Therapists and Nurses. However, progress varies across provinces. Gauteng Province has made significant strides on the implementation of this policy mandate, where

the Teams have been appointed in all 5 districts, but the composition is not consistent, as there is difficulty in recruiting psychiatrists to serve as part of the Teams. Tshwane District Health Services is struggling to recruit a specialist psychiatrist to serve in the Team. The question is "Given the scarcity of these professionals in South Africa, can we afford to recruit these specialists only for the Teams and to render services in line with the Terms of Reference outlined in the national policy framework? Is the national policy realistic? There is an urgent need to further unpack and standardize the operational deliverables of these Teams across the country and districts. Are the DSMHTs expected to function as mental health directorates at a district level?

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#### **Pillay A. The DSMHT in uMgungundlovu (KZN): Identity vs role confusion?**

The roll-out of the District Specialist Mental Health Teams (DSMHT) in KZN began during late 2023, with four such teams, although some are yet to be fully complemented. The uMgungundlovu district team comprises a Chief Clinical Psychologist and Deputy Directors for Social Work and Occupational Therapy, with nursing and psychiatry not yet included. The planned objectives include the development of a situation analysis of the district and regional mental health services, and also promoting mental health screening programmes at PHC and CHC level. In addition, policy development is a significant component, especially in contributing to best-practice and the ultimate goal of standardising services. The team has prioritised the training and support of mental health professionals, including registered counsellors, and research will be a key feature, as well. The DSMHT is a work in progress and, considering its novel role, work will need to be done on tailoring it to best serve the function of overseeing mental

health service development and provision.  
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**Thursday, 10 October 2024**

**Paper Presentations:**  
**Industrial/Organisational Psychology**

**Chair: Bester K**

**10:30 – 12:30**

#### **Murangi A, Rothmann S & Nel M. Sustainable employability: precariousness, capabilities, and functioning of special education teachers in Namibia**

Education is affected by rapid societal changes, specifically globalisation and economic nationalism, poverty and inequality, and digital technologies. This study aimed to investigate the sustainable employability of special education teachers from the perspective of employment precariousness, capabilities, and functioning (flourishing and intention to leave) of special education teachers in Namibia. All SETs in seven regions in Namibia formed part of the sampling population for this study. There is a total of 300 SETs in Namibia. The Precarity Position Profile, Capability for Work Questionnaire, Flourishing at Work Questionnaire, and Intention to Leave Questionnaire were administered. The non-probability sampling technique of convenience sampling was used to select the sample (n=200). The SPSS 27 statistical package and Mplus 8.7 were used to conduct the analyses. The study uncovered that all four dimensions of precarious employment significantly affected special education teacher capabilities. Precarious work conditions and job insecurity were associated with poor emotional, psychological, and social well-being. Precariousness concerning professional development was associated with poor psychological and social well-being.

Precarious work conditions, job insecurity, and poor professional development also impacted teachers' intention to leave.

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### **Zirzow M. A phenomenological exploration of the South African perspective on psychological harassment in the workplace**

Workplace harassment, particularly psychological, is widespread in SA, impacting individuals and organizations. This study aims to address the lack of practical guidance by exploring the experiences of SA employees, informing intervention strategies.

**Objective:** The study seeks to understand psychological harassment in SA workplaces, examining its manifestations and impacts from employees' perspectives, focusing on cognitive, emotional, and behavioral effects.

**Methods:** Using qualitative methods, particularly critical hermeneutics, the study employed an exploratory approach. Purposive snowball sampling ensured a diverse sample, with measures like member checking to ensure rigor.

**Results:** Findings highlighted psychological harassment's covert nature, causes including toxic leadership, and impacts on well-being and organizational culture. Themes included subjective interpretations, causes rooted in toxic leadership, and consequences like burnout and reduced job satisfaction.

**Objective Outcomes:** Participants described psychological harassment as distinct from bullying, with toxic bosses and organizational cultures contributing. Impact included cognitive, emotional, and behavioral effects, suggesting interventions such as fostering psychological safety.

**Conclusions:** Effective strategies include supportive leadership, inclusive cultures, and robust reporting mechanisms to create psychologically safe environments.

**Practical Significance:** The study offers insights for practitioners and policymakers to develop targeted interventions, improving workplace

quality and fostering healthier environments.

**Ethics:** The study prioritized participant well-being, data security, and research integrity, adhering to ethical principles throughout.

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### **Bester K. "I've got a pocket full of threats": exploring the perceptions of cybersecurity awareness within the South African National Defence Force.**

The rising frequency and complexity of cyber threats pose a significant security risk to governments, businesses, organizations, and individual safety. To address this issue, this study examined the cyber-hygiene practices among senior South African military officers. This is a subject that has been understudied within the South African armed forces domain. The study focused on a tertiary site where military training and education are offered. The study aimed to explore how military officers conceptualize cyber-hygiene and how they practice cybersecurity behaviour in the context of the South African National Defence Force. The study utilized a qualitative approach by conducting 10 semi-structured interviews. The researcher determined that cybersecurity awareness was a central factor in the formation of cyber-hygiene and locating potential cyber threats. These factors play a role in the development of cybersecurity behaviour that identifies vulnerabilities within the system and in their behaviour. Furthermore, the study found that cybersecurity best practices in the organization require greater emphasis across units. The cultivation of cybersecurity in the organization is challenged by the knowledge and experience relating to cyberspace usage.

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### **Van der Merwe P. Measuring the entrepreneurial, mismanagement and fraudulent propensity of a franchise population.**

The empirical study aimed to assess the integrity dynamics of an existing national franchise distribution footprint using the Giotto questionnaire. To ascertain to what extent the division exhibits an entrepreneurial character and the valency for nefarious financial behaviour. It is generally accepted that there is an overlay between entrepreneurial-, financial mismanagement- and fraudulent behaviour, which can be explained in terms of the virtues and vices embedded in the individual personality. This is observable when using the Giotto, a work-based personality questionnaire designed to assess integrity. The results were compared to the typical Giotto profiles of three convicted fraud transgressors, one convicted of financial mismanagement, and the typical profile of an entrepreneur. The results indicated a fit with the entrepreneurial profile at a lower magnitude, did not fit the typical profiles of three convicted fraud transgressors, but showed some semblance to the typical financial mismanagement profile at a lower magnitude. The organisation is thus not at financial risk in terms of fraudulent behaviour. The population is entrepreneurial at an acceptable level. Rigorous financial oversight is required though to moderate the typical financial creativity associated with entrepreneurial ventures to prevent financial mismanagement and to inform future recruitment of franchise principals.

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**Thursday, 10 October 2024**

**Paper Presentations: Community Psychology**

**Chair: Cherrington A**

**10:30 – 12:30**

**Hadebe N & Visser M. Empowering young adults to implement a peer-led intervention to promote mental health literacy**

In the absence of appropriate mental health services in disadvantaged communities such as Mamelodi, South Africa, young adults with a passion to help others were empowered to promote mental health through peer-led interventions. Snowball sampling was used to identify seven young adults aged between 18-28. During eight empowerment sessions, the young adults planned and implemented an intervention to foster mental health literacy among their peers. This included an interview at the community radio station where they engaged on mental health challenges among the youth. Accompanying this, they created a video on depression and suicide and a pamphlet with resources for mental health support, shared on the community radio station's Facebook page and on their social media accounts. The process fostered facets of psychological empowerment such as a critical awareness of the environment, the development of competencies and confidence, and resource mobilisation. Additionally, the young adults reported that it contributed to their psychological and social wellbeing, especially through improvements in their self-awareness, emotion regulation skills, and in their perception of themselves as valuable members of society. Findings additionally suggested that their peers benefitted through receiving social support from the young adults during the project. Key words: Empowerment; mental health; young adults; peer-led intervention; community. *Correspondence: Ms. Nqobile Hadebe, [nqobyhadebe@gmail.com](mailto:nqobyhadebe@gmail.com)*

**Tladi B. A need for embodied moral courage: centering embodiment in community psychology praxis**

The paper reflects on a need to centre embodiment practices within community psychology praxes, towards the critical development of a socially embodied moral courage. Disembodiment, as a chronically overlooked psychosocial issue and contributor to South Africa's mental health crisis, poses as

a matter for community psychology practitioners to contend with, alongside fellow practitioners in the healing, activist and psychosocial services. Where the body is highlighted as a critical intersect of our psychology, our relationships and the physical environment, the necessity and emergence of a turn to embodiment practices within social justice and activism spaces demonstrates self-evident relevance for inclusion in community psychology praxes. Engaging our bodies as critical tools of reason, I propose, offers practitioners more incisive and sustainable supports in grounding and embodying the moral social values often recognized as necessary to effectively progress a collective toward community-centered social change and transformation. Considering a body-inclusive psychosocial fabric, calls for prioritising communal models of psychological healing to integrate the value of collaborative embodied co-learning practices towards engendering an embodied moral courage, communal interdependency, care and overall, more compassionate socio-relational ethic.

Key words: community psychology, embodiment, moral courage, praxis.

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### **Cherrington A & Du Rand D. Self-care as a reciprocal service to others and a necessity for collective wellbeing**

Taking on the essential role of fostering and maintaining the health and wellbeing of others, what strategies do mental-health providers engage in to promote their own wellbeing? In the wake of recent local and global upheavals and mounting insecurity, burnout and compassion fatigue of healthcare professionals is at an all-time high. Defined as an emotional and behavioural impairment in response to prolonged and high level of exposure to occupational stress, burnout is experienced as chronic exhaustion, lack of motivation, and feelings of powerlessness/apathy to bring about change.

This presentation seeks to highlight the need for prioritising self-care practises among mental-health providers as a professional and ethical responsibility to improve wellbeing and competence - of self and others. Social connectedness and belonging are critical aspects of self-care; thus, we situate it as a relational and social practice. The concept of 'self-care' will be unpacked using a critical psychology lens and its value and role within healthcare positioned as a way of also promoting an ethics of care and humanness (ubuntu). We explore how indigenous practices of holding space, being of service to others, and fostering communities of care and support can restore personal balance, strengthen connectedness and develop social harmony and wellness. *Correspondence: Dr Avivit Cherrington,*  
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### **Methi LM. Experiences of caregivers in addressing psychosocial challenges of foster children in the context of SOS Children's Village, South Africa**

Caregiving is a global critical social programme where caregivers often face a myriad of challenges. Caregiving services for children and youth are meant to provide stability in safe, nurturing family settings and afford children opportunities to develop positive and supportive relationships, especially with caregivers and other significant adults that, in turn, facilitate normative development. This study seeks to explore the experiences of caregivers in providing psychosocial support in an SOS children's village in South Africa. Data was collected through focus group interview. The proposed study was qualitative, located within the interpretive paradigm as it aimed to investigate the particular social reality of a group of caregivers in its real-life and gain an in-depth understanding of the context. The study adopts an indigenous psychology theory to enhance the dominant Western discourses on psychosocial support. Thematic

analysis was used to identify and interpret common themes and patterns of meaning in the textual data. The findings reveal that caregivers feel unprepared and lack confidence despite wanting to succeed in this domain. The study suggests that training in basic trauma-informed parenting can be effective in improving caregiver's knowledge as well as in reducing children's post-traumatic symptoms. Keywords: Caregivers, indigenous psychology, psychosocial support, trauma-informed parenting. *Correspondence: Dr Lina Makgoba Methi, [Emethilm@unisa.ac.za](mailto:Emethilm@unisa.ac.za)*

**Spambo N. Political economies of violent protests 30 years post-democracy: youth in the Inanda and KwaMashu township, KwaZulu Natal**

Popular across townships of South Africa are protests that are accompanied by increasing violence. The increase in violent public protests is an important phenomenon to understand because it is taking place 30 years after South Africa gained democracy which promised inclusion and equality for previously marginalized groups. One can interpret violent protest a treat to unity and increasing fragmented communities, Important intersections of concern that communities of Inanda and Kwamashu townships speak (1) race discourse (2) structural violence highlighted by high rate of unemployed youth (3) politics related to upcoming elections (4) lack of communal healing from previous oppressive systems. The study used mixed methods, engaging with youth, political leaders, community elders, church and youth organisation leaders to gain more perspective. Results show that as violent protests increase community members have lost trust in the government in relation to improved livelihood, and further, that communities in the townships use violence public protests to fight each other, not only against the government. Lastly, the study posits that the positions in which political parties find

themselves post-2024 election could result to what the country experienced during the 2021 looting and violent events.

Key word: violent protests, townships, youth, intersectionality, community fragmentation.

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**James S, Taliep N, Ismail G, Ngwenya N, Mavundla B, Radebe D & Swart L. Resources, power, and community engagement: Navigating community priorities and university interests amid the structural divide in South Africa**

Community-based research, facilitated by community engagement (CE), is often grounded in principles of social justice that foreground community priorities and concerns. Community-based researchers thus strive to conduct research, in collaborative partnership with community members, that serves the interest of that community. Within CE research, however, community expectations and institutional processes might not always align, especially in financial matters. While researchers remain accountable to their research institutions, community members remain committed to improving conditions within their context. These competing priorities may hamper long-standing community and academic partnerships - it is thus important to recognise and navigate such matters. This paper aims to particularly explore the challenges of navigating money matters within CE, looking specifically at community expectations versus institutional requirements within a resource-constrained context. To achieve this aim, a qualitative community case study design was employed leveraging data from focus group discussions with community members and stakeholders who have been involved in institutional-community CE activities for more than 10 years across two South African communities. The presentation seeks to underscore the significance of navigating and addressing financial considerations, which not

only pose a challenge within CE but also serve as a means to mitigate conflicting priorities. *Correspondence: Mrs. Seneca James, [louwsa@unisa.ac.za](mailto:louwsa@unisa.ac.za)*

**Thursday, 10 October 2024**

**Invited Address: Trauma and Violence**

**Chair: Bawa U**

**10:30 – 11:15**

**Redda A.H. An investigation into the experiences of female victims of trafficking in Ethiopia**

The purpose of this study is to tell the story of female victims of human trafficking from Ethiopia. It pertains to the cause of trafficking and how it affects their social and emotional wellbeing. The study is conducted in light of constructivist framework and involves in-depth interviews with five returnees whose experiences as victims are explored. This is done to get insight into the challenges faced by the wider population. Themes evident in the stories are discussed in line with relevant literature. The study shows lack of job opportunities, limited income and false promises made by brokers as the major factors drawing women into human trafficking. The findings also show that even after return, the victims experience further difficulties due to post-traumatic psychological factors. Looking at the significance of the research outcome, the gleaned information could be of value for organizations working on migration and countering human trafficking.

Keywords: Female, Human trafficking, Migration, Migrant workers, Psychosocial and victims of trafficking. *Correspondence: Mrs. Assefach Haileselassie Redda, [asefubctc@gmail.com](mailto:asefubctc@gmail.com)*

**Thursday, 10 October 2024**

**Roundtable: Trauma and Violence**

**Chair: Bawa U**

**11:30 – 12:30**

**Nkosi S, Jansen S, Bawa U, Clayton N & Nhlumayo L. Exploring the nexus of trauma and masculine ideals in correctional services**

Violence perpetration and victimization is disproportionate among young South African men (Heber, 2017; Seedat et al., 2009). This phenomenon is hypothesized to be attributed to the influence of hyper-masculine ideals on the expression of anger (Vescio et al., 2023). Intergenerational violence and continued inequality experienced within low socio-economic environments socialize young men in these hypermasculine ideals, priming them for violence (Meinck et al., 2023). The correctional system is a microcosm of institutional violence perpetuating hypermasculine ideals, contributing to elevated Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) and complex PTSD prevalence among the incarcerated (Facer-Irwin et al., 2023). Under-reporting of violence and trauma by inmates is common due to retaliation fears and reluctance to involve correctional officers, reinforcing hypermasculine beliefs that discourage help-seeking behaviours (Byrne et al., 2024). Interventions and treatments to address trauma and reduce recidivism must recognize the role of masculine ideals. The panelists will provide insights that will address the intersection of historical and intergenerational trauma, masculinities, violence, and psychology in South Africa. In addition, the panelists will provide their reflections on practical guidance for clinicians working with young boys who are at risk and men within the correctional setting.

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**Thursday, 10 October 2024**

**Invited Address**

**Chair: Peters F**

**10:30 – 11:10**

**Afolabi O & Olusa O. Religious orientation and self esteem as predictors of subjective happiness and prosocial behaviour among a sample of undergraduates**

Prosocial behavior and subjective happiness are important social and cognitive lubricants that help students to cope and maintain focus in the midst of social, economic, and academic challenges in order to attain success. However, the interplay of religious orientation and self-esteem on prosocial behavior and subjective happiness has been less considered in literature, especially among the population of university undergraduates. Thus, this study examined the predictors of religious orientation and self-esteem on subjective happiness and prosocial behavior among a sample of undergraduates. Using purposive and convenience sampling techniques, 250 undergraduates were selected. The sample comprised of male=110 and female= 140 aged between 17 – 32 years (Mean =20.82; SD = 2.70). The participants responded to measures on prosocial behavior, subjective happiness, religious orientation and self-esteem. Two hypotheses were formulated and tested with Multiple Regression Analysis. The findings showed that religious orientation [ $r(2,247) \beta = .24, p < .01$ ] and self-esteem [ $r(2,247) \beta = .28, p < .01$ ] had significant independent and joint [ $F(2, 247) = 18.80, p < .01$ ] prediction on prosocial behavior. Similarly, the findings revealed a significant independent predictions of religious orientation [ $r(2,247) \beta = .23, p < .01$ ], and self-esteem [ $r(2,247) \beta = .29, p < .01$ ] on subjective happiness. Also, the joint prediction of religious orientation and self-esteem on subjective happiness were significant [ $F(2, 247) = 18.91, p < .01$ ].

Based on these findings, the study therefore recommends that parents must play a significant role to ensure that religious orientations on rendering help to others are taught in their daily devotions to their children. *Correspondence: Prof. Olukayode Afolabi, [afolabi95@yahoo.co.uk](mailto:afolabi95@yahoo.co.uk)*

**Thursday, 10 October 2024**

**Invited Address**

**Chair: Peters F**

**11:10 – 11:50**

**Barnes B. Decolonisation and Climate Psychology**

The world is experiencing unprecedented global heating and associated adverse weather events with negative impacts on mental health, physical health, ecosystems, infrastructure and economic systems. Psychologists are playing an increasingly important role in attempting to understand the impacts of climate change and interventions to address it. However, psychologists have inadequately acknowledged the *unfairness* of climate change (marginalised groups are disproportionately affected by climate change and ecological destruction) and the colonial underpinnings of climate change that shape much of that unfairness. This presentation focuses on strengthening the role of the decolonial movement and its intersections with climate psychology. The presentation describes the role of psychologists in the climate emergency, including some potential problems with current approaches. It then discusses the colonial assemblages that continue to promote the structural biases of climate change. It outlines how decolonial ideas emanating from within (for example, decolonial psychology) and outside of (for example, decolonising climate justice) psychology may be useful in strengthening

climate psychology, including examples of how this is happening. Lastly, the presentation suggests recommendations for future work. *Correspondence: Prof. Brendon Barnes, [bbarnes@uj.ac.za](mailto:bbarnes@uj.ac.za)*

**Thursday, 10 October 2024**

**Invited Address**

**Chair: Peters F**

**11:50 – 12:30**

**Gowensmith N & Nadkarni L. Clinical and Forensic Psychology from a U.S. Perspective**

Psychological practice has operated in the United States for more than 150 years, now representing a multitude of subspecialties. Hundreds of academic programs provide psychological training and supervision, and tens of thousands of specialized psychologists are employed throughout the US. However, despite this tremendous variety in psychological practice, there are some common cultural foundations that exist across all areas of US psychological practice. At its roots, US psychological practice operates largely in an individualistic context, placing accountability for change within the individual client, focusing on cognitive and emotional change while often diminishing cultural and spiritual belief systems, restricting access to care to those that can afford it, and relying on a medical model of “fixing” diseases and deficits rather than enhancing strengths and resiliencies. We will explore how these foundations impact the practice of clinical and forensic psychology in the US, how they may compare and contrast with those found in other nations, and where progress and creativity is pushing these foundations forward. In addition, we will explore our own training and service model at the University of Denver, which emphasizes the role of community and strives to ensure that our clients’ intersectional identities are

empowered, seen, and heard.

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**Thursday, 10 October 2024**

**Paper Presentations: Heath Psychology**

**Chair: Roomaney R**

**10:30 – 12:30**

**Melamu D, Tsabedze W, Hermann C & Manengela T. Fear of COVID-19 in Lonely Park community, experiences of young adults: an exploration study**

The study aimed to explore psycho-social well-being of Lonely Park's young adults during the COVID-19 lockdown. Qualitative research approach was employed. Phenomenological research design was utilised. Focus group discussion was used to collect data from fourteen participants, divided into two groups. Five males and nine females, data was thematically analysed. Setswana quotes were translated to English for inclusion. Four main themes: (i) feelings related to COVID-19 lockdown, (ii) fear of COVID-19, (iii) COVID-19 and psycho-social well-being, and (iv) effects of COVID-19 emanated. Healthcare professionals: needs to educate young adults on how.

*Correspondence: Ms. Dineo Melamu, [dineojeniffermelamu@gmail.com](mailto:dineojeniffermelamu@gmail.com)*

**Brogneri S, Florence M & Isaacs S. Substance use amongst South African emerging adults: exploring life purpose and sources of meaning as potential protective factors.**

There is a growing body of research that has determined a correlation between purpose and meaning as protective factors towards the use of substances amongst emerging adults. However, there is a lack of appropriate data on the relationship between these variables within South Africa (SA). Therefore,

this study investigated the correlation between life purpose, sources of meaning and substance use amongst emerging adults in SA. A descriptive correlational research design was utilized in which secondary survey data collected through a parent study entitled the 'Africa Long Life Study (ALLS)' was used for analysis. Ethical clearance was obtained from the HSSREC and permission was granted by principal investigators of ALLS. Data representing the variables were drawn from a 152-item survey administered on a sample of emerging adults aged 18-23 (N=675). Correlation test results revealed significant relationships between a number of life purpose and substance use items. Additionally, the source of meaning dimension 'employment and studies' showed a significant correlation to substance use. Conclusively, there were significant relationships between the source of meaning dimension 'self-transcendence' and life purpose. These insights contribute to knowledge on protective factors against substance use within SA and can be used to guide future interventions. *Correspondence:* Ms. Savannah Brogneri, [savannahbrogneri@gmail.com](mailto:savannahbrogneri@gmail.com)

**Brogneri S, Arendse N & van Niekerk A. Characterizing injury-related burn deaths with undetermined intent: the case for Mpumalanga, 2018-2022**

Injury deaths remain underestimated as the rates for undetermined deaths increase. For burn-related deaths in particular, the cause may be difficult to establish due to the extensive effects of heat on the body. Burn fatalities in low and middle-income countries are prevalent, with South Africa reporting an exceedingly high caseload. This presents a public health challenge as the level of undetermined deaths can affect resource allocation, timely intervention and public health planning. This study seeks to describe the epidemiological characteristics of undetermined burn-related deaths in

Mpumalanga, South Africa. Secondary data was extracted from the Injury Mortality Surveillance System (n=958). Descriptive analysis of gender, age and injury site between 2018-2022 demonstrate that over a fifth of burn-related cases are due to undetermined intent and its incidence doubled over the 5-year period with a male to female ratio of 1.9:1. Incidences predominate in Emalahleni (39.1%) and Mbombela (14.9%). Children and the elder reported the highest rates. Irrespective of the intent for burn causality, vulnerable populations require preventative interventions as burn-related injuries can lead to physical impairment and psychological trauma. These insights can be utilized in devising more effective procedures in determining manner of death for burn cases. *Correspondence:* Ms. Savannah Brogneri, [savannahbrogneri@gmail.com](mailto:savannahbrogneri@gmail.com)

**Gwadiso X, Arendse N & van Niekerk A. Epidemiological characteristics of fall-related injury deaths in Mpumalanga, South Africa**

**Background:** Fall-related injuries are a serious global and African public health problem that increasingly contributes to morbidity, lifelong disabilities, and healthcare costs. Following road traffic injuries, it is the second leading cause of unintentional deaths, causing an estimated 684,000 deaths annually where 80% occur in low- and middle-income countries. Particular risk factors include those over 60 years of age, being male, unsafe environments, hazardous occupations, and substance use. For South Africa, the injury mortality rate is nearly double the world rate; and misclassification of injuries contributes to the underreporting of particular classifications of fatalities. The current study investigated the extent and distribution of fall-related deaths in Mpumalanga for 2018-2022 study period. **Method:** A retrospective analysis of the National Injury Mortality Surveillance System, a comprehensive epidemiological database, was undertaken between 2018 and 2022 for Mpumalanga province. Comparative

analysis of data by gender, age-groups, and location were performed to describe the epidemiological characteristics of the vulnerable groups and circumstances of injury occurrence. *Correspondence: Mr. Xolisa Gwadiso, [Xolisagwadiso04@gmail.com](mailto:Xolisagwadiso04@gmail.com)*

**Basadien T & Isaacs S. The influence of family resilience on help-seeking behaviour and posttraumatic growth of university students with symptoms of post-traumatic stress disorder**

In South Africa, university students frequently experience traumatic events, increasing their risk for mental health issues like depression and PTSD. Despite this, a significant amount of students show resilience, leading to questions about the role of help-seeking behaviours and family resilience in lessening the effects of trauma. The current study explored the relationship between family resilience, help-seeking behaviour and posttraumatic growth of university students who have experienced symptoms of PTSD following the exposure of a traumatic event within the Western Cape. The study made use of a positive psychology framework which focuses on human strengths, rather than on pathology, and tries to build characteristics and positive emotions that can enhance individual wellbeing. Employing a correlational survey design, the research involved 295 participants aged 18 to 49. Data was collected through an online survey and analysed using correlation analysis and the PROCESS macro tool for mediation analysis. Results showed that family resilience did not mediate the relationship between PTSD symptom severity and attitudes towards help-seeking behaviour. However, a significant direct relationship was found between attitudes towards help-seeking behaviour and posttraumatic growth. The study also found that family resilience mediated the relationship between PTSD symptom severity and posttraumatic growth, offering valuable insights for creating support systems for

university students with PTSD symptoms. *Correspondence: Ms. Toughieda Basadien, [3558806@myuwc.ac.za](mailto:3558806@myuwc.ac.za)*

**Hector T & van Niekerk A. Fires and burn injury causal ecologies in South Africa**

Burns are a traumatic form of injury often with profound psychological impact. Such injuries typically have multiple individual, social and environmental influences that contribute to the occurrence and severity of injury. There is limited recent analysis on the causality of such injuries in South Africa, although recent accounts suggest that the demography of victims, geographic location of events, and other key socio-environmental aspects that affect injury causes may be changing. This study will explore how burns are now manifesting as injury events; whether the occurrence of burns is changing; and what social and environmental factors are currently important. The study involves South African media newspapers, with news articles sourced from NewsBank. Data analysis will be done through thematic analysis. The inclusion criteria for newspaper articles included those address fires and burns in South Africa, with an initial study period indicates as 2023. It is anticipated that themes will speak to a burn's typology, demography of victims, geographical locations, and other key aspects of causality and impact of burns.

Keywords: Typology; causality; burns; fires; media. *Correspondence: Mrs. Tiffany Hector, [hennitj@unisa.ac.za](mailto:hennitj@unisa.ac.za)*

**Thursday, 10 October 2024**

**Roundtable: AI and Professional Psychology Training**

**Chair: Den Hollander D**

**10:30 – 11:30**

**Viljoen B, Sekhute K, Den Hollander D & Den Hollander D. Collaborative Roundtable**

## **Discussion between the Division of Clinical Psychology and Artificial Intelligence**

As we celebrate PsySSA's 30<sup>th</sup> anniversary, we as the division of clinical psychology find ourselves in a reflective space, examining the changes and challenges existing within the field, specifically with regards to service delivery. A specific focus must be placed on access to care. The fourth industrial revolution has impacted upon the world in the way in which, things are done and on most professions. Demanding an adaptation and development from professions with regards to the way in which things are done and how service delivery is imagined and conducted. The field of psychology is no exception to this and one can question the level to which it has adapted to and or embraced this fourth industrial revolution. As such a roundtable discussion is proposed between the division of clinical psychology and artificial intelligence to address these two aspects and how it will relate to and impact upon access to care within the South African context. *Correspondence: Mr Barry Viljoen, [viljoen.barry7@gmail.com](mailto:viljoen.barry7@gmail.com)*

**Thursday, 10 October 2024**

**Roundtable: AI and Professional Psychology Training**

**Chair: Den Hollander D**

**11:30 – 12:30**

### **Masinga N. Is the Born Free Generation free? Exploring youth unemployment and career decision-making in context**

South Africa, a young population, faces significant challenges regarding youth unemployment. Statistics indicate that a substantial portion of the population, particularly between the ages of 15-39, are unemployed. This group ideally contributing to the nation's workforce, is

disproportionately affected by unemployment, with 31.9% of South African citizens being unemployed. In light of these statistics, it becomes imperative to understand the underlying factors contributing to youth unemployment. One significant aspect worth exploring is the role of career decision-making in shaping individuals' trajectories toward employment. Choosing subjects towards a career can be challenging, but research suggests a correlation between career choices, self-concept, and academic performance. Understanding these interconnections is important, it empowers individuals to make informed decisions that can positively impact their self-concept, academic achievements, and ultimately, their career prospects. This paper aims to offer insights to the discourse on youth unemployment, focusing on adolescents' aspirations and career decisions. It explores the relationship between adolescents' aspirations, self-concept, and academic performance, informing strategies for improving youth employment opportunities. *Correspondence: Ms. Nonhlanhla Masinga, [masinn1@unisa.ac.za](mailto:masinn1@unisa.ac.za)*

### **Jacobson J & Govender R. The relevance debate: an exploratory study of student's perceptions of psychology**

The relevance debate in psychology, particularly in the South African context, encompasses discussions surrounding the discipline's engagement with societal issues, cultural relevance, and its impact on post-apartheid nation-building efforts (Bantjieset al., 2019). This qualitative research study explores the perceptions of psychology students in KwaZulu-Natal, South Africa, regarding the relevance of psychology within the ongoing 'relevance debate.' The study focuses on understanding student's experiences in psychology courses, career aspirations, and their views on psychology's relevance in South Africa. The study aims to fill gaps in the existing literature concerning

the impact of the relevance debate on psychology education and practice. Employing an Interpretivist paradigm and a qualitative, cross-sectional design, the study will utilise purposive sampling to select eight participants from diverse racial and cultural backgrounds. Data collection involves semi-structured interviews, allowing for in-depth explorations of participants' perspectives. Thematic analysis, specifically Braun and Clark's method, will be employed to identify patterns within the data. While results are pending as data collection is ongoing, the study's objective is to shed light on factors influencing students' perceptions of psychology's relevance. Ultimately, this research aims to address disparities in postgraduate psychology demographics and improve accessibility to psychological services in South Africa. *Correspondence: Ms. Jaimie Jacobson, [jaimiejacobson@icloud.com](mailto:jaimiejacobson@icloud.com)*

#### **Nape M & Eagle G. South African clinical psychology trainees' experiences of their internship year**

Clinical Psychology trainees undergo a mandatory internship year requiring a significant transition from graduate student to formal, professional employee. The findings of a study investigating challenges South African interns reported experiencing during their training are presented, including consideration of contributions to positive experiences. Eleven participants from different sites were interviewed. The data generated was subjected to thematic analysis. Ten themes were identified and categorized into three areas: challenges or difficulties; benefits, learning, and growth; and coping resources and advice. All participants highlighted various significant difficulties leading to adjustment problems, role ambiguity, and feelings of incompetence. Supervision relationships significantly shaped interns' experiences, with the perceived misuse of power by supervisors exacerbating challenges faced. All trainees reported mental

or physical health problems. Despite hardships, trainees benefited from learning and demonstrated aspects of resilience. Some recommendations for facilitating more harmonious internship experiences are proposed. *Correspondence: Ms. Maretebale Nape, [maretebalen@gmail.com](mailto:maretebalen@gmail.com)*

**Thursday, 10 October 2024**

**Invited Address: Radical Dialogues**

**Chair: Suffla S**

**10:30 – 11:30**

#### **Shalhoub-Kervokian N. The Psychology of Anti-Colonial Resistance: Praxis from the Flesh**

Genocidal violence in Gaza, the colonized scattered and shredded body parts bring into focus the violent enmeshment of Palestinian ashlaa'/flesh within the geo-politics of psychology. The violent dismemberment of bodies testifies to state terror and its psychological warfare. By understanding how people of Gaza make sense of scenes of brutal dismemberment and death in their everyday lives, amidst a genocide, I offer an anticolonial resistance psychology and praxis from the flesh. My talk is a call to read the inscriptions of dismembered, wounded and dying flesh/body/land in their racial command. I will conclude by insisting that an anti-colonial resistance psychology invests in life and liveability against the permanence of otherness, in which racialized people are turned into the exploded, shattered, decomposed, unidentified no-bodies. It is a psychology that insists on re-assembling the wholeness of life, a psycho-political effort to rebuild new spaces of love in a struggle for a dignified humane life. *Correspondence: Prof. Nadera Shalhoub-Kervokian, [nadera@sh-ke.com](mailto:nadera@sh-ke.com)*

**Thursday, 10 October 2024**

**Invited Address: Radical Dialogues**

**Chair: Suffla S**

**11:30 – 12:30**

**Sheehi L. The Psychology of Anti-Colonial Resistance: Praxis from the Flesh: “On Refusing Psychic Intrusions”**

In engaging with Nadera Shalhoub-Kevorkian’s theorizing, I will discuss psychic intrusions and the various ways anti-colonial resistance refuses them. I will take up how to conceptualize the arduous, yet life sustaining struggle that allows for this refusal to happen just as consistently as the intrusion insists on making itself felt. In this talk, I will highlight how refusing the terms of settler colonial psychic intrusion by refusing its hollow attempts at “repair” is not out of recalcitrance, but rather as an ethical imperative that guides the *possibility* of another mode of being and staying in (or importantly, opting out of) relation. Cypriot and Greek psychoanalyst, Avgi Saketopoulou, in speaking of *exigent sadism* reminds us: “In refusing repair, exigent sadism is not indifferent to the other’s gesture: what the exigent sadist seeks to do, rather, is to stage an encounter that stands to rearrange the terms by which the relationship proceeds.” Using this as a springboard, I will explore how the mere *presence* of Palestinians is enough to stage that encounter in the settler colonial matrix, a Palestinian in *presence*, then, becomes the register by which repair is refused. Maintaining and sustaining, *presence*, in the face of genocide; in the face of dismemberment, erasure, subjugation, intrusion and coercion is enough to stage the encounter of which she speaks. The promise of this potential mounts a libidinal excitation that has the urgent potential to withstand the pressures of the deathscape that threatens to subsume us all. *Correspondence: Prof. Lara Sheehi, [drlarasheehi@gmail.com](mailto:drlarasheehi@gmail.com)*

**Thursday, 10 October 2024**

**Paper Presentations: Research Psychology**

**Chair: Maree D**

**13:30 – 15:30**

**Chitanga J, Adams-Adonis N & Sobotker N. Perspectives of coordinating the psychology research projects at a private higher education**

This study aimed to investigate the perspectives of coordinators of Independent Research Projects at a private institution in Cape Town. The module is important to promote the writing and critical thinking skills needed in the country. The research skills prepare students for other higher-level qualifications, and professions and strategically position South Africa globally. Some challenges are associated with the module, and most previous studies have focused on writing strategies, supervision in business studies and throughput or retention rates. Rarely studies on the experiences and perspectives of those involved in the coordination of the programme. The coordination involves assigning students to supervisors, hosting workshops and addressing students' questions. The perspectives of coordinators are vital to inform future interventions, especially with the reports of the challenges of managing and helping students from previously marginalised groups. The study aligns with Objective 9 of the National Development Plan (NDP) 2030. A case study approach was implemented for the study. Semi-structured interviews were conducted on Microsoft Teams. The findings revealed that the perspectives of the supervisors speak to the challenges faced by both students and supervisors due to several reasons including the pressure associated with all the other modules in the Honours programme. *Correspondence: Mr. Jabulani Chitanga, [jabulanic@cornerstone.ac.za](mailto:jabulanic@cornerstone.ac.za)*

### **Vorster L. When is research worth it?**

Although return on investment (ROI) is defined as the ratio of benefits over costs, or 'bang for your buck', the value of research is not just about money. To assess research ROI, collaboration between researchers, practitioners, policymakers, and other stakeholders is needed. In psychology, research ROI could relate to, for example, strengthening the body of knowledge in the field, treatment or intervention outcomes, cost savings in healthcare, workplace productivity and performance, national and international policy impact, educational outcomes, quality of life, or long-term impacts on society. First, approaches to assessing research ROI are illustrated using case studies from academic, commercial, and social research contexts, with specific reference to options, methods, and risks. Secondly, a framework for considering ROI when conceptualising and conducting research in psychology is proposed. Finally, a case is made for moving focus from responsible research that could have impact, to accountable research that must have a positive return. *Correspondence: Ms. Leonie Vorster, [leonie@leonievorster.co.za](mailto:leonie@leonievorster.co.za)*

### **Maree D. Am I a positivist if I work with numbers (or not scientific when dealing with meaning)?**

The paper shows that quantitative methods need not fall into the rabbit hole of positivism. If psychological science accommodates a plurality of methods and phenomena, qualitative and quantitative methods can avoid labels such as unscientific or positivistic. Critical realism allows us to view our scholarly practices as scientific, but only if we conceptualize terms such as objectivity and causality appropriately. The difficulty of uncovering explanatory mechanisms with either method is discussed, and guidelines are provided for avoiding positivistic platitudes when using numbers. By showing that ontology precedes epistemology, that agency,

the social, and the natural are real, and that our knowledge of these differentiated dimensions is provisional, it follows that our scientific understanding is one of depth and may recruit qualitative or quantitative approaches as required. This means that data do not equate to the thing to be explained and should be appropriately unlocked with quant, qual or mixed tools. Thus, data and tools provide epistemic access to things that are real. Finally, I provide brief examples of this process. *Correspondence: Prof. David Maree, [david.maree@up.ac.za](mailto:david.maree@up.ac.za)*

### **Rammopo O. Enhancing qualitative analysis with artificial intelligence**

This abstract explores how Artificial Intelligence (AI) can enhance qualitative research data analysis. Manual coding, the traditional method, faces limitations in handling large datasets and potential subjectivity. AI offers a toolkit for researchers to navigate vast datasets and uncover deeper themes within the data. Current qualitative analysis methods, while valuable, have limitations. Manual coding can struggle with large datasets and introduce researcher bias, potentially missing subtle thematic nuances. AI presents a novel approach by automating initial coding tasks, freeing researchers to refine themes and interpret the intricate narratives woven within the data. However, critical consideration is crucial. Researchers must be aware of potential data bias in AI algorithms and the risk of overlooking qualitative data's subtleties. This abstract advocates for responsible AI integration in qualitative data analysis. By leveraging AI's strengths while maintaining human expertise in interpreting qualitative data's intricacies, researchers can potentially unlock richer insights and advance the field of qualitative inquiry. *Correspondence: Mr. Omphile Rammopo, [omphile43@gmail.com](mailto:omphile43@gmail.com)*

### **Lazarus T & Lazarus NT. Artificial Intelligence in psychology research: promise, pitfalls, and improved application**

Psychologists are becoming increasingly aware of the relevance of social equity issues when using methods and interventions in psychological research and practice. One aspect of social justice is to interrogate the literature on the sample selection, methods used, interpretation of findings, and conclusions drawn before implementation in a world of significant diversity with respect to culture, gender and ethnicity. The search for universal psychological principles when researching human behaviour, even in the contexts of medical and sport sciences, demands data based on large sample sizes. Psychologists are encouraged to use large samples and data sets to reduce margins of error and standard deviations, thus improving generalizability of results. Although AI significantly improves analysis of large sample data, inherent problems with potential for bias exist in applying certain methods, thus potentially influencing outcome. Thus, this presentation is aimed at achieving the following:

1. To discuss data and text mining processes.
2. To propose potential sources of bias in in these methods.
3. To review and apply established AI focused methods on bias detection and mitigation, including redaction techniques.

*Correspondence: Prof. Theophilus Lazarus, [tlazarus57@gmail.com](mailto:tlazarus57@gmail.com)*

### **Geils C, Edwards S & Naidu T. Transpersonal research and organic inquiry: an integral research approach**

This paper discusses the transpersonal research approach of organic inquiry as meeting the requirements of integral research practices. Ferrer, Romero and Albareda (2005) argue that an integrative, 'whole-person', 'participatory' approach that incorporates all human dimensions, namely heart, mind, body

and consciousness, and masculine and feminine principles, is needed in learning and research. They argue for the importance of reconnecting learning and research with its transformative and spiritual roots and that an integrated and coherent multidimensional mode of inquiry is more naturally reflective of the multidimensionality of a human being. The unfolding research process and presentation of findings of a doctoral study which applied organic inquiry to explore seven South African trained psychologists' transformational experiences of constellations work is presented. In line with Ferrer et al.'s (2005) model, the unfolding process supported Ferrer et al.'s (2005) recommendations for an integrative and transformative inquiry process out of which emerges generative creativity. It is an approach to research that incorporates trans-egoic, liminal and spiritual influences and multiple ways of knowing in service of new knowledge creation. Implications for the integral training and education of psychologists is discussed. *Correspondence: Dr Catherine Geils, [cathygeils@gmail.com](mailto:cathygeils@gmail.com)*

**Thursday, 10 October 2024**

**Paper Presentations: COVID-19**

**Chair: Mashaba M**

**13:30 – 15:30**

### **Nel KA & Govender S. Perceptions of older patients in terms of their healthcare in South Africa during the COVID-19 pandemic**

South Africa has a younger as compared to an older population like those in Europe and America. The healthcare system is thus arguably geared towards the care, both physical and psychological, of those below 60 years of age. Older persons often find the term 'geriatric patient' on their files and referral letters. This affects their perceptions of themselves, and many find it disrespectful.

The aim of the research was to explore how older persons perceived their healthcare in terms of how they were talked to and treated. Positive psychology underpinned the study and was used to explore if the patients had positive emotions with regard to their care. The research used a qualitative approach with a phenomenological research design. The sample was purposive used a snowball technique. Interviews were conducted with 6 'geriatric' patients (2 males and 4 females) during the Covid-19 pandemic and analysed using Thematic Analysis (TA). Findings revealed several themes namely: 1) No one listens; 2) Older age is equated with feeble-mindedness; 3) When did my children become my parents? 4) Healthcare is gendered; 5) Shame related to the ageing process. Recommendations were that education and training on how to treat older patients is required in all levels of the healthcare system. *Correspondence: Prof. Kathryn Anne Nel, [kathynel53@gmail.com](mailto:kathynel53@gmail.com)*

**Mashaba M, Mapaling C & Tsabedze W.  
Psychosocial stressors and coping mechanisms of morticians during the COVID-19 pandemic: a qualitative study**

The declaration of COVID-19 as a pandemic by the World Health Organisation led to unprecedented challenges worldwide. In South Africa, measures such as social distancing, wearing of masks, curfews, and prohibitions on gatherings were enforced. This study explores the psychosocial stressors and coping mechanisms among morticians in the North West province. This research aimed to investigate the coping strategies employed by morticians facing psychosocial stressors during the COVID-19 pandemic. Adopting a qualitative approach, the study engaged in Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis to understand the lived experiences of 10 morticians. Data were collected through semi-structured interviews, employing purposive sampling. The interviews were thematically analysed. The findings reveal that morticians

experienced significant psychosocial stressors, including death overload, insomnia, stigmatisation, social isolation, and anxiety. Work-related stressors, such as trauma, fear of exposure, and stringent COVID-19 regulations, exacerbated these challenges. Nevertheless, morticians adopted coping strategies like acceptance, avoidance, resilience, seeking support, and turning to religion. The study highlights the critical psychosocial challenges faced by morticians during the COVID-19 pandemic and their coping strategies. It underscores the importance of promoting social inclusion and support for morticians. We recommend that mortuary governing bodies develop awareness programmes and counselling services to bolster mental health support for morticians. *Correspondence: Ms. Melissa Mashaba, [mashabamelissa1@gmail.com](mailto:mashabamelissa1@gmail.com)*

**JamJam N. Experiences of female psychiatric nurses with comorbidities who survived Covid-19 in Nelson Mandela Bay, Eastern Cape**

The COVID-19 pandemic has profoundly affected healthcare professionals, yet the experiences of female psychiatric nurses with comorbidities who contracted the virus during their service remain underexplored. This study focuses on such nurses at Elizabeth Donkin Psychiatric Hospital in Nelson Mandela Bay, Eastern Cape. Through interpretive phenomenological analysis, this study engaged 14 nurses for eight months, uncovering the multifaceted challenges they faced, which ranged from deteriorating physical health and psychological stress to stigma and considerable workplace changes, all while upholding their professional duties. The analysis reveals a spectrum of emotional responses, transitioning from shock, panic, fear, sadness, hopelessness and uncertainty to adaptation and effective management of their condition. The analysis identified essential themes like coping strategies, resilience, moral commitment, and

adaptability, accentuating the nurse's firm commitment to patient care amidst the pandemic. The preliminary findings provide a basis for developing psychosocial support strategies, clinical practices, and policies to enhance the resilience and operational efficiency of psychiatric nurses in health crises. This study is critical for improving the support system for psychiatric nurses, ensuring consistent quality care for patients, and offers vital perspectives for policy and clinical practice enhancements, with implications extending beyond the immediate context to broader health emergency responses. *Correspondence: Mrs. Nokuzola JamJam, [nomaqula@gmail.com](mailto:nomaqula@gmail.com)*

**Janse Van Vuuren M, Kagee A, Shongwe L & Coetzee B. South African university students' experiences of the COVID-19 pandemic and lockdown, ways of coping, sources of support and perceptions of the vaccine: a qualitative study**

During the COVID-19 pandemic, university students worldwide encountered significant disruptions to their learning routines, increasing their vulnerability to distress and mental health conditions. Prior to COVID-19, studies indicated that, compared to the general population, university students are more susceptible to common mental health challenges like depression and anxiety. While global studies have attempted to address some of these concerns, there is a noticeable dearth of research conducted in the South African context. Against this backdrop, our study aimed to explore the experiences of South African university students during the COVID-19 pandemic, including disruptions to learning, impacts on mental health, and coping strategies. Semi-structured interviews were conducted with 24 students at Stellenbosch University. Thematic analysis demonstrated that students grappled with academic stress, lacked adequate academic support, and held mixed attitudes towards the transition to an online learning format.

Mental health related themes included experiences of symptoms of depression, anxiety, loneliness, and isolation. Coping strategies varied and included substance use and engagement in physical exercise. Our findings underscore the urgent need for students to access academic and mental health support services. Addressing these needs is critical for mitigating the adverse impacts of the pandemic on students' well-being and academic success. *Correspondence: Mr. Marnus Janse Van Vuuren, [marnusjvv@sun.ac.za](mailto:marnusjvv@sun.ac.za)*

**Coetzee N & Frank M. Digital gaming and students' psychological wellbeing following the COVID-19 pandemic: an exploratory study**

The COVID-19 pandemic had a significant effect on global wellbeing. The transition from in-person to online learning, COVID-19-related health issues, social restrictions, anxieties surrounding the wellbeing of loved ones, and uncertainty regarding the future resulted in elevated symptoms of anxiety and depression. To combat social isolation students embraced digital gaming. Many of these games contain elements of violence, which have been associated with negative psychological wellbeing. The aim of this study was to determine the effects of violent versus non-violent digital gaming on student wellbeing following the COVID-19 lockdown. A quantitative cross-sectional design making use of convenience sampling was employed. The final sample, consisting of 114 students, were divided into three groups, namely violent gamers, non-violent gamers, and the control group. Participants completed a biographical questionnaire, the PERMA-Profiler and the State-Trait Personality Inventory Form Y. The results of a MANOVA indicated significant differences between the groups on the State Anxiety subscale. Lastly, a standard multiple regression analysis indicated that State Depression and Trait Depression were significant predictors of wellbeing. The results

of the study indicated that engaging in gameplay resulted in higher levels of psychological wellbeing when compared to those who did not engage in gameplay during the time of the study. *Correspondence: Prof. Nicoleen Coetzee, [nicoleen.coetzee@up.ac.za](mailto:nicoleen.coetzee@up.ac.za)*

**Nel R, Piotrowski K & Naude L. Motherhood, work, and life all wrapped up in a pandemic: Why would there be conflict?**

This qualitative study aimed to explore and describe the role conflict that working South African mothers experienced during the COVID-19 pandemic in relation to their maternal and work roles and to examine mothers' descriptions and experiences of their individual and maternal identities. The COVID-19 pandemic provided new research opportunities since lockdown restrictions created unprecedented circumstances within the home and work environment. Work-life conflict was explored within the context of motherhood, gaining a deeper understanding of the experience and integration of maternal and individual identities. Semi-structured interviews with nine mothers were analysed using reflexive thematic analysis. Analyses revealed that mothers experienced increased role conflict during the COVID-19 pandemic. The pandemic was described as a period of many trials and uncertainties, however similarly filled with positive experiences of increased family closeness and enjoyment of the unexpected quality time spent with loved ones. Challenges experienced included social isolation, limited time for self-care, re-evaluations of work and maternal roles, and subsequent influences on their personal and maternal identity development. This study provides insight into the complexities and nuanced experiences of mothers' work and family conflict within the unknowns and uncertainty of a pandemic. *Correspondence: Ms. Ruani Nel, [ruaninel@gmail.com](mailto:ruaninel@gmail.com)*

**Thursday, 10 October 2024**

**Invited Symposium: Childhood Studies**

**Chair: Sodi T**

**13:30 – 15:30**

**Youth mental health in sub-Saharan Africa: Are we making progress?**

Research shows that an increasing number of young people in sub-Saharan Africa experience mental health problems. This symposium will interrogate and provide scientific evidence on youth mental health problems in the region while building on the success of a similar symposium organised during the 29<sup>th</sup> PsySSA Congress. The first paper by Muchemwa et al. provides a comprehensive bibliometric analysis of mental health research within higher learning institutions across sub-Saharan Africa. The paper by Quarshie et al. presents data on the prevalence and correlates of anxiety and depression among first-year undergraduates in Ghana. In the third paper, Sodi et al. present the research protocol of a randomised controlled study (the PREhPARE study) that seeks to implement and evaluate a mental health literacy programme in three universities located in the provinces of Limpopo and Mpumalanga. Quarshie and Oppong Asante present the results of the first cross-sectional study to assess the prevalence and correlates of suicidal ideation and attempt in a sample of pregnant adolescent girls drawn from the three broad geographical zones of Ghana. In the fifth paper, Makgahlela et al. report on a systematic review that synthesised published primary evidence from sub-Saharan Africa on the status and measurement of mental health literacy among school-going adolescents. *Correspondence: Prof. Tholene Sodi, [tholene.sodi@ul.ac.za](mailto:tholene.sodi@ul.ac.za)*

**Makgahlela M, Muchemwa M, Quarshie E. N, Nkoana S, Asante K. O, Makatu M & Sodi T. Mental health literacy of school-going adolescents in sub-Saharan Africa: a regional systematic review**

Assessing mental health literacy has implications for the identification and treatment of mental health problems. Adolescents have been identified as a particularly important target group for initiating and improving mental health literacy. However, much of what we know about adolescent mental health literacy comes from high-income countries. This systematic review synthesised published primary evidence from sub-Saharan Africa on the status and measurement of mental health literacy among school-going adolescents. The systematic review was reported in line with the Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analyses statement (PRISMA-2020). We systematically searched the selected global databases (EMBASE, PsycINFO, PubMed and MEDLINE) and regional electronic databases (African Index Medicus and African Journals OnLine) for observational and qualitative studies published in English and French. Results were reported against three main themes: Recognition of mental disorders, knowledge about factors related to mental health, and attitudes and beliefs about mental disorders. Students viewed mental health as help offered to people who are stressed to reduce stress. The mental health problems were attributed to schoolwork, peer pressure, family problems, and poverty. Not seeking emotional support and mental healthcare services was attributed to low mental health literacy levels. *Correspondence: Prof. Mpsanyana Makgahlela, [mpsanyana.makgahlela@ul.ac.za](mailto:mpsanyana.makgahlela@ul.ac.za)*

**Muchemwa M, Sodi T & Themane M. Promoting mental health in university students through a mental health literacy**

**programme in South Africa: A randomized control trial study**

Mental health problems among university students are a growing public health concern. The levels of mental health disorders such as depression, anxiety and suicidal ideation are increasing among university students in South Africa. The PREhPARE study seeks to implement and evaluate a mental health literacy programme in three universities in the provinces of Limpopo and Mpumalanga. A randomised controlled trial evaluating the mental health literacy intervention programme among university students will be conducted. The universities will be randomised into active and control arms of the study. Students in the active arm of the study will receive the mental health literacy intervention while those in the control arm will not receive the intervention. We hypothesize an increase in mental health literacy in the intervention group compared to the control group. At present, no study has employed a mental health literacy programme to promote the mental health of university students. The results of this study will show the implementation and effectiveness of the mental health literacy programme in contributing to delivering an evidence-based intervention for mental health promotion in universities.

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**Quarshie E.N & Asante K.O. Antepartum suicidal behaviour in adolescent girls: a cross-sectional study from Ghana**

Suicide is the third leading cause of death among girls aged 15-19 years. However, there is a growing concern that suicide research has paid less attention to pregnant adolescent girls, particularly in low- and middle-income countries, including Ghana, where nearly 1 in 7 adolescent girls experiences pregnancy. This cross-sectional study is the first to assess the prevalence and correlates of suicidal ideation

and attempt in a sample of pregnant adolescent girls (aged 14 - 19 years) drawn from the three broad geographical zones of Ghana. Of the 463 participants invited, 97% responded with complete data. Bivariable and multivariable analyses showed that, overall, 28.5% (95%CI: 24.4-32.9%) reported suicidal ideation and 18.0% (95%CI: 14.6-21.9%) reported suicidal attempt. While alcohol use and food insecurity were uniquely associated with ideation, history of attempted suicide, adverse childhood experiences, and pregnancy related anxiety were uniquely associated with attempted suicide. However, conflict with parents, and physical abuse by intimate partner were associated with increased odds of both ideation and attempt. While further cross-disciplinary research is needed, the evidence also underscores a need for both routine antenatal screening for suicide risks, and targeted prevention and intervention programmes. *Correspondence: Dr Emmanuel Nii-Boye Quarshie, [enquarshie@ug.edu.gh](mailto:enquarshie@ug.edu.gh)*

**Quarshie E.N, Azure D, Osei A & Asante KO.  
Depression and anxiety among first-year undergraduates in Ghana: a multi-campus cross-sectional study**

There is an increasing recognition of the significant challenges posed to universities by the increasing number of students with mental health challenges, including anxiety and depression. However, there is still less than enough epidemiological evidence on anxiety and depression among (particularly, first-year) undergraduates in low-and-middle-income countries, including Ghana. This study presents a regionally representative self-reported cross-sectional data (collected between April and September 2023 from 1,296 first-year undergraduates) across the Greater Accra Region on the prevalence and correlates of anxiety and depression. Among other measures, the students responded to the 4-item Patient Health Questionnaire assessing anxiety and depression. Binary

logistic regression approach was applied to the data. Overall, the current prevalence of anxiety was 33.3% [female = 36.9%; male = 28.3%]. Also, 36.3% reported depression (female=40.1%; male=31.1%). Sexual violence victimisation was uniquely associated with increased odds of anxiety, while history of attempted suicide before attending university, alcohol use, and female gender were uniquely associated with increased odds of depression. Notably, academic satisfaction, and satisfaction with peer support were commonly associated with reduced odds of both anxiety and depression. The evidence underscores the need to initiate and improve university-wide psychosocial support systems and mental health-promotion programmes targeted at first-year students.

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**Thursday, 10 October 2024**

**Paper Presentations: Psychotherapeutic Interventions**

**Chair: Thwala J**

**13:30 – 15:30**

**Thwala J.D. Self-help tools for health professionals**

Health practitioners (psychologists) from different categories are known for helping others in need of emotional support. Individual counselling sessions are often suggested for student psychologists and psychologists who have just completed professional training. At very list, debriefing and self-help is spoken about. This is probably because psychologist and other health professionals are supposed to know how to look after their health status. This is not often the case. This symposium aims at shearing basic self-help tools that can become handy in the face of emotional draining situations. These self-help tools range from silent sounds

to 'invisible' gestures. They can be used across cultures.

Keywords: Self-help tools, health professionals, emotional support, psychologists, silent sounds, invisible gestures. *Correspondence: Prof. Jabulani Dennis Thwala, [thwalaj@unizulu.ac.za](mailto:thwalaj@unizulu.ac.za)*

### **Geils C, Edwards S & Naidu T. South African psychologists' transformational experiences of constellations work**

With lineage roots in African, specifically Zulu, cosmology, constellations work overlaps with shamanic practices, and many varied Western therapeutic modalities. There is little empirical and theoretical research into constellations work, both internationally and within a South African context. In particular, there is no specific, in depth, research on the transformational elements of constellations work praxis. Findings are presented from a doctoral study that sought to understand constellations work within a transpersonal, integral and whole-person consciousness model. Seven South African trained psychologists (co-researchers) attended six constellations' workshops over a nine-month period. Data was analysed within an organic inquiry framework, using a heuristic phenomenological approach. Findings suggested consciousness transformation as co-created descending, ascending and extending movements which supported constellations work as integral and transpersonal, consistent with depth psychological, feminine, indigenous and relational, participatory perspectives. Implications for integral training and education of South African psychologists is discussed. *Correspondence: Dr Catherine Geils, [cathygeils@gmail.com](mailto:cathygeils@gmail.com)*

### **Howes D. OCD: a therapeutic model.**

A therapeutic model is presented which serves to illustrate and identify the unconscious dynamics, belief systems and

emotional patterns of an individual with obsessive compulsive disorder. The logic of the unconscious mind is investigated relative to these dynamics, which is different to that of the conscious mind and determines a large part of the behavioural results. These patterns and belief systems are adopted in early childhood according to the way an individual learns to receive love or to survive under difficult circumstances. They become fixed and continue later in life where the OCD symptoms result. The sabotage mechanisms and origins are discussed as well as providing an illustration of the psychotherapeutic tools and skills that need to be implemented. These are reprocessed and desensitized towards healing and balance. A case study is cited.

*Correspondence: Ms. Debbie Howes, [debbiehowes@mac.com](mailto:debbiehowes@mac.com)*

### **Pillay I & Nel L. Psychotherapists' motivations and experiences in shifting to online psychotherapy during the COVID-19 pandemic: a rapid review**

The COVID-19 pandemic imposed various social and professional contact restrictions, with health care and especially psychological consultations being significantly affected. The use of online platforms for patient consultations became quite popular, with many psychotherapists opting for this medium. The present research was undertaken against the background of the challenges and also the benefits of using online consultations. To this end, the authors engaged in a rapid review of the scholarly literature to understand psychotherapists' motivations and experiences as they embarked on this approach to mental health care. The Self-determination theory (SDT) was used as the theoretical foundation of the study, and peer-reviewed, qualitative research studies published between 2020 and 2023 that met the inclusion criteria were included for analysis. A qualitative approach was used and the generated themes are discussed in relation to the latest literature,

with recommendations and a way forward for possible future pandemics. *Correspondence:* Ms. Indira Pillay, [indirapillay25@gmail.com](mailto:indirapillay25@gmail.com)

**Mutambara J. Factors facilitating the acceptance of psychological therapies among the public in Zimbabwe in the past decade**

Before 2015 psychological therapies remained dormant and uptake by the populace was low in Zimbabwe. However, in the last decade there seems to be greater appreciation of the role of therapy in improving people's well being among the public. This paper seeks to explore factors that have led to this shift and what the future holds for therapists in Zimbabwe. This paper is based on a qualitative analysis of the views of twelve registered clinical psychologists and counseling psychologists in Zimbabwe. The following factors were found to have contributed to greater appreciation of the role of therapy : mental health challenges as a result of the COVID pandemic, rise in drug and substance use, more therapists being trained and registered, the aging population, increase in cases of divorce and clients presenting with marital issues, health insurance accepting inclusion of counselling psychologists, increase of tariffs by health funders and availability of community programs like the friendship bench. Despite the great strides there is need to have more specialised postgraduate training and mentoring of upcoming psychologists. *Correspondence:* Dr Julia Mutambara, [mutambaraj@staff.msu.ac.zw](mailto:mutambaraj@staff.msu.ac.zw)

**Dube T. Reflections from the private practice of a black Clinical Psychologist: relinquish the need to belong everywhere**

We know the power of belonging and the joy of being in community. When one belongs it is empowering however, what happens when one does not belong and there is no likely prospect of ever belonging because of the nature of the circumstances where one finds themselves. Often, when individuals who may

be different in a marked way, join an established group there may be a desire to do things to try and belong. However, these efforts may exert a negative psychological toll on the individual who is doing the extra psychological labour in their attempt to be a part of the group. In this paper, I offer a reflection based on my experiences offering psychotherapy to black professionals in predominately white corporate spaces in Cape Town, South Africa that are not always welcoming of professionals of colour. I note that to thrive, these professionals are best served by actively relinquishing the need to belong in certain spaces and focusing on relationship building and networking, competence and grit. *Correspondence:* Dr Thembelihle Dube, [td@thembelihledube.com](mailto:td@thembelihledube.com)

**Thursday, 10 October 2024**

**Paper Presentations: African Psychology**

**Chair: Siswana A**

**13:30 – 15:30**

**Siswana A. Complexities of mental health and African spiritual healing practices among divine/traditional healers 'AmaGqirha': towards an integrated model in clinical practice.**

Interest in Africa(n) situated psychology has brought an abundance of theorizations about the psyche and psychological self-hood of Africans. Research on the role of traditional and divine healers in mental health is gaining attention both in the academic and medical communities. A number of studies have explored the role of how traditional healing practices, often rooted in cultural and spiritual traditions, can complement or be integrated into modern mental health care system. Thus, this current review aims to explore and elucidate the narratives and complexities surrounding the roles of *amagqirha* (traditional/divine healers) within the Xhosa

community, with a focus on their approaches to mental health and African spiritual healing practices. By examining the cultural, spiritual, and practical dimensions of these healing practices, the research seeks to contribute to a deeper understanding of indigenous knowledge systems and their interplay with contemporary mental health paradigms. The key reflective question is: *What are the narratives and complexities of amagqirha kwa Xhosa around mental health and African spiritual healing practices?* Overall, this reflection seeks to contribute meaningfully towards efforts to create access to mental health care services in South Africa.

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#### **Babila F. Cultural practices and health seeking behaviours in Mbororo communities of Mezam Division North West Region, Cameroon**

The purpose of this study was to investigate how cultural practices affect health-seeking behaviours of the Mbororos in their communities in Mezam Division. Precisely, indigenous health education, indigenous health beliefs and traditional medicine preference were perceived as capable of influencing health seeking behaviours of the Mbororos. The study employed a cross-sectional survey research design using an explanatory sequential mixed method. Quantitative data were collected using questionnaire while focus group discussions and interview guides were used to collect qualitative data. Questionnaires were filled by 500 Mbororos, selected using simple random sampling technique while 36 Mbororo leaders and elders and 3 healthcare providers were purposefully selected, making a total of 539 respondents. The data were analysed / The qualitative data were analysed using thematic analysis method. The findings showed that cultural practices had positive effects on health seeking behaviours towards traditional therapies. Indigenous health practices had positive effect on health seeking behaviours

but was statistically insignificant ( $p=0.354$ ). Indigenous health belief had a statistically significant effect on health seeking behaviour at 1%, as did traditional medicine preference. The study supports the notion that the Mbororo communities should develop more tolerance for conventional medicine.  
*Correspondence: Dr Foncham Babila,*  
[fonpaba1@gmail.com](mailto:fonpaba1@gmail.com)

#### **Makama R. Ngwakabani? Borders, identities and social being.**

Borders have long been a focal point in political, historical, and social sciences, transcending physical spaces to manifest within our consciousness, often as militarized as physical boundaries. Drawing on the concepts of borders and citizenship, this study delves into the narratives of homeless young men inhabiting the streets of Johannesburg. It posits that the experience of homelessness as a social justice issue erects social borders, demarcating those who belong from those who do not. For these young men, the pervasive sense of not belonging in society perpetuates their displacement from their original places and relationships. This presentation employs the notion of borders and the creation of "citizens" to examine individual constructions of self and otherness. Addressing the question "Ngwakabani?"- translated as "Who am I?" or "From whom am I?"-underscores ancestral connections, kinship, and belonging. It emphasizes not only a place of origin but also a locus of return and a fount of potential benefit. By employing an African-centered decolonial lens, rooted in Ubuntu philosophy; to contemplate home(lessness) and belonging, we may explore avenues to dismantle socially constructed and affectively militarized social positions that perpetuate inequality. This approach invites a nuanced understanding of belonging and kinship, suggesting pathways toward social cohesion and justice in African contexts. *Correspondence: Dr Refiloe Makama,* [refiloe.makama@uct.ac.za](mailto:refiloe.makama@uct.ac.za)

**Seipobi N. Navigating identity transformations among South African individuals after Ukuthwasa.**

Many individuals in South Africa are answering their spiritual calling to become traditional healers, known as Sangoma in the Zulu language. This calling involves a rigorous initiation process called Ukuthwasa, where individuals learn the necessary indigenous skills and practices to become healers. Upon completing Ukuthwasa, they emerge with a transformed identity, including new names and lifelong responsibilities. This research aims to understand how the Ukuthwasa process shapes individuals' self-identity after initiation. Drawing upon the African Psychology framework, this study seeks to deepen our understanding of African people and their behaviours, particularly in the context of spiritual calling and identity transformation. Using a qualitative approach, data will be gathered from 8-10 participants selected through purposive sampling. Semi-structured interviews will be conducted to capture participants' experiences and perspectives. Thematic analysis will then be employed to identify common themes related to identity transformation. This research is significant as it sheds light on the complex experiences of individuals and the meaning, they attach to their identities post-Ukuthwasa initiation. By exploring this transformative process, it contributes to our understanding of cultural practices and spiritual beliefs in contemporary South Africa within a simple and formal framework. *Correspondence: Miss. Neo Seipobi, [neolezy@gmail.com](mailto:neolezy@gmail.com)*

**Bester D. Advancing Black Solidarity while Colored and Black in South Africa: Reflections during COVID-19**

COVID-19 presented South Africans with an unprecedented period through which race, gender, violence, socio-economic circumstances and identity politics were visibilized. This talk will cover aspects of autoethnography to explore some of the

experiences I have had because of my legal classification as a Coloured woman in post-Apartheid South Africa. My selective narratives focus on how COVID-19 has amplified hostility and divisive politics, specifically through the use of negative stereotypes and perceptions. I interpret my selected narratives through Black Consciousness to illustrate how my legal identity as a Coloured woman has been saturated with colonial and Apartheid knowledge. I emphasize the need to use the COVID-19 pandemic as a space for forging Black solidarity and dismantling divisive politics among Black and Coloured people. *Correspondence: Dr Danille Bester (nee Arendse), [arendse.danielle@gmail.com](mailto:arendse.danielle@gmail.com)*

**Rammai A & Makama R. Intergenerational dynamics and accompaniment during widowhood.**

Mourning rituals are central in coping with bereavement and grief in most societies, which address the cultural and psychosocial aspects of being. Although studies show external factors that may complicate the widowed women's grief e.g. non-participation in rituals, loss of income, and changed social status, there is minimal focus about intergenerational dynamics among women when widowed women practice mourning rituals. In this presentation I explore the intergenerational relationships between women during mourning rituals and focusing on how the interactions between women facilitate women's transitions from wife to widow. Using a narrative enquiry method, I analyse the narratives of women participating in customary mourning practices. Through this analysis, I propose these interactions foster an opportunity for healing which speaks to African ways of coping with bereavement as per African conception of death. I argue that when other women are present alongside the widowed woman during her mourning period, they enact the process of accompaniment. Other women become the

"accompanier" to be present with the widowed woman as the "accompanied" as she makes sense of her loss until her mourning period ends. Accompaniment allows femininities to be negotiated and constructed. In conclusion, I utilise accompaniment to show ways women shape mourning practices. *Correspondence: Ms. Asnath Rammai, [rmmasn001@myuct.ac.za](mailto:rmmasn001@myuct.ac.za)*

**Thursday, 10 October 2024**

**Invited Symposium: Critical Psychology**

**Chair: Hagenars P**

**13:30 – 15:30**

**Anton Wilhelm Amo: the first dissertation on the mind**

In 1704, a ship of the West Indian Company sailed to Middelburg in the Dutch Republic with a remarkable little boy - 4 years of age - aboard. After a little while he was 'given' to the Duchy of Brunswick-Wolfenbüttel (now part of Germany). In line with the Enlightenment tradition, he received an excellent education. He happened to be an extraordinary and gifted student, mastering several languages, studying law and philosophy of which psychology - pneumatology - was part. He had a splendid career and became Professor at the Universities of Halle (Martin Luther University Halle-Wittenberg) and Jena (Friedrich-Schiller University). After the dukes died and the intellectual climate deteriorated, he was subjected to mockery and public racism. He left Germany for Ghana, probably via Rotterdam harbour (The Netherlands). This symposium, in honour of Anton Wilhelm Amo, not only accords this brilliant scholar a place in the Canon of psychology, but enables the profession to take the necessary steps towards embracing diversity and becoming more inclusive. It is also a call for awareness and acknowledgement of the colonial past

and its continuation in the world today. This symposium also hopes to build on the legacy of the late Professor Seth Oppong, who was an expert on the life and works of Anton Wilhelm Amo. *Correspondence: Dr Polli Hagenars, [polli.hagenars@gmail.com](mailto:polli.hagenars@gmail.com)*

**Thompson A.D. Ending Epistemic Silence: A Focus on the History of Psychology in Psychology Education and Training**

Psychology educators around the world are dependent on educational resources from other parts of the world that do not match their socio-historical context, culture, and developmental realities. In many cases, the "mismatch" also extends to traditional psychological perspectives, knowledge creation systems, and the development of contemporary psychological science. This continued reliance has a profound impact on psychology's development at the local, national, regional and global levels and thus perpetuates the epistemic silence that has considerable implications for broad societal development. In this presentation, I present data from the Caribbean psychology community to highlight the extent of the challenges in the Caribbean region along with examples of approaches to limit the dependency and teach a culturally-affirming history of psychology. Recommendations on ways regional psychology educators can systematically enhance their history of psychology instruction to end epistemic silence and promote regional psychologies are also offered. I end with a discussion about the implications for global psychology.

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**Hagenars P. Anton Wilhelm Amo Afer, a brilliant Guinean scholar and present-day psychology.**

Let psychology reflect the richness of humanity.

This presentation explores Amo's significance

for contemporary psychology. As an African scholar in Europe at the time of colonialism and slavery, he had a profound influence on academic life in Germany, back then. Philosophers in Germany and the Netherlands embraced his work. Psychologists however are hardly aware of his work, neither of his position as scholar from African descent. His person and his work are important in the decolonisation of psychology.

This contribution explores the question of whether and how psychology can undo its historical colonial traces, and how psychologists can decolonize their minds. The effects of colonialism continue to be reflected in global economic and social relations, in climate change, in minds and in attitudes, and ... also in contemporary psychology. The superiority of 'Horizontal Thinking', meaning what was or what is of the land or the people, is neglected and the notion of 'how I want to use those people and that land' is still present. Especially in Europe, the double standards of democracy and Enlightenment on the one hand and the continuing colonial traces seem difficult to unravel, although some projects are ongoing. A plea is made for the inclusion of A.W. Amo in the Canon of Psychology. *Correspondence: Prof. Polli Hagenars, [polli.hagenars@gmail.com](mailto:polli.hagenars@gmail.com)*

**Thursday, 10 October 2024**

**Extended Learning Forensic Workshop**

**Chair: Gowensmith N**

**13:30 – 17:00**

**Gowensmith N, Gorgens K, McMahon J, Grabowski K, Nadkarni L, Henderson-Metzger L & Francis J. Forging new pathways: Exploring the intersection of forensic and neuropsychological assessment**

This 3-hour workshop explores the intersection of neuropsychology, forensic

psychology, and rehabilitation. It will discuss the fundamentals of assessments used in forensic evaluations and provide a fast-paced overview on the science of brain health, mental health assessment, and the forensic population —specifically how brain injuries change cognitive and psychosocial function. Importantly, this workshop will emphasize scientifically supported strategies to assess and promote brain health and accommodate cognitive deficits, such as the Colorado Brain Injury Model, designed to disrupt the trajectory of those in the US criminal legal system. The workshop will emphasize research spotlighted in US media and a decade of data from more than 5000 adults and young people involved in the correctional and court systems. The Colorado Brain Injury Model aims to democratize cognitive assessment—adding this service to the competencies of licensed professionals and making it more widely available to underserved clients. Attendees will receive a complimentary trial of the cognitive assessment software (ANAM). Finally, the workshop will provide an intro on how to best communicate assessment findings to the referral source, in the report, and to the courts. *Correspondence: Prof. Neil Gowensmith, [neil.gowensmith@du.edu](mailto:neil.gowensmith@du.edu)*

**Thursday, 10 October 2024**

**Invited Symposium**

**Chair: Seedat M**

**13:30 – 15:30**

**Illuminations, refusals, and liberation: honouring the seminal works of Hussein Bulhan**

Professor Hussein Bulhan is a Fanonian, liberation and Somali studies scholar, and Professor of Psychology, Psychiatry, and Conflict Studies. His seminal book, *Frantz Fanon and the Psychology of Oppression*,

published in 1985, has been a radical companion for generations of de/anti-colonial thinkers and activists. The book and Professor Bulhan's other published works on imperialism in the studies of the psyche, black psyches in captivity, stages of colonialism in Africa and occupation of the mind, family therapy in the trenches, ruin and renewal in Somaliland, liberatory subjectivities and the dynamics of cultural in-betweenity, integral to African knowledge archives, are critical reading and thinking resources for students, established scholars, practitioners, and activists. Professor Bulhan has inspired and schooled a generation of black and anti-colonial psychologists-activists. Professor Bulhan has the distinction of having supervised over thirty-five doctoral dissertations at Boston University, USA in the late 1980s. Professor Bulhan has led on the establishment of several independent development and educational institutions. He is the founding President and current Chancellor of the Frantz Fanon University, Hargeisa, Somaliland. Professor Bulhan served as the President/Chancellor of University of Hargeisa, Executive Director of the Institute of Health and Development, Hargeisa, and Founder and Director of the Center for Health and Development, a non-profit organisation in Boston, Massachusetts, USA. In the early 2000s he was the 2011-2014 Chief of Staff Counselling and Welfare, UNAMID, Darfur, Sudan.

This symposium will celebrate, honour and engage critically with Professor Bulhan's scholar-activist and development contributions as part of the liberatory project of retrieving and consolidating African and South knowledge archives. In her lecture titled "Bulhan's Legacy as Abolitionist Register and Colonial Disruption", Professor Lara Sheehi will anchor the symposium by exploring Bulhan's intellectual and clinical contributions, particularly his influential work, "Frantz Fanon and the Psychology of Oppression". Professor Stephen Sheehi,

acknowledging his indebtedness to Professor Bulhan, will delineate the concept of "psychic sovereignty", which he and Professor Lara Sheehi describe as belonging to "the colonial Republic of Psychoanalysis". Professors Suffla and Seedat in their respective roles of Respondent and Convenor will talk about their own introductions to Professor Bulhan and his writings at the time when hegemonic psychology in South Africa faced insurrection by a small emergent group of Black psychologists inspired by decolonial thought and insisting on socialising and politicising psychology as knowledge and practice. Professor Hussein Bulhan will be invited to respond to the panelists as raconteur and indigenous storyteller. *Correspondence: Prof. Mohamed Seedat, [seedama@global.co.za](mailto:seedama@global.co.za)*

### **Sheehi L. Bulhan's Legacy as Abolitionist Register and Colonial Disruption**

In this talk I will ground the symposium in Bulhan's intellectual and clinical legacy, taking up especially his seminal *Frantz Fanon and the Psychology of Oppression*. In doing so, I will highlight how Bulhan's work can be interpreted through an abolitionist register—one that early on attempted to underscore what academic and abolitionist, Ruth Wilson Gilmore, reminds us: "Abolition is not *absence*, it is *presence*. What the world will become already exists in fragments and pieces, experiments, and possibilities... [it is] building the future from the present, in all the ways we can." (2018) In focusing on "third world people" and offering a piercing analysis and counter-register to white supremacist, Eurocentric frameworks that continue to haunt psychology well after his 1985 intervention, we can understand Bulhan's work as the very pieces and possibilities of which Gilmore speaks. More specifically, in leading us through and offering alternatives out of our "shared predicament of captivity", Bulhan offered an inversion of where one *must* begin to reimagine and enact an anti-oppressive clinical, psychological, and political

praxis. That is, one must *begin* with Fanon. Decades later, Bulhan's work can continue to help us disrupt coloniality and *presence* Fanonian possibilities for the study and practice of psychology. *Correspondence: Prof. Lara Sheehi, [drlarasheehi@gmail.com](mailto:drlarasheehi@gmail.com)*

### **Sheehi S. Against the Colonial Republic of Psychoanalysis: Hussein Bulhan, Fanon and "Rest of the World"**

In 1985, Hussein Bulhan's *Frantz Fanon and the Psychology of the Oppressed* compelled psychoanalysis to confront the constitutive violence of its universalizing mission. In the hands of Bulhan, the implications and conclusions within Fanon's most radical liberatory theories and realizations emerge in full force. In this presentation I explore more than "a superficial look at establishment psychology—its diverse theories, profusion sanctioned theories and techniques [that] serve to justify the status quo of oppression and are used as instruments of social control." Rather, in debt and gratitude to Bulhan, I map the "psychic sovereignty" claimed by, what Lara and I have called elsewhere, "the colonial Republic of Psychoanalysis." Starting with the IPA's Constitution, codified in Jerusalem in 1977, that divides the provinces (and providence) of psychoanalysis and the IPA into Europe, North America (North of the United-States-Mexican border), all America south of that border; and "the rest of the world," I consider how psychoanalysis, psychoanalysts and their institutions police the sovereignty of racialized and minoritized subjects, especially those of the Global South. I explore how psychoanalysis as a normative, disciplinary method and practice administers sovereignty over the internal worlds of black and brown people globally. In extending the psychic universality of the "*globally hegemonic ethnoclass world of "Man."*", in Sylvia Wynter's words, to "the rest of the world," psychoanalysis and its liberalism designates not only who is perverse and who is deviant, who are genuinely good and bad

objects, but pathologizes resistance to the hegemony of racial capitalism, colonialism, and imperialism as not worthy of the privileges of this ethnoclass of "Man". Moreover, learning from Fanon and Bulhan's exploration of his oeuvre, I invite participants also to consider how this universalized sovereignty over the psychic and internal worlds of "the rest of the world" -namely the bodies and minds of Arabs, Muslims, black people, the disabled, and queer and trans folks—are invited "innocently" into the globally hegemonic ethnoclass to collude with psychoanalysis' roles in regulating and enforcing white supremacist, cis-hetero-normativity. *Correspondence: Prof. Stephen Sheehi, [spsheehi@wm.edu](mailto:spsheehi@wm.edu)*

**Thursday, 10 October 2024**

**Roundtable: Teaching, Training and Curriculum Transformation**

**Chair: Pretorius J**

**15:45 – 17:00**

**Pretorius J, Marole M, Kleintjies S, Viljoen B & Motswai P. PiPS Roundtable discussion: Functional competencies of Clinical Psychologists in their internship: Goodness of fit between academic (Masters degree) and internship training in clinical psychology.**

Psychology and specifically psychology within the public service sector needs to be responsive and in line with the needs of the ever-changing socio-cultural context of South Africa. It is understood that while domains of competency will develop over the course of both the student and professional life of clinical psychologists, the internship year has been stipulated by the HPCSA to be dedicated to acutely developing these functional competencies. For many student psychologists, the internship offers the first direct experience of working within the public

sector. Limited literature exists on Clinical Psychology Internships in South Africa. Since this is an entry point into the public service, PiPS considers the goodness of fit between the academic (Masters degree) and internship training to be of critical relevance in order to consider solutions and possible remediations to maximise clinical psychology's responsiveness to the needs of our context.

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**Thursday, 10 October 2024**

**Roundtable: Clinical Psychology**

**Chair: Den Hollander D**

**15:45 – 17:00**

**den Hollander D, Carolissen R, Kiguwa P, Kessi S & Pillay S. Reflecting on How to Have Controversial Conversations in the Public Sphere**

The field of psychology finds itself between the contexts of mental healthcare and humanism. As a result, psychology professionals often have to adopt a tapestry of different roles within the mirage of contexts we consult. The explosion of social media, the return of relevance of mental health due to global lockdown, and an international community in transition and turmoil have contributed to putting Psychology in the collective consciousness firmly. Psychology professionals, no longer confined to the limitations of their consulting rooms but into the media spaces and on air, find themselves thrust into the roles of advocacy and activism. In a society with a complex and traumatised history, this navigation requires having difficult conversations. Conversations that may trigger old wounds or challenge the status quo. But how do we navigate these dangerous waters? And in so doing, how do we maintain critical engagement whilst challenging the narratives

circulating within our communities? The invited panellists will share their experiences and reflections on addressing the controversial conversations that have become the hallmark of their careers.

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**Thursday, 10 October 2024**

**Paper Presentations: Social Psychology**

**Chair: Masinga N**

**15:45 – 17:00**

**Sunjeevan K & Takoorsadh S.S. A Social Psychological Exploration of South Africa's Post-Apartheid Journey, 30 Years On**

This study provides a social psychological exploration of South Africa's Post-Apartheid journey, examining the persistent challenges encountered three decades post-transition. Drawing upon social psychological frameworks, it scrutinizes the complexities of intergroup dynamics, identity formation, and collective action that shape the landscape of post-apartheid society. Despite significant strides towards equality and reconciliation, the reality of ongoing inequality, polarization, and systemic injustice begs critical inquiry. Through a synthesis of empirical research and theoretical perspectives, this study interrogates the underlying factors contributing to the stagnation of social change efforts. Key themes explored include the role of intergroup contact, social identity processes, and institutional structures in perpetuating or challenging the status quo. Moreover, the impact of historical legacies, intergenerational transmission of attitudes, and socio-political contexts on the trajectory of social change is examined. By shedding light on the complexities and nuances of post-apartheid social dynamics, this study aims to inform strategies for fostering sustainable and transformative change. Insights learned from

this analysis hold implications for policymakers, activists, and practitioners invested in advancing social justice and reconciliation agendas in South Africa and beyond. *Correspondence: Ms. Kershia Sunjeevan, [sunjeevank@ukzn.ac.za](mailto:sunjeevank@ukzn.ac.za)*

**Symington S, Chitanga J & Franciscus G.  
Training Registered Counsellors: perspectives  
of the placement practicum supervisors**

The study aimed to investigate the perspectives of the supervisors on working with BPsych. Equivalent practicum students. The focus of the programme is to train competent mental healthcare practitioners to register as Registered Counsellor with the Health Professions Council of South Africa (HPCSA). In addition to the academic modules, students are placed in sites for the practicum phase of the programme. Most of the previous studies have focused on the experiences of students, workplace preparation and the experiences of the coordinators. Rarely the experiences of the supervisors are collected. Eligible participants were supervisors from both placement sites and the training institution. Semi-structured interviews were utilised with data collected using both in-person and virtual tools. The findings revealed that the perspectives of the supervisors depended on the placement context, but often included challenges around the variety of activities needing attention, managing students' work-related stress, and finding that students showed growth both personally and professionally by the end of the practicum. The findings of the study are not different to other previous studies on the internship programmes. It is therefore recommended that students are offered regular and varied contact with supervisors and peers for support, coaching, stress and time management skills. *Correspondence: Dr Serahni Symington, [serahnis@cornerstone.ac.za](mailto:serahnis@cornerstone.ac.za)*

**Kern A. The effects of inclusion and  
exclusion: parents' perspectives**

Inclusion in education has emerged as an area of research globally in recent decades, with a body of research demonstrating the role of numerous stakeholders in its successful implementation. Parents, who were historically relegated to fundraising for schools, have been identified as a significant group of stakeholders in the implementation of inclusion, both in research and policy. While research conducted internationally indicates that parents note the positive impact of inclusion, there appears to be limited research both internationally, and in South Africa, on parents' understanding of the perceived impact of inclusion on both learners experiencing barriers to learning and those without barriers to learning. This study aimed to explore parents' perceptions of the impact of inclusion on both learners with and without barriers to learning through the reflexive thematic analysis of 621 parents' responses to a self-developed survey. Based on the thematic analysis of the data, parents identified both positive and negative outcomes of inclusion and exclusion for both children with barriers to learning, and those without. These include outcomes related to social, behavioural, and cognitive domains. These perceptions are likely to influence parents' support for inclusion in schools. *Correspondence: Dr Anwynne Kern, [anwynne.kern@wits.ac.za](mailto:anwynne.kern@wits.ac.za)*

**Thursday, 10 October 2024**

**Paper Presentations: Community Psychology**

**Chair: Basadien T**

**15:45 – 17:00**

**Ahmed R, Basadien T, Bawa U & Pillay A.  
Have we lost our way again? Locating  
community psychology in professional  
training Authors**

The recent uptake of decoloniality has provided an opportunity to revise curricular

and professional training. However, there seems to be a significant gap between the importance of the challenge that decoloniality represents to mainstream psychology, and the transformation of training. Drawing on a narrative synthesis of the literature and the reflections of staff involved in the professional training of psychologists, this presentation assesses the possibilities and constraints for transforming professional training. It reviews the extent to which critical community psychology is embedded in and transforms mainstream curricula. Three main conclusions are drawn from this review. First, critical community psychology has become commodified and as a result has become even more marginalised. Second, it is presented as one alternative viewpoint, or a form of professional practice, rather than the subversive framework it is meant to be. Finally, in the light of globalisation and the neo-liberal agenda, evidence-based science and practice, instead of critical social theory, has been foregrounded with significant negative consequences for professional training. Critical community psychology's impact is now recognised at a time of peak global inequality and conflict. Transforming professional training is essential to align our field with the current unprecedented global movement for humanity and social justice. *Correspondence: Ms. Toughieda Basadien, [3558806@myuwc.ac.za](mailto:3558806@myuwc.ac.za)*

**Molumo K, Makola S, Nkil G, Myaka N & Meyiwa T. Responding to societal needs through adaptive psychology by means of integration and collaboration**

Despite the substantial growth of the discipline of psychology over the last few decades, the development of a unified psychology is essential to its continued development. The purpose of this research study is to discuss the difficulties and solutions involved in combining several psychological theories to produce a framework that is both pertinent and

adaptive. Analysis of data will be done in the form of a systematic review across different kinds of literature. Furthermore, this study will examine the importance of cultural diversity in psychology, the ways in which cooperation and integration can advance the field, and the significance of psychology in addressing societal requirements. Moreover, it is crucial to examine the ways in which cultural diversity influences the thoughts, beliefs, and actions of individuals in psychology, as this has a substantial effect on the discipline. It is imperative to comprehend the ways in which cultural diversity impacts the discipline of psychology to establish a unified, progressive, and adaptable field. *Correspondence: Ms. Kutloano Molumo, [kmolumo@cut.ac.za](mailto:kmolumo@cut.ac.za)*

**Mokgomola T & Sodi T. Experiences of Capricorn district mental health review board members in implementing the Mental Health Care Act No 17 of 2002**

The aim of the study was to explore the experiences of members of the Capricorn District Mental Health Review Board in implementing the Mental Health Care Act. Specifically, the objectives of the study were: a). to determine how members of the Capricorn District Mental Health Review Board perceive their role in the implementation of the Act; b). to explore how members of the review board perceive their effectiveness in implementing the Act; c). to identify and describe factors that members perceive to be enabling them to carry out their statutory mandate; and, d). to establish what members of the Capricorn District Mental Health Review Board, perceive as challenges and constraints in implementing the Act. The study revealed that participants seem to understand their individual roles and also the contribution of other members. The study further pointed to the different enabling factors and challenges in implementing the Act. The study concluded by recommending workshops to be conducted

for mental health care practitioners so as to help them keep abreast with the administrative work required by the MHCA. *Correspondence: Dr Thandiwe Mokgomola, [thandiwemokgomola@icloud.com](mailto:thandiwemokgomola@icloud.com)*

**Thursday, 10 October 2024**

**Roundtable: African Psychology**

**Chair: Laher S**

**15:45 – 17:00**

**Laher S, Sodi T, Serpell R & Thalmayer A. G. African cultural models in psychology**

Africa will constitute a quarter of the global population by 2050, underscoring the pressing need to diversify psychological research and practice. Despite this demographic significance, mainstream psychology remains predominantly informed by Western models primarily from the Global North. African samples are underrepresented in studies addressing basic psychological processes, leading to a narrow and potentially biased understanding of human behavior and mental processes. Historically, psychology in Africa has been pragmatically applied to address specific societal challenges, such as mental health crises, educational deficits, and social inequalities. While these applications are vital, they have contributed little to the theoretical frameworks that underpin the broader discipline of psychology. Consequently, there is an asymmetrical appreciation: while African societies recognize the utility of psychological interventions, the global psychological community has yet to fully integrate African perspectives into its theoretical corpus. In this discussion, panellists will draw on their own experiences to advocates for a dual discourse: one that emphasizes the Africanization of psychology to meet local needs and another that ensures African contexts are robustly represented in psychological research. Such an approach aims to decolonize psychology,

enriching it with diverse insights and making it more globally relevant. *Correspondence: Prof. Sumaya Laher, [sumaya.laher@wits.ac.za](mailto:sumaya.laher@wits.ac.za)*

**Thursday, 10 October 2024**

**Paper Presentations: Trauma and Violence**

**Chair: Crause E**

**15:45 – 17:00**

**Pillay J. Violence against children: A social ecological perspective of violence against children: implications for psychologists**

Violence against children (VAC) is a global phenomenon that needs deliberate attention. Children exposed to violence in their families, communities, and schools in their early years are likely to maintain this cycle of violence in their youth and adult lives if no efforts are made to break this cycle. Taking this into consideration the author adopts a social ecological theoretical perspective in exploring global, regional, and South African literature on the risks and causes of VAC as well as the protective factors that can prevent VAC. Embedding VAC within a social ecological perspective warrants the need to explore it at four crucial levels, namely individual, relationships, community, and society. The literature review embodies the relevance of these four levels since all risk and causal factors of VAC are easily categorised in one or more of these levels. As such, the author provides a social ecological perspective comprising all four levels that holistically address the prevention of VAC. The literature review indicated that many of the risks and causes of VAC are a common trend across countries providing implications for psychologists to intervene. *Correspondence: Prof. Jace Pillay, [jacep@uj.ac.za](mailto:jacep@uj.ac.za)*

**Crause E, Blomerus L, France T, Visagie G, Raubenheimer G, Marais I, Fisher G, Cross V & Mare C. The role of a circuit-based**

## **psychologist in responding to trauma in public sector education systems**

This paper draws on insights from the eight senior psychologists of the Western Cape Education Department (WCED), focusing on the essential role of circuit-based psychologists in navigating the challenges of providing school psychological services within resource-constrained environments. It outlines the strategic approaches and innovative solutions these psychologists employ to ensure trauma-informed care reaches every student in need. By detailing their responsibilities in conducting comprehensive assessments, implementing targeted interventions, and maintaining continuous support, the paper showcases how they are instrumental in developing resilient, trauma-informed educational settings. Emphasizing collaborative efforts, it highlights the integration of teachers, administrative staff, and external mental health professionals into a cohesive support system. The work of circuit-based psychologists in utilizing data-driven strategies to optimize resource allocation and intervention delivery is also discussed, underscoring their contribution to creating an inclusive, supportive educational culture. Through this focused exploration, the paper illustrates the critical importance of their role in ensuring equitable access to psychological services, marking a significant step towards fostering a supportive learning environment that accommodates the diverse needs of all students in the public education system.

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## **Mayisela S, Mpofu P & Sophethe T. Understanding sexual misconduct by teachers in South Africa: The analysis of cases reported to SACE from 2019 to 2022.**

Childhood sexual abuse is one of the gross human violations and a contributory factor to mental health difficulties in adulthood, draining the country's fiscal income towards

crime prevention, mental health and medical intervention, and institutionalization. The South African Council of Educators (SACE), which is the regulatory body for South African educators is well positioned for this identification of sexual abuse pathways as observed within the education sectors. SACE posed a question that sought to understand teachers' sexual misconduct patterns in school. To respond to this question, the SACE-Wits Research Collaboration (SWRC) has undertaken to descriptively analyse the existing qualitative data, from the 2019-2022 case files of reported sexual offenses by teachers. From these case files, the following quantitative data will be generated; the number of cases per year, the gender, race, and age of perpetrators, and the prevalence of the misconduct in terms of the location (provinces). Further, the analysis will capture the age, gender and race of victims. To understand the perpetrator's behavior, the analysis will also focus on the time and spaces where these offenses occur. The outcomes of the study will be used as a report by SACE to strategise on appropriate interventions to prevent the sexual molestation of school children by teachers. *Correspondence: Dr Simangele Mayisela,*  
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**Friday, 11 October 2024**

**Symposium: Assessment and Evaluation**

**Chair: Thalmayer A.G**

**08:00 – 10:00**

## **The Africa Long Life Study: Lifespan Research in Kenya, Namibia and South Africa**

Psychological science faces a significant challenge due to its heavy reliance on samples from Western industrialized countries, which represent only a fraction of the world's population. This limits our understanding of

whether psychological phenomena are universal or shaped by cultural context. Longitudinal studies, valuable in allowing stronger inference of causation, have been largely absent from Africa, hindering the elucidation of more region-specific from more universal developmental patterns. The Africa Long Life Study addresses this gap by examining personality, mental health, and cultural values in Namibia, Kenya, and South Africa. Large ( $N = \sim 1000$ ) relatively representative samples of 18-19 year olds were recruited in each country by dispersed local teams in 2022, and have completed surveys on personality, mental health, and cultural values every 6 months since. This symposium highlights initial findings, including insights into experiences of emerging adulthood, the assessment of personality traits and their associations with life outcomes, the assessment and manifestation of psychological disorders, and the influence of gender, geographical location, socioeconomic status and religion on anxiety and mental health. By foregrounding African experiences, this research contributes to a more comprehensive understanding of personality and mental health development, diversifying the knowledge base in psychology beyond Western perspectives.

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**Thalmayer A. G, Naude L, Laher S, Hassem T, Asatsa S, Shino E, Florence M, Adonis T. A, Uugwanga S, Hofmann D, Murangi A, Makunda J, Shirima C.M & Botha C. The Africa Long Life Study: Lifespan Research in the Majority World**

Longitudinal studies have been key to psychological science but are virtually absent from the majority world. The Africa Long Life Study (ALLS) brings a new perspective to lifespan research with large samples of 18-year olds from Namibia, Kenya, and South Africa, representing over 50 ethno-linguistic groups ( $N = 2,950$ ). We contend that cross-

cultural psychology has over relied on individualism vs. collectivism, and East vs. West. With the ALLS we bring nuance to the cross-study study of several areas of psychology, exploring both universal and unique elements of young adulthood in African contexts and centering Sub-Saharan Africa as an important contributor to theory-building and practice in psychology. ALLS participants complete two surveys a year on personality, mental health, cultural values, and life experiences, with follow-up qualitative interviews in subsamples. At the time of the sixth wave of data collection, we describe the goals of the ALLS and the teamwork and the contextualization of methods we have used to obtain high quality and representative data in an international collaborative effort that embraces the values of decolonizing science. We report the diversity of the sample in terms of language, geographical location, life experiences, and socio-economic status, and review early findings and future directions.

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**Uugwanga S & Naude L. Markers of Adulthood in Sub-Saharan Africa: Contextualized findings**

Emerging adulthood is a developmental concept delineating the unique transitional experiences of 18-29-year-olds into adulthood. It is a period of identity exploration, instability, self-focus, feeling in-between, and optimism. Developmental psychology literature continues to underrepresent emerging adults where they are most populous - in Africa. African emerging adults' transitional experiences vary from those of their Western counterparts due to culture- and context-specific factors. For example, African emerging adults contend with structural inequalities that intensify the transitional turmoil of this life stage. Gender and family roles may influence this population's entry into adulthood. This study

explores similarities and differences in the endorsement and attainment of adulthood in Namibian, South African, and Kenyan emerging adults, using the *Markers of Adulthood* scale. Approximately 700 18 and 19-year-old participants completed the scale in each country. Differences across gender, birth order and parental status in the endorsement and attainment of markers within each country (and in comparison to Western counterparts) will be presented and discussed within the extant literature on emerging adulthood experiences.

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**Hofmann D, Laher S, Green J, Hopwood C & Thalmayer A. G. The assessment and structure of psychopathology among emerging adults in Southern and Eastern Africa**

The persistent mental health treatment gap in low- and middle-income countries extends beyond resource scarcity, involving challenges in adapting Western-centric measures and classification systems. This presentation draws on data from the Africa Long Life Study (ALLS) to probe mental health assessment in two dimensions: psychological disorders and wellbeing. Firstly, it examines the structure and measurement of mental health disorders using the International Mental Health Assessment (IMHA), exploring the similarity of disorders across contexts and the efficacy of the internalising and externalising spectra model. Secondly, it assesses the psychometric properties of the Mental Health Continuum-Short Form (MHC-SF), focusing on psychological, emotional, and social wellbeing. By comparing the results obtained on the IMHA and MHC-SF in the same sample of emerging adults across the three countries, the presentation addresses assessment challenges in African contexts whilst taking into consideration the different paradigmatic assumptions underlying the instruments. This is particularly relevant for emerging adults in

Africa as many face economic, social, political, cultural and health challenges that place them at increased risk of mental health challenges. The findings offer insights into the complexities of mental health assessment and highlight the need for culturally-sensitive approaches in research and practice.

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**Chopdat S, Campher S, Hassem T & Laher S. Contextual impacts on anxiety and wellbeing amongst emerging adults in South Africa: Evidence from the ALLS study**

Sub-Saharan Africa, with its rapidly growing adolescent population, faces substantial mental health challenges. Approximately 23% of the population comprises adolescents and emerging adults, accentuating the need for focused interventions. Using the ALLS data from young adults from South Africa, Namibia, and Kenya, we examined the presentation of anxiety symptoms using the IMHA as well as psychological, emotional and social wellbeing using the MHC-SF. Additionally the influence of contextual factors, namely, geographical location, gender, socioeconomic status and religion were examined as protective and risk factors that impact mental health. Based on the results, it was evident that gender and SES in particular were influential determinants of anxiety and wellbeing outcomes. This underscores the imperative for comprehensive strategies to address mental health issues among young adults in these countries, incorporating both individual and broader societal considerations.

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**Kura M, Thalmayer A. G & Rentzsch K. Personality traits in the Africa Long Life Study: Culturally-de-centered approaches for assessing individual differences in African Contexts**

Self-report personality measures predict life outcomes including health, well being, relationships, and career success. But most research has been conducted in Western contexts, and its applicability in African contexts is unclear. Here we present two projects to identify the best way to assess personality traits in the Africa Long Life Study to predict life outcomes over time. First, a novel item-selection-algorithm method was used to create optimally-applicable marker scales for the HEXACO (Honesty, Emotionality, eXtraversion, Agreeableness, Conscientiousness, Openness) model. Secondly the Cross-Cultural Big Two Inventory (CCB2I), was developed using a culturally-de-centered approach, meaning that input from global contexts was integrated from the outset, without prioritizing Western perspectives. This more universal Big Two model includes dimensions of Communion/Social Self-Regulation, which captures the internalization of versus resistance to the normative codes of one's society, and Agency/Dynamism, which captures approach versus avoidance tendencies. For both inventories, psychometric properties and correlations with physical health, mental health, and religiosity are compared to established findings from North America and Europe to assess generalizability to African contexts. The potential and importance of culturally de-centered models and inventories, and what we have learned about the personality tendencies most relevant to the ALLS samples are discussed. *Correspondence: Ms Marie Kura, [m.kura@phb.de](mailto:m.kura@phb.de)*

**Friday, 11 October 2024**

**Invited Address: Clinical Psychology**

**Chair: Kramers-Olen A**

**08:00 – 08:45**

**Stobie B. Common sense or nonsense? Ideas that have held back and advanced the treatment of OCD**

OCD is a chronic and disabling condition which was once thought untreatable. The first seeds of optimism regarding OCD treatment emerged from South Africa after the second world war. Since then, the development of psychological and psychiatric treatments for OCD has been characterised by a series of dead ends, and pivotal turning points. This address will provide a brief retrospective overview of some of these ideas, the people behind them, and their links to South African psychologists and psychiatrists. The crucial role of intrusive thoughts and safety-seeking behaviours in the development and maintenance of OCD will be discussed. Factors which negatively impact on the effective delivery of psychological treatments for OCD, including pop psychology, the invalidity of traditional CBT techniques when applied to OCD, therapist drift, and therapist beliefs will be reviewed. This presentation will then consider some of the possible broader implications for the future development of our field. *Correspondence: Dr Blake Stobie, [Blake.Stobie@slam.nhs.uk](mailto:Blake.Stobie@slam.nhs.uk)*

**Friday, 11 October 2024**

**Roundtable: Clinical Psychology**

**Chair: Kramers-Olen A**

**09:00 – 10:00**

**Pillay A & Bawa U. Suffer the little children in Gaza & other war-ravaged nations: psychology's silence at the casualties of adult hatred & war**

Globally, wars are ravaging communities, livelihoods and infrastructure that have developed over decades. Civilian deaths are the most serious concern, and child casualties increasingly constitute a large portion of the

fallout. Some have viewed this as 'collateral damage' which is, of course, an insult to the lives of children. Inordinate numbers of children have been killed, maimed, traumatised, starved or left homeless in wars in Gaza, Ukraine, Haiti, Sudan and several other places. Children pay the price for wars started by adults, despite the hollow reassurance of Article 38 in the child-friendly version of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, "You have the right to protection and freedom from war". For those children who survive, they suffer injury, trauma, poverty, and inadequate access to health care, schooling and a normal life. Many have lost their homes, parents, caregiving and the daily structure that is needed for healthy development. The psychological impact on children is severe, and probably greater than any other imaginable trauma, and psychology needs to respond. *Correspondence: Prof. Anthony Pillay, [anthony.pillay@kznhealth.gov.za](mailto:anthony.pillay@kznhealth.gov.za)*

**Friday, 11 October 2024**

**Paper Presentations: Educational Psychology**

**Chair: Van Heerden A**

**08:00 – 10:00**

**Maepa M & Nekhavhambe M.S. Social support and stigma as correlates of quality of life of parents raising children with autism**

**Introduction:** Raising a child living with Autism Spectrum Disorder is characterised by many psychosocial challenges which have an impact on quality of life. This study sought to explore the association of social support, stigma, and quality of life among parents raising children with Autism.

**Methods:** A cross-sectional quantitative design was used for purposive sampling of 118 parents raising children with Autism in Gauteng Province South Africa. Participants completed a questionnaire assessing social

support, stigma, and quality of life. The collected data were analysed using Pearson correlation coefficients.

**Results:** The study's findings indicate a statistically significant positive correlation between social support  $r(118) = .422, p < .001$  and quality of life. Stigma was negatively correlated with quality of life  $r(118) = -.367, p < .001$ . All subscales of social support were positively correlated with quality of life and all subscales of stigma were negatively correlated with quality of life.

**Discussion:** The results of this study indicate social support does play a significant positive role in the quality of life of parents raising children with autism. Stigma does negatively impact the quality of life of parents raising children with autism. Social support services and awareness campaigns are recommended. **Keywords:** social support, stigma, quality of life, parents, autism. *Correspondence: Prof. Mokoena Maepa, [mokoenamepa@gmail.com](mailto:mokoenamepa@gmail.com)*

**van Heerden A & Marais I. Managing autism spectrum disorder within the educational system: challenges and strategies**

Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) presents distinctive challenges within the educational landscape of South Africa, necessitating tailored interventions and support mechanisms to facilitate the comprehensive development of affected individuals. Nonetheless, the nation encounters significant obstacles in effectively addressing ASD within educational settings, primarily due to limited awareness, resources, and expertise. Moreover, pervasive societal stigmas and misconceptions surrounding ASD serve to compound the challenges faced by individuals with ASD and their families. In response to these critical challenges, this presentation endeavours to explore the multifaceted dimensions of managing ASD within the South African educational system. Drawing upon the insights of psychologists within the Western Cape Education

Department, the presentation will delve into several pertinent topics. These include gaining an understanding of the unique needs of individuals with ASD within educational contexts, identifying the barriers that impede access to sufficient support and resources, examining evidence-based interventions, and elucidating available resources. Furthermore, the presentation will scrutinise the pivotal role of collaboration among schools, families, healthcare professionals, and community organizations in delivering comprehensive support for individuals with ASD. Through the facilitation of dialogue and dissemination of best practices, the presentation aims to contribute to the establishment of inclusive and supportive educational environments conducive to the well-being of individuals with Autism Spectrum Disorder across South Africa. *Correspondence: Ms. Ashley van Heerden,* [ashley.vanheerden@westerncape.gov.za](mailto:ashley.vanheerden@westerncape.gov.za)

**Govender R & Buthelezi N. A review of Applied Behaviour Analysis (ABA) as a method of early intervention for foundation phase learners living with autism in South Africa.**

Despite the increasing prevalence in Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD), both globally and nationally, access to care and treatment remains limited. Applied behaviour Analysis (ABA) is a form of intervention that is primarily used in the treatment of ASD and is based on the premise that behaviours are caused by external stimuli result in the implementation of a reward and punishment system in order to discourage or encourage behaviours. Although there is a significant amount of research exploring the effectiveness of the ABA model, little research has explored its effectiveness within a South African society. Embedded within the Theory of Learning and Development, a qualitative research design was utilised whereby data was collected through the analysis of secondary data retrieved from ten to fifteen

case files from The Star Academy (South Africa). The findings from this study provided valuable insight into understanding the strengths and limitations of the ABA model within a South African society. Lastly, the research findings served as a valuable resource in addressing the challenges to treatment of ASD in South Africa.

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**Lentoor A, Mdluli T & Maepa M. 'I asked myself why I was having this difficult child': care burden experiences of Black African mothers raising a child with autistic spectrum disorder**

There is increasing recognition that raising a child with Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) is stressful and challenging, particularly for mothers in resource-constrained countries. The aim of this study was to learn more about the experiences of black African mothers raising children with ASD and to gain a better understanding of the care burden. Semi-structured interviews were conducted with nine purposively recruited mothers of children with ASD and analysed using interpretative phenomenological analysis. The findings revealed that caring for children with ASD puts a tremendous psychological, emotional, and financial strain on mothers. Mothers commonly faced social judgment and stigma, which manifested as internalized self-blame, isolation, and social exclusion for both themselves and their children. The findings highlight the critical need to increase psychosocial support for mothers of children with ASD who live in resource-constrained countries.

Keywords: Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD); Caregiving Burden; Child; Mothers; Resource-constrained Countries. *Correspondence: Prof. Antonio Lentoor,* [Drantonio.lentoor@gmail.com](mailto:Drantonio.lentoor@gmail.com)

**Mpangane E, Maepa M & Muhadisa T Challenges experienced by newly appointed**

## **teachers at an autism-specific schools: a thematic analysis study**

Learners with Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) present with challenges in their social communication, social interactions, and repetitive patterns of behaviours. These challenges significantly impact the provision of education by newly appointed teachers with limited experience in teaching learners with ASD. The purpose of this study was to explore the challenges faced by teachers working in autism-specific schools. A qualitative research design was used, with two focus group discussions conducted with a total of 16 participants (9 participants in group 1 and 7 participants in group 2) working in autism-specific schools. The main research question included the following: What are the challenges encountered by new teachers in autism special schools? A Thematic Content Analysis was used to analyze the data collected from these discussions. The study identified several challenges faced by teachers working in autism-specific schools. The challenges included managing challenging behaviours such as temper tantrums, meltdowns, communication difficulties, and disciplining learners. Other problems encountered by teachers included: limited resources, lack of support, and lack of training and professional development opportunities. Correspondence: Mr. Elmon Mpangane, [musa.mpangane@gmail.com](mailto:musa.mpangane@gmail.com)

**Friday, 11 October 2024**

**Paper Presentations: Neuropsychology**

**Chair: Truter S**

**08:00 – 10:00**

### **Lazarus L. Neuroimaging: a primer for neuropsychologists**

From inception, Neuropsychology has attempted to elucidate how the brain shapes

subjective perception of the world, internally and externally. Neuropsychologists study brain-behaviour relationships, making inferences about cognitive and emotional changes from clinical, behavioural and psychological test data. Significant technical advancement has seen an exponential increase in the use of brain imaging to study both structural and functional cortical and subcortical organization in normal and pathological psychological states. The clinico-pathological approach to disorders of cognition and emotion is enhanced by integrating neuroimaging findings with observational and clinical signs/symptoms. Whilst neuroimaging findings provide greater accuracy of lesion localization in neurological disorders, neuropsychological assessment continues to form the bedrock of decision making about mental capacity, independent functioning, employability and educability for patients since it is unique in elucidating the psychological processes that are undermined by disease and injury. The learning objectives of this presentation are:

1. To understand the basics of neuroimaging.
2. To understand the utility of different neuroimaging methods in neuropsychology.
3. To demonstrate the integration of neuroimaging in neuropsychological investigations using case studies.

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### **Munsami A. HIV-associated neurocognitive impairment knowledge and current practices: a survey of frontline healthcare workers in South Africa**

Neurocognitive impairment (NCI) associated with the human immunodeficiency virus (HIV) remains prevalent amongst people living with HIV. Testing for HIV-associated NCI in routine clinical care is limited in South Africa and reasons for this are unclear. We conducted an online survey amongst healthcare workers (HCW) to assess HIV-associated NCI knowledge and current practices. The final

sample included four hundred surveys (n=400). Chi-square analyses were used to explore HCW knowledge of HIV-associated NCI and screening tools. One-way ANOVA was used to compare mean responses between HCW categories. We observed low awareness of HIV-associated NCI terminology and screening tools. HCW seldom suspected NCI among patients and screening practices were uncommon. Referrals for further NCI investigations were never requested. HCW expressed a desire to receive further training to identify HIV associated NCI. The current study highlights the context of HIV-associated NCI knowledge and practices among front-line HIV HCW in resource-limited settings.

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#### **Truter S. Determining performance invalidity in a group of South African adult litigants**

Current literature based on studies in the United States (of America, US) suggests that examinees' performances on cognitive tests can be considered invalid if they 1) fail two or more Performance Validity Test (PVTs) when demographically appropriate cut-off scores were applied, 2) they have an incentive to feign cognitive impairment, 3) there are inconsistencies between test performance and other evidence of functioning, and 4) the poor performance is not due to a mental, neurological or physical cause. These criteria for performance invalidity have not yet been explored in the South African context with adults who do not have English as a first language and who have levels of education that are relatively lower and of poorer quality than their US counterparts. This study investigated the extent to which a group of South African brain injured adults in litigation with 7-12 years of disadvantaged quality of education, failed either zero, one, or more PVTs. The study found that, of the 102 participants, 38 failed zero PVTs, 33 failed one PVT and 31 failed two of more PVTs. The demographic characteristics (age, sex,

language and education) of the participants in each group were investigated. The implications of these findings will be discussed. *Correspondence: Dr Sharon Truter, [sharon@neuropsychologysa.co.za](mailto:sharon@neuropsychologysa.co.za)*

#### **Truter S. Applicability of tests of performance invalidity/malingering, in South African adult litigants and non-litigants**

Psychologists doing assessments for personal injury matters (e.g. for the Road Accident Fund) need to test if their examinees are exaggerating cognitive impairment for secondary gain purposes (e.g. increased monetary gains) or performing invalidly for other reasons, such as experiencing fatigue or not understanding test instructions.

Performance Validity Tests (PVTs) are designed to check for performance invalidity. Until recently, there have been no published data for PVTs in the South African context.

This study investigated the PVTs currently available for the South African adult population and if cut-off scores need to be adjusted for age, language, and education (level and quality). The following PVTs were found have applicability in the South African context, when demographically appropriate cut-off scores were applied: Digit Span Age-Corrected Scaled Score, Reliable Digit Span, Dot Counting Test, Rey Auditory Verbal Learning Test Combination Score, Rey 15-Item Test, Test of Memory Malingering and Trail Making Test A and B (performance validity indicator). It was found that, if the correct cut-off scores were applied, the PVTs were suitable for use in the South African adult population and distinguished between adults performing validly and invalidly.

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#### **Sodi E. Barriers and facilitators in caregiving for adults who suffered severe traumatic brain injury (sTBI)**

Literature shows that traumatic brain injury (TBI) is one of the major public health and socioeconomic problems that often results in disability and death. Families with individuals who suffered TBI are often faced with the burden of caring for the individual member who has limited functional independence and requires care and support. In this paper, the results of a study that investigated caregiving for adults who suffered sTBI are reported. A phenomenological research design, and particularly Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (IPA) was used to conduct the investigation. Fourteen (14) individuals providing care to adult family members who sustained severe traumatic brain injury were selected through purposive and snowball sampling methods. Data were obtained through semi structured interviews and analysed using IPA. The results show that physical, cognitive, and mental problems on the part of the care recipient, financial constraints, and lack of support are some of the common barriers identified. Factors identified as facilitators for caregiving include medical treatment, financial support, previous experience related to caring, and support from others. The findings have implications for clinical practice, and rehabilitation processes. *Correspondence: Dr Edzisani Sodi, [edzisani@sodiandpartners.co.za](mailto:edzisani@sodiandpartners.co.za)*

**Olivier L. Hidden markers (depression, sexual dysfunction and personality change) in traumatic brain injury**

Researchers (Rucco, 2009, Nicholl, 2009 and Flemming 2010) stated that damage to the medial frontal area of the brain can cause personality disorders and damage to the limbic system, orbitofrontal cortex and left anteromedial frontal lobe can cause aggressive disorders and depression. The author studied 600 cases of Traumatic Brain Injury and developed the theory that Traumatic Brain Injury to the mentioned areas has as its sequelae a mood disorder (depression), and/or a personality disorder

(often borderline personality disorder) and/or a sexual dysfunction (inhibition of sexual desire or hypersexuality). It was also noted that the symptoms and prognosis of these problems may differ from the normal psychiatric disorders as described in the DSM-5. The discussion will be highlighted by some case studies. *Correspondence: Dr Louise Olivier, [info@drlouise.co.za](mailto:info@drlouise.co.za)*

**Friday, 11 October 2024**

**Paper Presentations: Trauma and Violence**

**Chair: McLachlan C**

**08:00 – 10:00**

**Nkuna P.M. Sex and age differences in road traffic fatalities for different road users over 2018-2022 in Mpumalanga, South Africa.**

Road traffic fatalities (RTF) are a global public health problem and the leading cause of death for young adults. In South Africa, RTFs are the second leading cause of injury death. Males are overrepresented both as victims and crash agents, with aggressive driving and legal transgressions a particular concern. This study investigates sex and age differences of RTFs for different road user types over 2018 - 2022 among adults in Mpumalanga, South Africa. This study utilised data collected from Forensic Pathology Services (FPS) facilities in Mpumalanga, South Africa, from its Injury Mortality Surveillance System (IMSS). The study sample was  $n = 6\,447$  adults from the ages of 18 - 94 years. This study employed descriptive and multinomial logistic regression analyses. Adult males between the ages of 30 - 59 years accounted for more RTFs with just over half of RTFs during the day. This study reports that young adult males (18-29), mature adult males (30-59) and elderly males (60+) were at a higher risk of dying as a driver. This study is consistent with previous research that emphasized gender differences in RTFs. The findings highlight the higher risk to males

as vehicle drivers and females as pedestrians in RTFs over the pandemic period.

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### **Pillay L. Violence exposure and peer victimization**

Studies show that youth in low socioeconomic communities, with a plethora of psychological risks, suffer significant negative developmental disturbances due to exposure to direct and indirect violence and peer victimization. often manifesting in internalizing disorders like depression and anxiety and increases the likelihood of youth engaging in further violence. The aim of this study was to examine the relation between risks factors and exposure to direct and indirect community violence, and peer victimization within low socioeconomic schools and communities in KwaZulu Natal. School and home interviews with youth and their maternal caregivers were conducted with standardised interview schedules and instruments. Results showed that sociodemographic risks were significantly associated with lifetime witnessing violence, lifetime victimization and lifetime hearing about violence, Low maternal education was associated with overt peer victimization and cyber-victimization. Youth worry and oversensitivity, fear and concentration and anxiety and maternal anxiety was significantly associated with measures of violence exposure and peer victimization. We conclude that such risks predispose youth to direct and indirect exposure to violence and peer victimization' and is significantly associated with violence on different levels and domains. Policies and interventions to improve the youths' health needs to be holistic, and inclusive of macro and micro level interventions. *Correspondence: Dr Lingum Pillay, [prepil@intekom.co.za](mailto:prepil@intekom.co.za)*

### **McLachlan C. Enhancing healthcare and mental healthcare services for LGBTIQ+ individuals at a Thuthuzela care centre**

Thuthuzela Care Centre plays a crucial role in addressing sexual violence and abuse, yet the accessibility and effectiveness of its services for LGBTIQ+ individuals remain inadequate. This abstract presents a specialized training programme developed by the Medical Research Council aimed at empowering healthcare and mental healthcare providers to offer more inclusive and sensitive care to LGBTIQ+ persons accessing services at the centre. Grounded in the recognition of unique challenges faced by this community, the training seeks to enhance providers' awareness, understanding, and cultural competency in addressing the needs and experiences of LGBTIQ+ individuals. Through a multifaceted curriculum encompassing topics such as sexual orientation, gender identity, discrimination, and affirming care practices, the training aims to foster a safer and more supportive environment at the Thuthuzela Care Centre. By equipping providers with the requisite knowledge and skills, this initiative strives to improve access to quality healthcare and mental healthcare services for LGBTIQ+ individuals, aligning with the centre's mission of providing comprehensive support to all survivors of sexual violence and abuse. *Correspondence: Rev. Chris McLachlan, [doinghopeweddings@gmail.com](mailto:doinghopeweddings@gmail.com)*

**Friday, 11 October 2024**

**Invited Address: Critical Psychology**

**Chair: Chitiki E**

**08:00 – 08:45**

**Mate-Kole C. From birth to old age: what has African culture taught us?**

Africans ensure the continuity of its tradition through by highlighting the mutual care between generations. Older adults are seen to be the pride of the family; they provide guidance to younger generations and function as spiritual heads. Thus, it is expected that ageing starting from birth to old age allows the African to age healthily. Africans view spirituality and its practices as a major source of healing. Spiritual and religious practices, such as dance, singing, and storytelling, are seen to contribute to healthy ageing. Thus, spirituality is considered a fundamental process in ageing. There is growing evidence that people in Western societies are embracing spiritual practices to promote healthy aging. This trend has given rise to the field of neurotheology, where scientists explore the connection between the brain and religion. This address will focus on spirituality and its relation to neuroscience emphasizing its role in the ageing process. *Correspondence: Prof. Charles Mate-Kole, [cmkole@ug.edu.gh](mailto:cmkole@ug.edu.gh)*

**Friday, 11 October 2024**

**Paper Presentations: Critical Psychology**

**Chair: Chitiki E**

**08:45 – 10:00**

**Painter D. With all the ambivalence of a car in the city: Reflections on a critical psychogeography of driving**

The title of this paper is a borrowed line from Jeremy Cronin's wonderful collection of poems, *More Than a Casual Contact*. It served as an important impulse for me to start documenting my drives: my long, boring commutes, my liberating road trips, my quick dashes to the shop, in the city, on the freeway, in traffic, in the morning, at night. What is it that I (can) document when I'm driving? What do I perceive? What can't I perceive? What can I know or understand from this mobile bubble of metal and glass,

the car? Can driving be a method? In this paper I will explore these questions, seeking not only to foreground the banality of driving as a worthy object of study, but to argue that driving indeed can be made into a powerful method for critical study of the spatial contradictions or urban life. What I will outline is not a systematic method as much as a mutant psychogeography, constructed from theoretical arguments, field notes and photographs, of contemporary Cape Town. *Correspondence: Prof. Desmond Painter, [dpainter@sun.ac.za](mailto:dpainter@sun.ac.za)*

**Chitiki E, Kiguwa P & Nkomo N. Unmasking education institutional culpability in male rape: affective economies of shared pain and rage**

This study focuses on male sexual violence and is centered around understandings of school enabling cultures that render young boys vulnerable to abuse. For this study, data was gathered through radio podcasts that explore rape culture within school context. The presentation engages with a key finding from the study that cultural norms are inherited and attest to Institutional failure, toxic culture and toxic masculinity. Through affective-discursive analysis, we discuss some of the unhealthy cultural norms present as a way to show the intersections with toxic school cultures that perpetuate rape culture. *Correspondence: Dr Elizabeth Chitiki, [chitikiliz@yahoo.com](mailto:chitikiliz@yahoo.com)*

**Zeeman N, Thomas N, Mashaba M & Hendricks L. Interns in transition: reflections of three young female research psychologists in training**

Transitioning from being a student to an intern in a professional workspace is a significant step which has been exciting but daunting. For us, our educational journey lasted five years and was primarily confined to the classroom, where our progress primarily impacted only us. Beginning an internship feels like being thrown into the deep end and

can unearth insecurity and anxiety about one's competence in this field. The importance of mentorship cannot be overstated, especially for women. It not only facilitates professional development but fosters a sense of belonging and community in academia. Although the number of women in academia has increased in recent years, inequality due to gender remains prominent. This is especially true for women of colour who remain particularly marginalised. More intentionality needs to be brought into reflecting on how women play all of these roles and overcome obstacles that hinder their progression into leadership roles, specifically in academia. This experience underscores the significance of representation and diversity in research and academia which will enrich work quality. Transitioning from a student to a research intern is a rewarding experience, and we are grateful for the opportunities to learn and contribute within such a dynamic and diverse environment. *Key words:* Academia, Transition, Challenges, Mentorship, Women in Research, Representation. *Correspondence:* Miss. Nicala Zeeman, [zeemannicala@gmail.com](mailto:zeemannicala@gmail.com)

**Theron L, Levine D, Fawole F, Mai-Bornu Z, Olaniyan L, Stekel D, Wright C & Ungar M. Emerging adult resilience to depression: systematic review insights for psychologists in Africa**

Emerging adult depression is a pressing concern, more especially among young adults facing significant stress. While much is known about the factors that place these young people at risk for depression, there is little understanding of what supports resilience to these risks. To remedy this, we systematically reviewed the relevant literature ( $n = 1828$  records) to determine what supports emerging adult resilience to depression. Using a multisystem resilience framework, we conducted a narrative review of the 236 eligible studies. This paper reports the results of that review. It shows that physiological,

psychological, social, institutional, and physical ecological resources enable stressed emerging adults to avoid elevated depression symptoms, with emphasis on psychological and social resources and general inattention to multisystemic resource combinations. It also shows that emerging adults from majority world contexts, including Africa, are poorly represented in resilience to depression studies. The paper concludes with the implications for psychologists wanting to advance resilience to depression, especially in majority world contexts like Africa.

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**Friday, 11 October 2024**

**Invited Address: Gender, Culture & Religion**

**Chair: TBC**

**08:00 – 08:45**

**Ratele K (TBC)**

**Friday, 11 October 2024**

**Paper Presentations: Gender, Culture & Religion**

**Chair: Khan M**

**08:45 – 10:00**

**Mazibuko A & Makama R. Blurred lines: when the private becomes public and men give women relationship advice**

Although men have been recognised as prolific poets, romantic lyricists, and are now esteemed relationship advisors, there remains a dearth of research attention evaluating men and masculinities in the context of romantic relationships. Therefore, this paper evaluates the relationship advice men give women on a radio show segment called *Ask A Man*. The paper situates itself within critical studies of

men and masculinities and employs thematic discourse analysis to explore the nature of the relationship advice men give women. The current presentation expands on three themes derived from the aforementioned paper. Firstly, it explores the blurring of private and public lines, highlighting how the nature of, conventionally private, relationship advice is influenced by its publicisation. Secondly, the interplay between psychology and pop culture is discussed, focusing on the tension presented by their respective roles to educate and entertain. Finally, it explores how men draw on discourses of heteronormativity when giving relationship advice and how this speaks to power as it relates to men as advice givers and women as advice solicitors. The presented paper contributes to our understanding of how men negotiate masculine identities, in the context of romantic relationships, through the discourses they draw upon when giving relationship advice. *Correspondence: Ms. Ayanda Mazibuko, [mzbaya003@myuct.ac.za](mailto:mzbaya003@myuct.ac.za)*

**Gray T & Ismail H. The digital mirror: exploring male perceptions of the role of social media on self-image.**

Social media platforms have become inescapable in the digital age, playing a role in shaping young adults' perceptions of their self-image. Understanding the impact social media use has on mental health and perceptions of self-image among young South African adults is a perpetuating topic of importance. This will better establish the influence societal expectations and norms hold. Extensive female-centric research has been conducted regarding the influence social media use has on individuals' perceptions of self-image. This illustrated a significant gap in literature focused on understanding male experiences and perceptions of their self-image within the digital landscape. This qualitative cross-sectional study filled this gap by exploring the experiences and perceptions of a sample of four young South African

males' regarding the role social media played in shaping their self-image. This study explored social constructs regarding gendered expectations, masculinity ideals, body image, mental health implications, and social comparisons in terms of males' perceptions of their self-image. This facilitated an in-depth understanding of the role of social media through semi-structured interviews with a diverse sample population. The study is developing, and the key findings and discussions are ongoing. *Correspondence: Miss. Tayla Gray, [tibbygray2003@gmail.com](mailto:tibbygray2003@gmail.com)*

**Byne-Ross K, Nzuwa J & Retter C. Investigating the intersection of faith and psychology: perspectives from South African private higher education students**

This study examines the perspectives of students enrolled at a private higher education institution regarding the intersection of psychology and faith. Utilising a qualitative approach, students' perspectives on the compatibility of these two disciplines are explored. Drawing from students in psychology and theology, the research focuses on how individuals negotiate the complex interplay between religious beliefs and psychological theories. Various aspects, such as epistemological frameworks, ethical considerations, therapeutic approaches, and personal experiences, are analysed. Additionally, contextual factors such as cultural backgrounds and institutional influences that shape students' viewpoints are considered. Preliminary findings reveal a range of opinions, from advocating for integration to advocating for strict separation. Participants articulate the potential for enrichment through synthesis, while also expressing concerns about potential biases and conflicts. Moreover, the study underscores the significant role of education and exposure in shaping attitudes toward the intersection of faith and psychology. This research contributes valuable insights to ongoing discourse by illuminating the diverse

perspectives of South African students. The gleaned insights inform discussions surrounding curriculum development, professional training, and broader dialogues on integrating faith and psychology within diverse cultural contexts. Ultimately, the aim is to foster greater understanding and dialogue among stakeholders engaged in navigating this intersection. *Correspondence:* Mrs. Kendall Byne-Ross, [kendallb@cornerstone.ac.za](mailto:kendallb@cornerstone.ac.za)

**Siyothula B & Zank A. The intersection of culture, the attachment theory and implications for psychotherapy in a South African context. A preliminary literature review.**

While the attachment theory is largely viewed as a Western concept, there is evidence that different cultures consider the significance of the attachment relationship in varying degrees. The quality of the child/ caregiver relationship manifests differently in each culture and different cultures promote this relationship in multiple ways. This paper is a preliminary literature review of the intersection of culture, attachment theory and implications for psychotherapy in the multicultural South African context. *Correspondence:* Dr Busi Siyakhula, [bsiyothula@gmail.com](mailto:bsiyothula@gmail.com)

**Friday, 11 October 2024**

**Roundtable: Assessment and Evaluation**

**Chair: Laher S**

**10:30 – 11:30**

**Laher S, Bischof D, de Beer, Maree D & Kock R. Test Regulation in South Africa: where we were, where we are and where to from here?**

Psychological assessment in South Africa has historically been entwined with politics having been used to justify racial discrimination

preceding even the apartheid years. However with the dawn of democracy in the 90's, the field underwent substantial transformation particularly in the area of test regulation. Panellists will discuss the regulatory landscape pre-1994, followed by key events and legislation leading to the current system. This system includes compliance with the Employment Equity Act, ethical codes for practitioners, and certification of tests by the Professional Board for Psychology. The quality assurance gap left by only certifying a test is carried voluntarily by the Psychological Society of South Africa, the Society for Industrial and Organisational Psychology in South Africa and the Association of Test Publishers in South Africa who jointly provide support for Assessment Standards South Africa. It is clear that this is a necessary step and as a body overseeing the quality of tests using objective guidelines, ASSA has achieved success since its official launch in 2022. The discussion will engage the audience on the efficacy of this test certification and classification model and ideas on how to move forward to further ensure the ethical use of tests in South Africa. *Correspondence:* Prof. Sumaya Laher, [sumaya.laher@wits.ac.za](mailto:sumaya.laher@wits.ac.za)

**Friday, 11 October 2024**

**Paper Presentations: Clinical Psychology**

**Chair: Roomaney R**

**10:30 – 11:30**

**Coetzee C & Roomaney R. A Model of the Relationship between PMDD symptoms, Suicidal Behaviour, and Child Abuse among female university students in South Africa**

Premenstrual Dysphoric Disorder (PMDD) is a severe form of premenstrual syndrome, where hormone-related disruptions during the luteal phase of the menstrual cycle manifest as a cluster of debilitating cognitive, behavioural, and somatic symptoms that

cease after menstruation. Suicidal behaviour and childhood abuse have independently been associated with PMDD. We examined the effects of childhood abuse on the relationship between PMDD symptoms and suicidal behaviour. A sample of 1218 females from Stellenbosch University were recruited for this cross-sectional study. The Premenstrual Symptoms Screening Tool, Childhood Trauma Questionnaire, Interpersonal Needs Questionnaire and the Acquired Capability for Suicide Scale were administered to participants via an online survey. Data were analysed using multiple regression analysis in the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (v.24.0) to determine the relationships between the variables and test a model. The prevalence for symptoms of PMDD in the current sample was 27.4%. Both child abuse ( $r = .364$ ) and suicidal cognitions ( $r = .347$ ) correlated significantly with PMDD ( $p < .05$ ). PMDD was highly prevalent in the sample, highlighting the importance of early screening and detection for PMDD among university students. This study contributes to the lack of research on female suicidal behaviour and PMDD, especially within the local context. *Correspondence: Ms. Courtney Coetzee, [courtney.coetzee2@gmail.com](mailto:courtney.coetzee2@gmail.com)*

**Onyencho V, Oduaran C & van Wyk TNG.  
Social network sites usage and its  
associations with depression and anxiety  
among year-one students in a South African  
university**

Numerous studies have examined SNS use among students, but only a small proportion looked at the relationship between SNS use and mental health. This study investigated social network usage and its association with depression and anxiety among year-one students in a South African University. This cross-section survey was conducted online using convenience and snowball sampling techniques. Overall, 132 first-year students at North-West University, aged 18 to 41 participated with 91 (69%) women and 41

(31%) men. Pearson Product-Moment Correlation was used to compare SNS usage and depression. SNS and anxiety. T-test for independent measure was used for gender differences and SNS usage. The results showed that among NWU first-year students, there was no association between SNS use and depression. Also, SNS use and anxiety. On gender, there was no variation in SNS use and gender. Therefore, it can be said that the use of social network sites does not correlate with anxiety, and depressive disorders. In this population, it may not be true to say that SNS use is a sign of psychological disorders such as depression, and anxiety. Also, being male or female has no bearing on gender differences in SNS use. *Correspondence: Dr Victor Onyencho, [victorchid01@yahoo.com](mailto:victorchid01@yahoo.com)*

**Friday, 11 October 2024**

**Roundtable: Liberatory Psychology**

**Chair: Den Hollander D**

**10:30 – 11:30**

**den Hollander D, Cooper S, Ratele K, wa Bofelo M, Pityana B, Ramphele M & Nengwekhulu H. Bantu Steve Biko: The Liberation of Our Minds**

Bantu Steve Biko, the founder of the Black Consciousness Movement, understood that for real liberation to be realised within our society, changing the narratives of inferiority chained within our prejudices and perceptions was essential: "*Material want is bad enough, but coupled with spiritual poverty it kills*". Unfortunately, fifty years later, the spiritual oppression he fought against still stunts our society. Gross social inequality, failing services, corruption, and a deep inferiority-superiority divide still plague our society. Psychologists play an important role but we come from our own jaded past. Psychology, the former bridesmaid to colonialism, played an integral architectural role in the

construction of Apartheid. The symbolic formation of PsySSA has the potential to reframe our profession back towards a Psychology of Liberation. This roundtable consisting of panelists from those who knew Biko personally, to those whose lifework was influenced by his work, share their reflections on what answers Biko would give to us today, and what questions he would pose to us after thirty years of our democracy.

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**Friday, 11 October 2024**

**Invited Address: Decolonising and Transforming Psychology**

**Chair: Watts A**

**10:30 – 11:15**

**Machando D. Neuropsychology in Zimbabwe: A Field on the Rise**

Introduction: Zimbabwe witnesses the emergence of neuropsychology as a distinct field within psychology. This presentation explores its current state, highlighting growth and challenges.

Current Status: Educational psychology dominates (over 300 practitioners), but other specializations like clinical, counselling, and community psychology exist.

Neuropsychology is gaining traction and will have its inaugural graduation of 5 students this year, and 12 students pursuing a Masters in Neuropsychology degree. This program is sustained through strong networks, capacity building for lecturers, guest lecturers (neuropsychology experts), and partnerships with universities.

Challenges: Limited resources (infrastructure, assessment tools, local data, qualified staff) hinder development. Additionally, a lack of awareness among healthcare professionals regarding the difference between clinical and neuropsychology exists. Finally, cultural

stigma surrounding mental health extends to neuropsychology.

Strengths: Despite challenges, Zimbabwe boasts a strong research focus in neuropsychology, fostered by collaboration with, [AMARI: African Mental Health Research Initiative](#), capacity building through training initiatives and dedicated professionals.

Additionally, Zimbabwe has successfully built strong networks, is currently collecting local normative data for neuropsychological tests, as well as participation in conferences.

Conclusion: Neuropsychology in Zimbabwe is a growing field with immense potential.

Collaboration across the healthcare system is essential to address challenges and ensure proper diagnoses and interventions for patients.

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**Friday, 11 October 2024**

**Roundtable: Community Outreach**

**Chair: Franciscus G**

**10:30 – 11:30**

**Franciscus G & Cordeiro K. The Impact of SADAG's Community Outreach and Student Involvement in South Africa: A Round Table Discussion**

The South African Depression and Anxiety Group (SADAG) has emerged as a pivotal force in addressing mental health challenges within South Africa's diverse communities over the last 30 years. The roundtable focuses on highlighting the multifaceted impact of SADAG's three branches in Johannesburg, Cape Town and KwaZulu-Natal providing nationwide support and free services to people impacted by mental challenges. The organization's significant contributions towards destigmatising mental health issues, awareness and psychoeducation, enhancing access to care, advocating for mental health rights and fostering community resilience.

SADAG's core services being the Helpline Call Center providing free telephone counselling, information, referrals and support to thousands of callers. The discussion will include the training offered to thousands of volunteers for practical counselling experience, exposure to community mental health, as well as grassroot level insights of people navigating the mental health care system. We will showcase SADAG's holistic approach to mental health care and advocacy, collaborative partnerships with higher learning facilities, as well as emphasising the importance of community engagement and student involvement in advancing psychological well-being nationwide. By showcasing SADAG's transformative impact on South Africa's mental health landscape, the roundtable aims to inspire collaboration and innovation in the field of psychology.

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**Friday, 11 October 2024**

**Invited Address**

**Chair: Zamani A**

**10:30 – 11:15**

**Bukabau R & Twela R. Psychological consultations in the Democratic Republic of Congo: practice and evolution**

Context: The work retraces the painful journey of this science, the struggles of the precursors and the happy outcome thanks to the association of practicing psychologists, united within the National Union of Clinical Psychologists, on the other hand. This practice, it should be noted, remained for a long time in the scientific ghetto in the DRC, thus making the masters of yesterday as the holders of a scientific approach very inaccessible to their successors. Which earned them attributions linked to mystical-religious considerations.

Objectives of the work: To constitute a capacity building tool and to offer an orientation, in the discipline, to students and other scientists who are interested in psychological consultations on the one hand, and to describe the progression curve of the activity in the framework of psychological practice. The culture of psychological consultations in the DRC dates back to the second half of the 20th century by university professors, notably those from the University of Kisangani who migrated to the University of Kinshasa on the one hand, and those from the Institute National Pedagogical on the other hand. During this period until the 1990s, psychological services were not known to the public nor were they structured. Since 2000 to the present day, the need for psychological interventions has increased by 85%, in the context of the mental health of the population, especially with the social intrusion of pandemics and the repeated wars in the East of the country.

Conclusion: Psychological consultations, through their practice, help to understand the client's real psychological experience and ensure efficient psychotherapeutic support or treatment. *Correspondence: Prof. Ruth Bukabau, [bukabauruth@gmail.com](mailto:bukabauruth@gmail.com)*

**Friday, 11 October 2024**

**Roundtable: Assessment and Evaluation**

**Chair: Melrose S**

**11:30 – 12:30**

**Melrose S, Symington S, Retter C, Chitanga J & Byne-Ross K. Training on the use of psychometric test battery for Registered Counsellors: A critical reflection**

South Africa's historical psychological assessment development was marred by resource inequality in a racially segregated setting. However, there's been a notable shift towards recognising diverse social and

cultural communities, necessitating culturally appropriate assessment measures. Despite a shortage of registered psychological workers, psychological tests remain integral to psychological support in South Africa. HPCSA guidelines specify screening assessment measures for RCs' training, aiming to cultivate competent, ethical, and professional practitioners serving South Africa's diverse population. Emphasis lies on multidimensional assessment imbued with ethical practice rather than solely on psychometrics. RCs are trained to administer selected psychometric test batteries within communities, integrating comprehensive test usage with academic and professional preparation. There is a lack of studies that focus on the perspectives of coordinators on the training of Registered Counsellors on the use of psychometric tests. The discussion will highlight the process of training Intern Registered Counsellors on the use of assessment tools. We are to include the challenges faced on the selection and use of the available tests. *Correspondence: Mrs Sharon Melrose, [sharon@smelrose.co.za](mailto:sharon@smelrose.co.za)*

**Friday, 11 October 2024**

**Roundtable: Assessment and Evaluation**

**Chair: Melrose S**

**12:30 – 13:30**

**Brouard P, Pillay S, McLachlan C, Madlala N & de Beer-Proctor J.L. Understanding and addressing Conversion Practices in the African context**

Conversion Practices (CPs), also known as reparative therapy, conversion therapy and SOGIESC change efforts, attempt to change or suppress a person's sexual orientation, gender identity or gender expression. They occur in the psychology sphere but more often in spiritual and cultural spaces. CPs, though widely accepted as harmful, abusive and unethical, persist. This round table will draw

on a collaboration between PsySSA/the SGD and Outright International, which supports human rights work to better LGBTIQ+ lives, to develop guidelines for working with survivors of CPs. It will bring together psychological practitioners who do work to understand and address CPs to share insights about the following, in the African context: how do we understand why CPs thrive and continue; what are CPs and what is their impact; how can psychology practitioners work with survivors of CPs in individual and group settings; what advocacy strategies contribute to the elimination of CPs; and what is the role of the profession of psychology in raising awareness of the harms attached to CPs?

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**Friday, 11 October 2024**

**Paper Presentations: Clinical Psychology**

**Chair: Baker M**

**11:30 – 13:30**

**Baker M. Exploring the efficacy of brief behavioural therapy for insomnia versus sleep hygiene: a preventative approach**

Insomnia is a widespread disorder affecting mental and physical health, posing a significant public health issue. This study compares Brief Behavioural Therapy for Insomnia (BBTI) and traditional Sleep Hygiene methods in treating insomnia, highlighting the critical role of early intervention. BBTI, a simplified form of Cognitive Behavioural Therapy for Insomnia (CBTI), focuses on correcting harmful sleep habits and thoughts in a short period. In contrast, Sleep Hygiene recommends environmental and behavioural adjustments to improve sleep. Evaluating BBTI and Sleep Hygiene's effectiveness, this research supports BBTI's advantages in accessibility, affordability, and efficacy, advocating for its inclusion in primary care to

prevent insomnia from becoming chronic. It promotes early, preventative measures to improve sleep health and individual well-being in South Africa and elsewhere.

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### **Ajele K.W & Idemudia E.S. Exploring the intersection of diabetes and depression in the wake of Covid-19 pandemics: a systematic review**

**Background:** This systematic review examines the relationship between diabetes and depression during the Covid-19 pandemic, focusing on the physical and potential exacerbation of comorbid depression among individuals with diabetes.

**Methods:** A meticulous systematic search strategy was executed, encompassing an array of databases, including PsycINFO, Scopus, Web of Science, and Google Scholar. The search spanned from the onset of the pandemic to 2023, with stringent inclusion criteria. The review adhered to a pre-registered protocol (CRD42024510335) to ensure methodological rigor. Data synthesis incorporated findings from 28 studies published during this period, and quality assessment was guided by the QUIPS tool.

**Results:** The findings revealed that Covid-19 pandemic significantly increased depression rates among individuals with diabetes, with type 2 diabetes mellitus patients experiencing 17% to 33% of depression. Factors like demographic variables, clinical deterioration, reduced self-care, and pandemic-induced anxieties contributed to this issue. Diabetes patients were also more susceptible to severe Covid-19

**Conclusion:** The Covid-19 pandemic has exacerbated mental health challenges, especially depression for individuals with diabetes, highlighting the need for comprehensive healthcare approaches that prioritize both physical and mental well-being. The bidirectional relationship between diabetes, depression, and Covid-19

vulnerability necessitates further research and tailored interventions for this high-risk group. *Correspondence: Dr Kenni Wajujutari Ajele, [54976073@mynwu.ac.za](mailto:54976073@mynwu.ac.za)*

### **Baker M. The brain takes a shower**

Sleep is crucial for human physiology, with emerging insights into its role in brain health through neural cleansing during Slow Wave Sleep (SWS). This presentation, building on Stickgold's 2010 research on the Glymphatic System, discusses how SWS aids in brain detoxification by facilitating Cerebro-Spinal-Fluid (CSF) circulation. During SWS, brain cells shrink, increasing extracellular space and allowing CSF to remove metabolic waste, enhancing cognitive function and reducing the risk of neurodegenerative diseases.

Additionally, it incorporates research on the glymphatic system's waste clearance during sleep and the benefits of sleep for memory consolidation and synaptic plasticity. These findings highlight sleep's integral function in brain maintenance and cognitive health. In summary, the presentation emphasizes sleep's essential role in brain "showering," offering insights into sleep physiology and potential therapeutic strategies for brain health. *Correspondence: Mrs. Michelle Baker, [michelle@neurosleep.co.za](mailto:michelle@neurosleep.co.za)*

### **Baker M. Perceptions of good and bad sleep in South African employed women using IPA methodology**

This study uses Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (IPA) to investigate good and bad sleep perceptions among employed South African women, exploring their personal and cultural understanding of insomnia. IPA's approach, rooted in phenomenology, hermeneutics, and idiography, allows an in-depth exploration of their sleep experiences and interpretations. Through focus groups and a detailed thematic analysis, the research reveals how societal norms, security concerns, menopause, and work-family stress influence sleep quality

perceptions. Findings suggest these factors significantly affect sleep, highlighting the need for empathetic, culturally sensitive interventions. This study contributes to understanding sleep perceptions in employed South African women, emphasizing the importance of context-specific sleep disorder solutions. *Correspondence: Mrs. Michelle Baker, [michelle@neurosleep.co.za](mailto:michelle@neurosleep.co.za)*

### **Selepe M. Bio-psycho-social-spiritual benefits of hiking**

Hiking is one of the outdoor activities that most people love, because they tend to spend time in nature without any distraction. Most people who love hiking also report the benefits of hiking, especially in maintaining their mental health. Apart from the physical benefits resulting from walking, climbing the mountains and crossing the rivers; hiking activities also have some spiritual benefits. When hiking in the forest, people report that they feel connected to the forces of nature, Higher Being and their ancestors. In addition to the spiritual connection, hiking seems to connect individuals with the elements and forces of nature, thereby providing the sense of calm and peace within. No wonder as part of African traditional medicine, most of the African traditional and spiritual healers also encourage individuals to visit the forest, rivers and mountains to connect with their ancestors. After having several therapy hiking sessions with the professional hiker and the psychologist, this paper, attempts to explain the biological, psychological, social and the spiritual benefits of hiking, with the intention of recommending therapy hiking as an additional approach to psychotherapy. Key words: Hiking, natural elements, professional hiker, psychologist, bio-psycho-social-spiritual, African traditional medicine. *Correspondence: Dr Mandu Selepe, [lasantepsyservices@gmail.com](mailto:lasantepsyservices@gmail.com)*

**Friday, 11 October 2024**

### **Paper Presentations: Educational Psychology**

**Chair: Gani S**

**11:30 – 13:30**

### **Tau M, Tsabedze W & Mapaling C. Exploring the impact of COVID-19 on academic adjustment and psychological well-being among undergraduate students**

The COVID-19 pandemic brought unprecedented uncertainty globally, impacting South African universities' undergraduate students. Limited research exists on how this affected their academic adjustment, psychological well-being (PWB), and fear of COVID-19. This study investigated these relationships among North-West University undergraduates during the pandemic. Employing a cross-sectional correlation design, the research utilised web-based questionnaires, including the Ryff Psychological Well-being Scale, Academic Adjustment Scale, and Fear of COVID-19 Scale. Supported by self-transcendence theory and perspectives on adjustment, PWB, and differential susceptibility, 501 randomly selected students self-reported on these variables. Data analysis involved descriptive and inferential statistics, using simple linear regression and multivariate analysis of variance. Findings indicated significant positive correlations: COVID-19 fear with PWB ( $r = .22, p < .001$ ) and academic adjustment ( $r = .17, p < .001$ ), including its academic achievement ( $r = .19, p < .001$ ) and motivation ( $r = .20, p < .001$ ) aspects. PWB positively correlated with academic adjustment ( $r = .52, p < .001$ ), achievement ( $r = .51, p < .001$ ), motivation ( $r = .32, p < .001$ ), and lifestyle ( $r = .32, p < .001$ ). The study confirmed significant positive correlations among COVID-19 fear, academic adjustment, and PWB, underscoring the need for interventions to enhance student PWB and facilitate academic adjustment. *Correspondence: Mrs. Matumelo Tau, [taumatumelo@gmail.com](mailto:taumatumelo@gmail.com)*

**Gani S, Laher S & Hassem T. Exploring the relationships between adjustment to university, academic stressors and mental health in first year university students**

Transitioning into university can be stressful and the mental health of students is intimately related to the demands experienced at university. This is evident in the early stages of university adjustment where levels of psychological functioning begin to slope. As a result, mental health concerns may cause students to be vulnerable to adequate adjustment. The aim of this study was to examine the relationship between adjustment to university, academic stressors and mental health among first year students at a South African university, to better understand the interplay between these variables in this context. A convenient sample of 431 first year students completed a questionnaire consisting of the DSM 5 Level 1 Cross Cutting Symptom Measure to examine mental health symptoms, the Daily Hassles scale to measure university related stress and the Student Adaptation to College Questionnaire-short form to measure adjustment to university. Mediated and moderated regression analyses were used to analyse the data. From the results it was evident that a complex interplay exists between adjustment, mental health and stress which is further exacerbated by risk and protective factors in the student's environment. These findings are discussed within the broader context of student mental health and the necessity for interventions at South African universities. *Correspondence: Ms. Salma Gani, [salma.gani@wits.ac.za](mailto:salma.gani@wits.ac.za)*

**Kerruish G & Roomaney R. Exploring the lived experiences of self-stigmatisation among university who have attempted suicide**

Suicide is reported as one of the twenty leading causes of death globally, with an estimated 25 attempted suicides for every death. The psychosocial ramifications of

attempted suicide, however, extend past that of the attempt itself, where individuals may experience self-stigmatisation. Self-stigmatisation may heighten the accrued risk of suicide among those who have previously attempted suicide. University students may be vulnerable to suicide, however, there is a paucity of research on self-stigmatisation following a suicide attempt among South African university students. This study explored the lived experiences of university students who have attempted suicide. Our aim was to gain an in-depth understanding of self-stigmatisation. Semi-structured interviews were conducted with six students, and analysed using interpretative phenomenological analysis. Findings illustrate the manifestation of self-stigmatisation, and its influence on recovery and shaping personal identity; individual perception of public suicide stigma; as well as the nuances of attending university after surviving attempted suicide. These findings add to the dialogue on attempted suicide and suicide stigmatisation, both by the self and others, in the South African context. Furthermore, these findings shed light on the nuances of life after attempted suicide and mitigating social conventions that are, relatively, grounded in stigmatisation. *Correspondence: Miss Gennifer Kerruish, [22044760@sun.ac.za](mailto:22044760@sun.ac.za)*

**van Niekerk R.L, Tsebe K.B, van Gent M.M & Ter Goon D. Mental health and physical activity during the pandemic: Lessons learned from academic, sporting and farming communities.**

Physical activity is associated with psychological health benefits for humans and so much so during times of isolation and pandemic threat. Three separate studies including an academic-, sporting- and farming community during the Covid-19 lockdowns emphasized the importance of physical activity to mitigate mental health during such times. The results from convenience samples from the three communities were analyzed to

determine the relationship between physical activity and mental health and group differences. High levels of psychological distress were observed in all three communities, with significant negative impact on the social wellbeing of participants. Those who participated in physical exercise showed significantly lower levels of psychological distress and higher overall wellbeing than those who did not. To the contrary, participants who achieved enough physical activity (at least 300 minutes/week) through housework related physical activity, had significantly worse mental health outcomes than those who did not, indicating that the type of physical activity that leads to mental health benefits during pandemic conditions matters. Group comparisons indicated that females and participants who did enough exercise had significantly lower psychological distress than their counterparts. Logistic regression indicated that females, sedentary participants and those alone during lockdown were more at risk for psychological distress. *Correspondence: Prof. Rudolph Leon van Niekerk, [leonvn@ufh.ac.za](mailto:leonvn@ufh.ac.za)*

**Thani G. A review of cognitive dissonance experienced by Life Orientation teachers, teaching gender diversity content in schools**

This paper reviews an empirical study that focused on the cognitive dissonance experienced by Life Orientation teachers, during their delivery of sexuality education in schools. This qualitative study employs interviews across the 9 province of 18 LO teachers from 18 different schools. Using critical discourse analysis the study explored themes of religion, traditional and moral conflict and the power dynamics that arise challenging the successful teaching of this curriculum content. The paper highlights the challenges experienced by teachers mandated by the South African Schools Act 84 (1996), Curriculum Assessment Policy Statement (2017), the South African Constitution (1996) and the SACE Code of Professional Ethics (2019) to be inclusive in their content

delivery. Teachers struggled to be neutral in their approach to teaching gender diversity content. Their belief systems often bring up feelings of cognitive dissonance. The paper recommends that the training be developed to assist student teachers to acknowledge and deal with cognitive dissonance.

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**Friday, 11 October 2024**

**Invited Symposium:**

**Chair: Ratele K**

**11:30 – 13:30**

**Ratele K & Stevens G. 'Psychology and Apartheid', Thinking with Books, and the Mind During Thirty Years of Freedom**

This symposium takes its inspiration from two historical moments. The first is the publication of the book *Psychology and Apartheid: Essays on the Struggle for Psychology and the Mind in South Africa* in 1990, edited by Lionel Nicholas and Saths Cooper. Among other issues, the book explored how it was common for most psychologists in Apartheid South Africa to repress, deny, rationalise and engage in splitting vis-à-vis the racist political system. The book also highlighted how a small group of psychologists mounted critiques against Apartheid and mainstream Psychology. The second inspiration is the demise of Apartheid and thus the onset of political freedom in South Africa. This moment was marked by the first universal franchise in April 1994, in South Africa. In this invited symposium, the objective is then, to consider what might still be learned from the project by Nicholas, Cooper and their colleagues against racist science and politics, as well as what we have come to understand about emotional and mental life in South Africa now that we have experienced three decades of political freedom. The symposium will, however,

consider various kinds and dynamics of freedom, not only political and epistemological freedom, but not limited to economic, media, gender, and psychological freedom. We wish to also interrogate the prospects of organized psychology and its relationship to freedom as such. And given that one of the inspirations for the symposium is a book, we shall direct the latter part of our symposium toward the creation of knowledge in the form of different kinds of books, offering space to stimulate new work and discuss opportunities to produce books in psychology as concrete practice toward the realisation of epistemic freedom.

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**Friday, 11 October 2024**

**Paper Presentations: Environmental Psychology**

**Chair: Mokobedi T**

**11:30 – 13:30**

**Seretlo-Rangata L, Sodi T & Govender S.  
Perceptions of community members in Lephale area, Limpopo province, towards water conservation: towards the development of a psychological model**

Despite interventions by various governments to regulate water demand and address water scarcity, literature shows that billions of people across the world continue to struggle with access because not everyone contributes equally to conservation efforts. Behavioural factors such as individual and collective aspects of cognition and commitment have been found to play an important role in water conservation. The study aimed to explore the perceptions of community members in the Lephale area, Limpopo province, towards water conservation with a view to developing an explanatory psychological model on water conservation. Twenty participants were

selected through purposeful sampling. Semi-structured individual face-to-face interviews were used to gather data which was analysed utilizing thematic content analysis. The findings revealed that there are psychological effects of water scarcity on communities such as emotional distress, interpersonal conflicts and disruptions of daily activities of living. The study results showed that there are various coping strategies developed by participants to deal with water scarcity. Derived from the findings, a psychological model of water conservation was developed incorporating ideas from the Value-Belief-Norm theory and Afrocentric theory. The model suggests that people's worldviews, including their values, beliefs and culture are significant determinants of their pro-environmental behaviours. Recommendations made for policy-developers. *Correspondence: Dr Linda Seretlo-Rangata,*

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**Rasodi R, ka Canham H, Radebe D & Naidoo S  
Interspecies relations in Johannesburg's outdoors ecologies**

Informed by methods located in Black and indigenous studies, this paper attends to interspecies relations in the Black outdoors. We embrace the call to study nature and society in ways that decentre anthropocentric planetary perspectives by leaning into understanding the interactions between humans, plants, animals, and indigenous cosmologies as forms of collaboration in the interspecies survival of human and more-than-human actors. These relations take place in informal settlements located on the periphery of development and enact different strategies for survival and refusal to be captured by state formality. Like the people, natural elements within these ruderal ecologies are seen to have the capacity for agency, resilience, and resistance. Photographs of the natural and material environment along with verbal accounts of space were collected from residents in 4

communities located in the South of Johannesburg. The Afro-ecofeminist theoretical framework and Tina Campt's reading of still-moving images were adopted to study the interspecies relations between humans and more-than-humans. The study concluded that there is a sense of co-dependency and collaboration among different species in precarious environments and that multiple worlds exist within these ecologies. Subsequently, interspecies relations within natural environments have the power to inform the placemaking practices of nature and people.

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### **Mokobedi T. The socio-ecological life and history of the Klip River**

The socio-ecological life and history of the Klip River will delve into understanding how black people residing in informal settlements around the river have attributed significance to it from colonialization to the present era. The study will employ riverhood and animating the river as theoretical frameworks to explore the socio-ecological dynamics of the Klip River, focusing on its ecological integrity, human impacts, and the socio-economic status of the local communities. Data for this research will be gathered through a systematic review and from the South African National Archives, tracing archival records from the colonial period to the current democratic era. By analyzing historical and contemporary perspectives, the article aims to illuminate the evolving perceptions, uses, and challenges faced by individuals living in proximity to the Klip River, shedding light on the intricate relationship between the river and the surrounding communities over time. *Correspondence: Ms. Tshifhiwa Mokobedi,*  
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### **Chetty N. Educational consequences: unheard voices of children from the Gaza ruins**

Children are universally protected by the United Nations Conventions on the Rights of the Child. Further the UN Declaration defines children's rights to protection, education, health, care, shelter and good nutrition. The best interest of children comprises four main pillars, the right to survival, the right to protection, the right to development and the right to participation. From October 07, 2023 the World has witnessed an assault on Children that can be equated to war crimes with total disregard for the Rights of Children. To date it is estimated that almost thirteen thousand children have perished as a result of the armed conflict in Gaza. What about the traumatized child rescued from the rubble with no recourse to protection. This presentation takes a look at GAZA before the Israeli military incursions, the aftermath of devastating attacks and the Educational sequelae of the surviving children filtered through the eyes of an Educational Psychologist. Since the Gaza strip is an active theatre of conflict there are gaps and silences on primary data from formal research. Instead, multi-faceted secondary sources will be used. *Correspondence: Dr Narainsami Chetty,* [anandchetty@telkomsa.net](mailto:anandchetty@telkomsa.net)

### **Errington S & Lamprecht L. The fight for child rights: an open access boxing gym that promotes the well being of children**

The current mental health crisis in South Africa is exacerbated in contexts with high rates of poverty, violence and inequality, such as the inner city of Johannesburg, where children experience multiple attacks on their development on a daily basis, in the form of basic rights violations, such as a lack of adequate nutrition and basic shelter, no access to health or social services and exclusion from school, increasing their risks of developing long-term physical and mental health problems. Fight with Insight has

conceptualised a safe after-school programme, in the form of a local boxing and life gym in the inner city. The programme aims to contribute positively to healthy lifestyles and sustainable communities, under the objectives of Sustainable Development Goals 3 and 11. This is achieved by providing an integrated child development programme. The presentation highlights the need for alternative approaches to addressing child rights violations through an approach which is inclusive of ALL children, and which can be adapted to better meet the needs of the broader community in the inner city of Johannesburg. *Correspondence: Miss. Sheri Errington, [sheri@socialperspectives.co.za](mailto:sheri@socialperspectives.co.za)*

**Friday, 11 October 2024**

**Roundtable: Ethics and Human Rights**

**Chair: Errington S**

**11:30 – 12:30**

**Chetty N, Metsing M, Erasmus P, Mashipata M & Maree K. Educational Psychology: Slow Lane. Driving on Empty.**

The vital Educational Psychology according to the scope of the profession concerns the most precious of Society's beings the children. EP is privileged to be the custodians of the psychosocial, mental and educational well-being of children. Despite this pre-eminent importance as a branch of psychology EP faces numerous contests extraneous to the practice itself. A running battle with Professional Board of Psychology to justifiably widen our roles to enable us to practice according to our training and competence. EP practitioners have daily to contend with non-paying Medical Aids for legitimate service. In a hostile professional jungle to robustly compete for scarce resources, The spectre of NHI hangs further threatening the profession and fearing redundancy. The unbundling of role confusion across categories as "each to

his/her own" is the order of the day. Our ongoing concerns for the poor quality NSC. An acclaimed professor, acting district director of Education, a widely researched academic and two experienced EP's in private practice will tank up before the pumps runs dry for the Cinderella branch of psychology. *Correspondence: Dr Narainsami Chetty, [anandchetty@telkomsa.net](mailto:anandchetty@telkomsa.net)*

**Friday, 11 October 2024**

**Invited Roundtable: Ethics and Human Rights**

**Chair: Errington S**

**11:30 – 13:30**

**August J, Pillay J, Ngcobo Sithole M, Watts A, & Tabane R. Three Decades of Regulating Psychology in South Africa: A Retrospective Analysis**

Over the past three decades, the regulating of psychology in South Africa has experienced changes, reflecting our unique socio-political landscape and its commitment to addressing mental health within a diverse society. This retrospective analysis examines the significant milestones, challenges, and advancements in the regulation of psychology in South Africa. The end of apartheid marked a pivotal shift, with regulatory bodies like the Health Professions Council of South Africa (HPCSA) striving to address historical inequalities and integrate culturally relevant practices into the profession. The development of regulations, policies, and guidelines to accommodate emerging specializations, have been key advancements. Challenges such as maintaining stakeholder trust, balancing innovation with regulation, and ensuring equitable access to psychological services in rural and underserved areas have been central to regulatory efforts. This analysis highlights the critical role of continuous dialogue among stakeholders, including government, educational institutions,

practitioners, and the public, in navigating future challenges. By reflecting on the past thirty years, this presentation provides insights into ongoing efforts by the Board to protect the public and guiding the profession of psychology in South Africa.

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**Friday, 11 October 2024**

**Invited Symposium: Conflict, Trauma and  
Violence**

**Chair: Machando D**

**11:30 – 13:30**

**Handling psychological breakdown among victims of armed conflict in Cameroon: African perspective**

The culture of a people shapes their lifestyle, social interactions, and conflict resolution methods. Cultural norms, imparted through socialization, equip community members with problem-solving skills, such as ancestral intervention, collaborative dialogue, and rituals like "pouring libation" for community well-being. In Cameroon, collectivism is a cultural value promoting community support and conflict resolution to maintain peace. However, the adoption of new cultures, religions, and technological advancements has led many Cameroonians to shift from collectivism to individualism. This shift has weakened traditional support systems, leaving individuals, especially women, vulnerable and struggling alone during crises. The rise in individualistic and competitive behaviors may contribute to social unrest and armed conflicts in Cameroon, impacting citizens' psychological well-being. This study will explore how abandoning African cultural pathways affects psychological breakdown in women during armed conflicts using a mixed sequential design method, employing Likert scale questionnaires and interviews.

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**Bobga L.J. Shift in African Cultural Pathways on the Psychological Breakdown of Women During Armed Conflicts: Case of Mezam Division, North West Region, of Cameroon**

The culture of a people determines the way they live, share and solve problems including conflicts which may come as a result of misunderstanding between communities. Culture which is brought to a people through socialization, enhances members of the community with basic values, norms and builds in them problem handling skills and systems like; dependence on ancestral intervention in times of trouble, collaborative dialogue, "pouring libation" for better community wellbeing. Cameroonians, are a people who belief and are expected to practice collectivism a cultural value which calls on members of the community to live together, serve as support systems and negotiation agents in handling problems/conflicts in order to limit its escalation to the larger society for peace to reign at all times. This might not be the case especially as people are adapting to new cultures and new religions. The advancement in technology that has made the world a global village as people easily connect and learn new values and ways of solving problems through its numerous applications while unconsciously abandoning African cultural pathways. It has been noticed that a lot of Cameroonians have shifted from their collective pathways which served as ready support system to handle an array of problems and have through acculturation embraced individualism a borrowed perspective to life which leaves individuals struggling alone when faced with difficult situations in the community. This individualistic way of living may affect the collective ways of living, family support in times of trouble, community engagement in problem solving and dispose people to be

involved in unwanted or negative competitions that might cause social unrest and eventual armed conflicts leading to psychological breakdown, especially for women who are vulnerable. Individualistic and competitive tendencies which are shifts from collective community living and collaboration observed in Cameroon today might be blamed for tribal, regional and national armed conflicts experienced in Africa, particularly Cameroon. This may affect the citizens especially women psychologically as they struggle without Community support to handle psychological problems experienced during conflicts. This study intends to investigate how the shift from Africa cultural pathways influence psychological breakdown in women during armed conflicts. This study will employ the mixed sequential design method and collect data with the use of a Likert scale questionnaire as well as an interview guide in order to see the link between the shift Africa cultural pathways and psychological breakdown women during armed conflicts.

Key Words: Shift African Cultural Pathways, collectivism, support system, individualism, conflict, psychological breakdown. *Dr Lum Jacqueline Bobga* [lumja6268@yahoo.com](mailto:lumja6268@yahoo.com)

### **Wirdzenyuy, L. Rethinking Conflict Resolution Strategies by Harnessing African Indigenous Mechanisms for Effective Psychosocial Wellbeing of Affected Parties**

Conflict is an inevitable aspect of life as it happens in all families, communities, villages, tribes, countries, continents and the world at large. Conflict management and conflict resolution in indigenous African societies provided opportunity to interact with all parties concerned, it promoted consensus-building, social bridge reconstructions and enactment of order in the society. Indigenous conflict resolution techniques such as mediation, adjudication, reconciliation, and negotiation as well as cross examination which were employed by Africans in the past,

offer great prospects for peaceful co-existence and harmonious relationships in post-conflict periods. Conflict resolution comprised a complex network of forces surrounding the parties in the conflict. It was not only an end to hostilities that may re-emerge but a healing process in which all stakeholders contribute positive energy. The task was to re-establish the energy flow within individuals, families and communities so as to re-build social harmony.

Reconciliation often required symbolic gestures and associated rituals including exchange of gifts, and slaughter of animals (chickens, goats, sheep, cows) In this context, rituals play an important role in the reconciliation process. They help to link people to the past, present and future. Acceptance and performance of rituals of reconciliation by both parties was an outward sign on inward grace that they will never engage into such conflicts again.

Unfortunately, in our societies today conflict between different parties seem to persist for long periods and often escalate to serious crises without any effective and efficient solutions. Conflict that we thought had come to an end often resurface and become more devastating with negative psychosocial implications than what had happened in the past. Modern conflicts reoccur and persist because resolution strategies are built on oppression, suppression and at times avoidance of one party in favour of another due to self-interest of mitigating authorities. It is therefore important to rethink effective conflict management and resolution mechanisms that will not only end the current conflict, but go a long way to prevent future conflicts and enhance the psychosocial wellbeing of the parties that have been affected by conflict.

Key words: Conflict resolution; Conflict management; African indigenous mechanisms; Psychosocial wellbeing.

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**Bongwong B. Seeking lasting solutions: psychological role of African traditional institutions “nwerong nso” of northwest Cameroon in conflict mediation**

The Western structured tool and philosophy of colonialism greatly influenced the social, cultural, political and economic life of Africans in an invaluable yet, radical way. Premised on western legal traditions with an Anglo-saxon jurisprudence modus operandi imprinted on Africans. This weakened, undermined and greatly uprooted the African values, norms and beliefs systems which provided a framework for conflict mediation. Among the Nso of Northwest Cameroon like in any other state across Africa, traditional institutions like “Nwerong”, play a central role in the justice system of the people of Nso, dispute resolution, and psychological wellbeing of the people and the land. This paper seeks to x-ray the role of “Nwerong Nso” in conflict mediation in achieving lasting solutions. Key Words: Traditions institution, Nwerong, conflict mediation, Psychological role. *Correspondence: Dr Bruno Bongwong, [brunobongwong@yahoo.com](mailto:brunobongwong@yahoo.com)*

**Wednesday, 09 October 2024**

**Poster Presentations**

**10:30 – 10:30**

**Muila L & Baloyi L. Unraveling the enigma: exploring the causal roots of infertility as explained by the Bapedi elders in Moletjie Moshate, Limpopo, South Africa. An Afrocentric perspective**

This study explores the causality and cultural beliefs surrounding infertility among the Bapedi community in Moletjie Moshate, South Africa, using the Afrocentric framework and indigenous research methods. Twelve elders were interviewed, revealing three main causes of infertility: biomedical factors such as

ovarian issues and infections, traditional remedies like herbal treatments, and spiritual dimensions such as displeasing ancestors or violating cultural taboos. The research emphasizes the importance of integrating indigenous knowledge systems and African worldviews into infertility studies, challenging the dominant biomedical approach. It advocates for a holistic understanding of infertility that incorporates cultural, spiritual, and biomedical aspects, suggesting interventions that respect Bapedi traditions and beliefs, including recognizing the menstrual cycle's significance and honouring ancestral roles in conception. This comprehensive approach aims to improve interventions and treatments for infertility by considering the multifaceted nature of reproductive challenges within the Bapedi people and the community of South Africa at large. *Correspondence: Mrs. Lethabo Muila, [muilalethabo22@gmail.com](mailto:muilalethabo22@gmail.com)*

**Bitsang C. Acceptability of EMDR amongst mental health providers in Botswana**

In 2019, Trauma Aid Netherlands and Stepping Stones International funded the first ever Eye-Movement Desensitization and Reprocessing (EMDR) for mental health providers in Botswana. Currently, more than twenty mental health providers are undergoing the Level I AND level II trainings for certification as EMDR therapists in Botswana. It therefore, becomes vital for research to explore the therapist's acceptability of the bilateral movements as the critical technique of EMDR A semi-structured interview will be utilized to explore the acceptability of EMDR amongst fifteen Botswana EMDR trainees. A thematic analysis of data will be applied to analyze subjective experiences of providers using EMDR for trauma treatment. *Correspondence: Mrs. Christinah Bitsang, [kgathic@ub.ac.bw](mailto:kgathic@ub.ac.bw)*

### **Mulaudzi T. Selection into and distribution of treatment from mental health professionals: a systematic review**

Several epidemiological studies show facts on the proportion of "true" cases of mental disorders receiving treatments, and the adequacy of coverage for people with the most need for mental health services. There are different factors that contribute to the mal-distribution of treatment among people with mental disorders. Previous research confirm that most people with severe mental disorders receive no treatment from mental health professionals. There are different reasons attributed to these people not receiving treatment: Lack of or limited mental health services in their communities; those with mental problems might think they do not need treatment because they feel their condition is temporary; they may not see their symptoms as mental health-related symptoms; may not be aware of the existing relevant services; mental health services being inaccessible; they do not think that treatment will help them; or they may be embarrassed to seek help due to fear of stigma and social rejection. *Correspondence: Prof. Tshilidzi Mulaudzi, [Mercy.Mulaudzi@univen.ac.za](mailto:Mercy.Mulaudzi@univen.ac.za)*

### **Calvert K. A digital mental health intervention to enhance mental health and resilience among school teachers working in under-resourced schools in the Western Cape province.**

Teachers working in under-resourced schools are vulnerable to adverse mental health outcomes owing to the lack of resources in these settings. South Africa has a serious shortage of mental health resources, hindering the ability for teachers to access mental health services. Therefore, digital mental health interventions can offer immediate psychological support and offers an alternative means to accessing mental health care. The study aims to generate evidence on the efficacy of a 'My Possible Self

(MPS)' digital mental health application in enhancing mental health and resilience among school teachers in the Western Cape Province. The study is part of a triangulation design that consists of three phases. Phase 1 entails a mental health survey and includes the following instruments: a socio-demographic questionnaire, the Teacher Satisfaction Scale (TSS), the Professional Identity Scale (PIS), the Perceived Stress Scale (PSS), the Center for Epidemiological Studies-Depression Scale (CES-D), State-Trait Anxiety Inventory-Trait (STAI), the PTSD Checklist 5 (PCL-5), the Alcohol Use Disorders Identification Test (AUDIT), the Connor-Davidson Resilience Scale (CD-RISC-25), and the Multidimensional Scale of Perceived Social Support (MSPSS). The Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS-27) will be used to capture and analyse the data. This is a presentation of the phase 1 protocol.

*Correspondence: Miss. Kayla Calvert, [calvertkayla@gmail.com](mailto:calvertkayla@gmail.com)*

### **Molokoane P & Modipane M. Young men's perspectives on expressing their mental health problems to family and friends.**

**Background:** Globally, more than 1 in 10 people are living with some type of mental health condition and these include depression, anxiety, schizophrenia, and bipolar disorders. South Africa has the world's eighth highest suicide rate, with 450 men committing suicide each month. The aim of this study was to explore the young men's perspectives on expressing their mental health problems to family and friends.

**Methods:** A qualitative research method with non-probability convenience sampling was adopted. A sample of 16 young males were interviewed and the data was analyzed using thematic analysis. **Results:** The key themes that emerged from the study include young men's description in confiding their mental health problems, barriers to participants sharing their mental health problems and factors encouraging young men to share their

mental health problems. Sub-themes on description of young men in confiding their mental health problems include confiding in mental health professionals and confiding in family and friends. Sub-themes on barriers discouraging young men to share their mental health problems include fear of stigma and masculinity. Sub-themes on factors encouraging young men to share their mental health problems include received emotional support, received social support and supportive environment. *Correspondence: Dr Mahlatse Modipane, [mahlatse21@yahoo.com](mailto:mahlatse21@yahoo.com)*

**Kunutu R, Ntshangase S & Phasha N. Establishing an intervention centre within a research unit: strategies and outcomes - a case study of the UNISA Centre of Excellence in Disabilities.**

This abstract delves into the establishment of an Intervention Center within a research unit, focusing on the strategies employed and the resulting impact, using the UNISA Center of Excellence in Disabilities as a case study. The paper emphasizes the significance of bridging research with practical applications, highlighting the center's role in fostering collaboration and driving positive change. It discusses key strategies such as needs assessment, infrastructure development, staffing, and partnerships that were instrumental in setting up the center. Furthermore, it explores the center's strategies for effective intervention, including evidence-based practices, community engagement, capacity building, and robust evaluation mechanisms. The abstract concludes by analyzing the impact of the UNISA Center of Excellence in Disabilities on research outcomes, community empowerment, knowledge exchange, and policy influence, showcasing its contributions to advancing knowledge and addressing real-world challenges in the field of disabilities. *Correspondence: Ms. Ramokone Kunutu, [kunutrd@unisa.ac.za](mailto:kunutrd@unisa.ac.za)*

**Allan B, Cameron E, Toussaint L, Adjei SB, Trend-Cunningham FJ & Jacquin KM. Ghanaian women's resilience: navigating trauma and cultivating post-traumatic growth during the COVID-19 pandemic**

The impact of trauma on public health is escalating and can lead to profound adverse psychological consequences. As global crises become more prevalent, there arises an urgent need to comprehensively grasp the factors that can shape culturally responsive post-trauma interventions. This study, conducted amid the COVID-19 pandemic, collected data from four diverse locations in Ghana, highlighting the disproportionate impact of natural and human-made disasters on women and girls across the African continent. In the context of Ghana, significant educational disparities persist among genders, where socio-cultural and economic factors play a substantial role in fostering low school enrollment and elevated dropout rates. Consequently, understanding the gender-specific effects of trauma and post-traumatic growth (PTG), along with identifying protective factors, becomes imperative. Our findings underscore that women in Ghana experienced elevated levels of trauma and PTG during the COVID-19 pandemic in comparison to males. Notably, education and marriage emerged as potential protective factors against trauma symptomology. Therefore, culturally relevant approaches that foster PTG through education show potential on alleviating the effects of trauma. By recognizing and addressing these interconnected factors, interventions can be tailored to the unique sociocultural context of Ghana, ultimately contributing to the resilience and well-being of its population. *Correspondence: Miss. Bailey Allan, [Baileyallan125@gmail.com](mailto:Baileyallan125@gmail.com)*

**Fouché J.P & Hugo Q. The first Afrikaans female and feminist medical practitioner in South Africa: utilising psychobiography to reconstruct her Feminist Identity**

### **Development as a non-conformist and anti-racist personality.**

Psychobiography has witnessed tremendous academic interest. Currently it is pursued by many academics in Arts and Humanities across South Africa. Psychobiography is a lifespan case study of the psychological development of an extraordinary person within a given historical period. Dr Petronella van Heerden (1887-1975), was the first Afrikaans female and feminist medical practitioner in South Africa. Despite her achievements, she was a marginalized figure in South African historiography, attributed to her feminist, socialist and anti-racist views. She was purposefully chosen as the subject, as she was an extraordinary and non-conforming female for her time. This study reconstructed the feminist identity development of Petronella across her lifespan. This was accomplished by applying Downing and Roush's Feminist Identity Development (FID) model, to the biographical and historical data on her life. The researchers used Alexander's saliency indicators to prioritize the themes that were related to the propositions of the FID-model. Findings indicated that Petronella's socio-cultural contexts (e.g., her occupation, Afrikaner identity, socialist and feminist views, and intimate relationships) influenced her development. She did not adhere to a passive acceptance of traditional female identity, but rather identified with emancipatory and non-conforming ideas. This study adds to psychobiographies focusing on notable South African women. *Correspondence: Prof. Jacobus Paulus Fouché, [fouchejp@ufs.ac.za](mailto:fouchejp@ufs.ac.za)*

**Thursday, 10 October 2024**

**Poster Presentations**

**10:30 – 10:30**

### **Naude L & Esau M. The quest for a “Soft Life” and the transition into adulthood: views from South African emerging adult students**

Gaining financial independence is a prominent marker of adulthood. This study explored the experiences of a group of South African students ( $M_{Age}=22.24$ ), with a specific focus on how the psychological tasks of emerging adulthood are embedded in the socioeconomic context. Through the thematic analysis of 26 interviews, participants' hopes, fears, and well-being (while managing student life shaped by an economically contentious situation) were unpacked. Considering the academic, personal, and social threats in their quests for independence, participants appreciated the support from parents, the university, and funders. Despite financial obstacles, they portrayed a strong personal commitment and resilience to excel academically, be financially liberated, and break the cycle of poverty. Hardship inspired dreams to secure a better future, a '*soft life*', for themselves and others. In this poster presentation, the study's findings are presented in juxtaposition with the responsibility of institutions to ensure a just society where emerging adults can flourish into financially stable adulthoods and futures. *Correspondence: Prof. Luzelle Naude, [naudel@ufs.ac.za](mailto:naudel@ufs.ac.za)*

### **Shirima C.M, Maso E, Molumo K, Sokhaya L, Viti Z, Thalmayer A.G & Naude L. Instability, Possibility, and Responsibility: Experiences of Emerging Adults in Kenya, Namibia and South Africa**

Emerging adulthood is a crucial period for individuals to make life-changing decisions. African emerging adults are confronted with a multitude of life-altering experiences that can profoundly impact and transform their existence and development. *The Africa Long Life Study* is a longitudinal mixed-methods research project that follows the development of emerging adults from Kenya,

Namibia, and South Africa over a five-year period. As a part of this larger research project, the current qualitative study focused on the key concerns and life events identified by approximately 800 male and female 18- and 19-year-old participants per country. Data were analysed using content analysis, with frequency distributions and Chi-squared tests to compare differences across country, gender, and other demographic groupings. This poster will present findings regarding the challenges and possibilities experienced to provide a deeper understanding of the complex features linked to the emerging adulthood developmental phase in African contexts. *Correspondence: Dr Catherine Mkaleso Shirima, [shirima.cm@ufs.ac.za](mailto:shirima.cm@ufs.ac.za)*

**Shirima C,M, Thalmayer A.G & Naude L.**  
**Youth in action: empowering and building resilient youths**

Numerous factors affect young peoples' development and capacity to flourish. Understanding the complex interactions between the youth and the contexts and systems that shape them can facilitate positive youth development and enhance the effectiveness of youth intervention programmes. Male and female youth aged between 18 and 21 participated in this participatory action research project, an initiative culminating from the *African Long-Life Study*. Approximately 800 South African participants completed the *Positive Youth Development scale* assessing the prominence and prevalence of strengths in the fields of Competence, Confidence, Connection, Caring, and Character. This was followed by focus group interviews with participants living in Taung, South Africa, which were thematically analysed using an appreciative inquiry approach. Findings guided the planning and implementation of future phases of the project to offer the youth opportunities to use their strengths, skills, and competencies to make informed choices. This poster will present results from the different phases of

this project, with examples of youth that are proactive, socially engaged, and flourishing. *Correspondence: Dr Catherine Mkaleso Shirima, [shirima.cm@ufs.ac.za](mailto:shirima.cm@ufs.ac.za)*

**Adams-Adonis N, Mibey A, Holmes B, Stoffberg E & Rightford M.**  
**A systematic review exploring interventions on emotion regulation within adolescents**

Emotions are key to the human experience, as they inform individuals of themselves, their surroundings, and influence their actions. It is vital for individuals to have the ability to regulate and control their emotions, as it has shown to benefit one's mental health, as well as society. Adolescence is a stage of life where emotions can be experienced with more intensity, sensitivity, and fluctuation, for which there has been an increase in global mental health issues in the adolescent population. A lack of effective emotion regulation in adolescents can lead to internalising issues, including psychopathologies, and externalising issues, including suicide, violence, academic failure, substance abuse, and unprotected sex resulting in unplanned pregnancies. It is reported by the World Health Organisation (WHO; 2021) that suicide is the fourth leading cause of deaths among adolescents and young adults globally, with 77% of all suicides occurring in low- and middle-income countries (LMICs). Existing interventions can be improved by placing an emphasis on emotion regulation; however, further research is needed to adapt and implement these interventions within SA. This systematic review evaluated interventions that focus on improving emotion regulation within adolescents, finding the most applicable and beneficial models for the South African context. *Correspondence: Mrs. Natalie Adams-Adonis, [nataliea@cornerstone.ac.za](mailto:nataliea@cornerstone.ac.za)*

**Tsabedze W, Mputle A & Mapaling C**  
**Comorbidities related to autism spectrum**

### **disorder from infancy to adolescence: scoping review**

Children living with ASD struggle with not only ASD but also with the above-mentioned difficulties leading to developmental delays. The researchers focus was on the psychosocial developmental stages from infancy to adolescence (1 year to 19 years old). In this review, the researchers aimed to systematically scope the existing literature on the comorbidities related to ASD from infancy to adolescence, identify the common comorbidities related to ASD, and define specific characteristics such as the symptoms and aetiology/causes of these comorbidities. The researchers used Science Direct, Google Scholar, Academic Search Premier, PsycARTICLES, PsycINFO, EBSCOhost, MEDLINE and JSTOR Journals, EMBASE, the Cochrane Library, Cumulative Index to Nursing and Allied Health Literature (CINAHL) as databases to search for evidence. A total of 360 articles retrieved from the databases, a Boolean search was conducted, which resulted in 19 peer-reviewed articles being included in this scoping review. These articles assessed the comorbid conditions of ASD in different psychosocial developmental stages, namely, infancy, childhood, and adolescence. There is a dearth of research on the comorbidities that affect psychosocial stages and development. Findings from this scoping review identified the most common comorbidities linked to ASD in different psychosocial stages in different individuals. *Correspondence: Dr Wandile Tsabedze, [wandile.tsabedze@gmail.com](mailto:wandile.tsabedze@gmail.com)*

### **Badat F. Exploring preventative methods in coping with professional stressors in a teaching context: a self-study.**

The focus of this study is to examine the factors that contribute to teacher effectiveness or teacher's ability to cope with work demands in a sphere of early burnout. As a former teacher turned lecturer and

educational psychologist, returning to the classroom was an experience of wonder and apprehension. Not only was I returning to a classroom, but also exposed to my first work experience in an international context. This is a self-study paper that examines teaching well-being from an individual subjective lens, using the theoretical underpinnings of positive psychology to explain findings. The primary mode of data collection was the use of journal entries over a period of six months, or two school terms. The problem this research addresses is the growing level of frustration in the teaching profession and the reduced ability of teachers to cope with professional demands. That central questions include what are the factors that contribute to a teacher's demanding workload? What strategies are teachers employing to cope with professional demands? What changes need to be made to increase professional effectiveness? Incorporating the aspects of PERMA, as postulated by Martin Seligman (2010) have been proven effective in mitigating some risks associated with the inability to cope. *Correspondence: Ms. Fathima Badat, [fathimabadat@gmail.com](mailto:fathimabadat@gmail.com)*

### **Mavuso M. Exploring primary school learners' perceptions and experiences on bullying: implications for learner support.**

Bullying is a global phenomenon affecting learners. It is regarded as an undesirable and hostile actions of power displayed by perpetrators over victims. Bullying affects individual mental wellbeing; social relations and it infringes on the rights of affected learners. This research explored the perceptions and experiences of grade 7 learners on bullying in Gauteng -South Africa. The study was framed within Bronfenbrenner's ecological systems theory. A qualitative research approach and a case study research design was used. Purposive sampling included 12 learners from 2 primary schools. Data were collected through individual interviews and research journal was

kept. Thematic data analysis revealed that learners encountered direct victimisation, witnessing bullying incidents, active participation in bullying, fear of being mocked and continuous victimisation. However, some learners reported bullying incidents to their parents and teachers, some avoided interacting with bullies and others enacted revenge on the bullies. To curb bullying learners suggested enforcement of disciplinary rules, reporting bullying and mental health support, parental involvement, interventions for bullies and victims. The study contributes to theory and practice on bullying. It proposes evidence based bullying interventions. Key words: Bullying, primary schools, learner support. *Correspondence:* Prof. Mubi Mavuso, [mavusmf@unisa.ac.za](mailto:mavusmf@unisa.ac.za)

#### **Mdikana A.A & Nyewe PK. Teacher reported types of sexual abuse of learners with intellectual disability in a South African school setting**

This study investigated prevalent types of sexual abuse of learners with intellectual disability, as reported by teachers. Participants were 28 teachers from special educational needs schools in Gauteng Province, South Africa (females = 80%, age range = 30 to 55 years). The teachers participated in a focus group discussion on prevalent types of sexual abuse they were aware of that occurred to learners with intellectual disabilities. Thematic analysis of the data suggested five forms of sexual abuse of learners with intellectual disability: incest, rape by the members of the community, sexual harassment, child prostitution, and exposure to adult sexual encounters. Future research should focus on the ways to mitigate in-school sexual abuse of learners with intellectual disability; prioritising which forms of interventions would be affected. *Correspondence:* Dr Andile Alfred Mdikana, [mdikaaa@unisa.ac.za](mailto:mdikaaa@unisa.ac.za)

#### **Rambau E & Mavuso M. Intersectoral stakeholders' experiences of supporting sexually abused learners in schools.**

Child sexual abuse affects many learners worldwide. It leaves victims and their families traumatized. South African children of any race are prone to this phenomenon. This study aimed to explore the experiences of intersectoral stakeholders in supporting sexually abused learners from Gauteng North Education District -South Africa. The study was positioned within Bronfenbrenner's ecological systems theory. A qualitative research approach and phenomenological design was used to gain insights and understanding of the intersectoral stakeholder's lived experiences of supporting sexually abused learners. Data were collected through semi-structured individual interviews, literature review and field notes which were reflected in a journal. An interpretive phenomenological analysis was used to analyse data. Purposive sampling included 12 intersectoral stakeholders (4 teachers, 4 psychologists and 4 social workers) responsible for supporting sexually abused learners. The findings show that child sexual abuse is a sensitive, complex, and extensive phenomenon. Intersectoral stakeholders experienced numerous challenges and negative psychological effects on their health and wellbeing while supporting sexually abused learners. The study contributes to theory and practice. It recommends the use of a collaborative, integrated multidisciplinary approach and evidence-based interventions that addresses sexual abuse. Learners and continuous professional development for schools.

Key words: Intersectoral stakeholders, child sexual abuse. *Correspondence:* Dr Eunice Rambau, [rambaumepsych@gmail.com](mailto:rambaumepsych@gmail.com)

**Friday, 11 October 2024**

**Poster Presentations**

**10:30 – 10:30**

**Fumani H, Mathe V & Mulqueeny D. The impact of climate change on mental health and psychological responses of mental health care users: psychotherapists' perspectives**

Background: Limpopo province is susceptible to severe effects of climate change. Evidence of these effects include patterns of disasters such as droughts, storms and high temperatures. Psychotherapists in the Department of Health treat patients who are at high risk of experiencing mental health illnesses related to climate change. This study aims to explore and describe the impact of climate change from the perspectives of clinical psychologists who treat mental health care users (MHCUs).

Methodology: The first strand of data collection was through scoping review of literature.

Results: MHCUs in low socioeconomic areas are at high risk of developing mental illness such as posttraumatic stress disorder, fears of losing space and property, bereavement, depression, adjustment disorders, existential crisis, and other emotional distress induced by physical illness or injuries. Secondly, one study reported that some psychotherapists felt not equipped to treat MHCUs presenting with emotional distress related to climate change.

Conclusion: There is need to develop protective psychological measures to mitigate effects of climate change. This should include conceptualization of the impact within the systems framework that incorporates the biological and indigenous cultural contexts. This could aid psychotherapists in treating MHCUs using therapeutic practices that are based on local cultural experiences.

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**Maotoana M, Nel KA & Govender S. Hate speech and actions against Black lesbians in South Africa**

A qualitative approach utilising a phenomenological research design was used in the study. The objective of this research was to explore the experiences of Black lesbians, who have suffered hate speech and actions and who live in townships in Limpopo Province, South Africa. Twenty (20) black lesbians participated using a snowball sampling technique. Data was collected through face-to-face interviews and a semi-structured interview questionnaire. Thematic analysis (TA) was used to analyse data. One superordinate theme was gleaned out of the data namely: Hate speech and actions against black lesbians, living in townships in Limpopo Province, South Africa and one sub-theme: Mental health challenges because of hate speech and actions against black lesbians. Findings from this study shows that, despite the constitutional rights of lesbians in South African, hate speech and actions against black lesbian is still manifesting in South Africa, and this is significantly affecting the day-to-day lives of black lesbians in South Africa. It is apparent that the black lesbians who participated in this research struggled with the negative actions to their lifestyles, from their heterosexual peers, family, and community.

Keywords: Black lesbians; Corrective rape; Homosexuality; Phenomenological.

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**Maotoana M & Govender S. The link between gender and stigma among people living with HIV/AIDS in Mahwelereng, Limpopo province.**

Human Immunodeficiency Virus (HIV) and acquired immunodeficiency syndrome (AIDS) remains a major health problem, as the number of individuals with the disease across the globe has been increasing since the early 1980s when the disease was identified. The

African population represents almost 70% of total HIV cases worldwide where the majority is young Africans aged between the ages of 6-24 years. This is an explorative study that aimed to explore the link between gender and stigma at Mahwelereng township, situated in the Limpopo Province. The study was underpinned through the social identity theory. A qualitative research approach was utilised, and data was collected through semi-structured interviews and analysed using a thematic content analysis. Through purposive sample, a sample size of 10 participants was selected, comprising of 5 males and 5 females, aged 18 and 35 years. The finding indicated that males and females living with HIV/AIDS are treated differently by the community, and females are harshly treated and stigmatised more than males.

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### **Houndalas A, Coovadia M & Naidoo P. A case study of the benefits experienced by male psychologists practicing in Johannesburg**

The Health Professions Council of South Africa (HPCSA) revealed that males comprise a mere 20.3% of registered psychologists in South Africa. Research postulates that this disproportionate reality is due to psychology being perceived as incongruent with traditional gender roles, as males tend to adopt analytical careers whilst females tend to adopt careers within the helping profession. The benefits experienced by male psychologists were explored to provide insight into this apparent underrepresentation using role congruity theory. A qualitative case study research design was utilised in which a sample of six male psychologists was identified using nonprobability purposive and snowball sampling. Semi-structured interviews were conducted to obtain descriptive, experiential accounts. Thematic analysis was applied during the data analysis phase to interpret and organise the information obtained into common themes. The major findings

pertaining to the benefits experienced by male psychologists were: (1) facilitating the client's self-discovery; (2) the psychologist's self-development; and (3) the power dynamic and male relatability. The study is envisioned to contribute towards a richer understanding of male psychologists' experiences and encourage further practice, policy, and research in this area. *Correspondence: Ms. Alexandra Houndalas, [alexia.houndalas@gmail.com](mailto:alexia.houndalas@gmail.com)*

### **Ndhlovu S & Makama R. Ukushela: men's ways of initiating romantic relationships**

Despite ongoing efforts towards gender equality, traditional gender roles heavily influence the behaviours expected of men and women in romantic relationships. Men often initiate relationships and make decisions, while women are typically seen as recipients. These roles and expectations not only shape the dynamics of relationships but also serve as fundamental drivers of societal norms, significantly shaping individuals' self-perceptions and their perceptions of others within the context of gender. This study explores men's strategies and approaches in initiating romantic relationships with women, assessing their impact on prevailing notions of masculinity. While previous research has examined men's approaches to romantic initiation, their effect on masculinity remains unclear. To address this gap, focus group discussions were conducted with male University of Cape Town students aged 18 or older, currently or previously in relationships, to show how men negotiate societal expectations and cultural norms in romantic pursuits. In this presentation, I will discuss men's reluctance to challenge traditional masculinity norms, despite appreciating women taking the lead in romantic relationships. It remains evident that some men persist in viewing relationship initiation as their responsibility, emphasizing the enduring influence of societal norms on individual behaviours and the perpetuation of

traditional masculinity ideals.

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### **Corleis V & Lesch E. Gender and tertiary-educated fathers' parenting of daughters**

Gendered inequalities remain a persistent issue within South Africa. Parents are important gender socializing agents but father's contributions to daughters' gender socialization have been less extensively researched locally. However, international research signifies that fathers can shape their daughters' gender ideas. Thus, the father-daughter relationship could be viewed as a gender construction, and could potentially represent a gender equality resource. Additionally, as exposure to tertiary education may enhance individuals' endorsement of gender-egalitarian ideas, tertiary-educated fathers may exhibit more liberal gender ideas. Currently, however, knowledge on South African tertiary-educated fathers' gender-egalitarian ideas remains limited. Subsequently, this study, informed by feminist social constructionism and hybrid masculinities discourse, investigated gender constructions held by tertiary-educated fathers and their young adult daughters. We interviewed daughters to gain insight into their own gender ideas, as well as their perceptions of fathers' parenting and gender ideas. In this presentation, we will discuss initial themes identified through thematic analysis of the data: a) "Progressive but still traditional fathers", b) "He doesn't know me", c) "Emotional distance." These findings highlight that, although tertiary-educated fathers uphold traditional fathering constructions, they may be more open to endorsing liberal gender ideas, particularly concerning daughters' independence and education, which could advance daughters' empowerment. *Correspondence: Miss. Viktoria Corleis,  
[viktoriacorleis1998@gmail.com](mailto:viktoriacorleis1998@gmail.com)*

### **Maraba M & Moalusi KP. Barriers to career advancement of women managers in a Gauteng province city metro**

This qualitative study explores the career advancement barriers faced by women managers in a Gauteng Province City Metro. Although women are significantly present in the local government, they are still underrepresented in senior roles. By combining gender theory and career psychology, the research aims to uncover the barriers hindering women's career advancement. Through one-on-one interviews with a purposive sample of 5 female and 5 male managers, the study shares perceptions, and experiences of female and male managers on encumbrances affecting women career advancement. Five themes emerged from the data highlighting gender inequality and gendered organisational hierarchies as factors contributing to these encumbrances. The recommendations to address women managers' barriers to career advancement are discussed. *Correspondence: Mrs. Masego Maraba, [masegodia@joburg.org.za](mailto:masegodia@joburg.org.za)*

### **Hendricks L, Young T & Hannes K. Defining and enabling supportive environments for young women living with HIV in South Africa**

This presentation explores the complex and multifaceted concept of "enabling environments" in the context of supporting adherence to Antiretroviral Treatment (ART) among young women living with perinatal HIV infections in South Africa. This study draws on a qualitative study that included 75 interviews with young women and stakeholders. The study employed the "Adherence Assemblage" conceptual framework, which delineates eight domains of enabling environments: intrapersonal, home, social, health and social care, political, natural, material, built, research, education, and knowledge. Through this framework, the research articulates how each domain interacts with others, emphasizing the need for a holistic approach

in healthcare and support systems. Enabling environments are identified as spaces that foster a sense of safety, dignity, and empowerment, allowing individuals to manage their health effectively. They are defined not only by physical and material conditions but also by social and emotional support structures, policy frameworks, and community norms. The presentation will highlight the importance of safe outdoor spaces, compassionate educational systems, and integrated healthcare services, which illustrate practical applications of enabling environments in both research and practice. This approach aims to transform theoretical concepts of enabling environments into tangible, actionable realities that significantly improve adherence to ART and overall quality of life. *Correspondence: Dr Lynn Hendricks, [lynnah@sun.ac.za](mailto:lynnah@sun.ac.za)*

**Christian C. The hidden curriculum: an exploration of postgraduate psychology students' research identity development**

The honours research journey is an important rite of passage every psychology honours students has to endure to successfully complete their qualification. Adjusting to research at postgraduate level has been described as tumultuous and very grueling. Transitioning from "knowing" to "doing" research requires grit and perseverance. It is for these reasons that understanding how the research identity develops for psychology honours students. A qualitative, interpretivist study was conducted to explore postgraduate psychology students' experiences of their research identity development in honours. A sample of 12 psychology honours students who completed their qualifications participated in semi-structured interviews. Data were transcribed and analysed using Braun & Clarke's thematic analysis. Results indicate that the relationship between the student and the research supervisor is pivotal in the formation of a research identity in psychology honours students. Furthermore,

the successful development of a research identity is facilitated through peer support, a supportive learning environment and leaning into the discomfort of "doing" research. This information could potentially be incorporated into postgraduate supervisor training and student orientation to ensure that students receive the necessary support to ensure the successful completion of their research projects. *Correspondence: Mrs. Cindy Christian, [cchristian@varsitycollege.co.za](mailto:cchristian@varsitycollege.co.za)*