

# UCT Department of Psychiatry and Mental Health Newsletter

Issue 15 – June 2022



# A NOTE FROM THE HOD

2001 was an important year for mental health policy: the World Health Organization focused a range of activities on mental health, including the production of a WHO Report on “Mental Health: New Understanding, New Hope”. The South African Derek Yach, then based at the WHO, played a key role in its production. The report argued for providing mental health treatment in primary care, making psychotropics available, giving care in and involving the community, educating the public, and establishing national mental health policies.

Public mental health has continued to advance and strengthen over the last two decades, and it is noteworthy that WHO has this year again focused on mental health through a new World Mental Health Report. The report was led by Devora Kestel of the WHO, with the writing team including the South African Melvyn Freeman; it’s entitled “Transforming Mental Health for All”. The messages of the report are not dissimilar from the earlier one, with the conclusion encouraging readers to “Deepen commitment, reshape environments, and strengthen care to transform mental health”.

Doubtless this is easier said than done. Still, our Dept is certainly doing its bit, as evidenced by the stories in this newsletter. Many thanks to all who continue to work towards transforming mental health for all.

Warm regards,  
Dan Stein



## COMMENTS

Thanks to department colleagues and others for submitting contributions to the newsletter. If you have any comments or suggestions for future newsletter issues or would like to volunteer to be part of the newsletter team, please make contact with the editors.

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## Division and Committee News

Addictions Psychiatry .....	4
Child And Adolescent Psychiatry .....	4
Consultation Liaison Psychiatry .....	4
Intellectual Disability Mental Health.....	5
Neuropsychiatry .....	6
Psychopharmacology and Biological Psychiatry.....	6
Psychotherapy.....	7
Public Mental Health.....	7

## Social Responsiveness News

An Update from the Committee Chairs.....	12
Transgender Healthcare .....	13
Loren Leclezio Lecture .....	16
Featured NGO: S-Cape .....	16

## Transformation and Innovation News

Farewell to Dr John Parker .....	18
Student Psychiatry Society Update .....	18
How Is Our Website Faring?.....	20

## Staff News

GSH Staff Mental Health And Wellness.....	21
UCT Health Science Orchestra.....	22
PASS Staff News.....	22
Lightmind.....	24

## ADDICTIONS PSYCHIATRY

## WELCOME TO MTHOBISI ZIKODE

By Goodman Sibeko



The Division of Addiction Psychiatry welcomes Mthobisi Zikode to the Department. He holds a Bachelor of Commerce (BCOM) degree in Human Resource Management and a Postgraduate Diploma in Business Management. He joins us as the Administrative Officer for the Division and Assistant to Goodman Sibeko. Mthobisi is an accomplished administrative professional who has been working in institutions of higher learning for the past 10 years, most recently at UKZN. He brings the welcome experience of having provided high levels of support across multiple functional areas in higher education.

He has expressed an eagerness to widen his horizons and challenge himself in the field of administration and is excited to support the growth of the Division. We welcome Mthobisi with open arms and thank him for bringing Zulu to the office so Goodman can take a break from English every now and then.

Mthobisi, we hope you find your time with us enriching and fulfilling! ■▶

## CHILD AND ADOLESCENT PSYCHIATRY

## CONGRATULATIONS

To Prof de Vries on receiving the prestigious 2021 international Bourneville Prize for his work on Tuberos Sclerosis. He accepted the award during the 6<sup>th</sup> Dutch Stichting Tubereuze Sclerosis Nederland Lustrum at the end of 2021. For more details go to our [website](#) ■▶

## CONSULTATION LIAISON PSYCHIATRY

## COMMENTARY ON THE INTEGRATION OF MENTAL HEALTH CARE FOR HCW DURING COVID-19

By Toni Abrahams

Prof Jackie Hoare recently penned a moving commentary for the South African Journal of Science sharing her lived experience as a liaison psychiatrist at Groote Schuur Hospital during the COVID-19 pandemic. She offers insightful reflections on key lessons to supporting the mental health of patients and staff. COVID-19 has to an extent, equalised our experience of anxiety and fear and brought on a global mental health crisis. Prof Hoare shares that her role was to provide psychological support to patients hospitalised with COVID-19 requiring high or intensive care, to mitigate against worsening physical symptoms and prevent the longer-term deleterious effects of prolonged anxiety on mental health. Patient's decisions about their clinical treatment were significantly affected by this fear and anxiety and they needed to be non-judgementally supported to make sound decisions. Traditional norms of how clinicians should be with their patients were tested by the unprecedented situation. Supporting colleagues was of equal importance and only possible through becoming part of the COVID-19 team and providing a normalising and affirming group space where all belonged through their collective experience of loss, grief and trauma. A key lesson from the experience was that mental health and health cannot

be separated, nor can our common vulnerability and humanity be disowned. Read the full commentary [here](#). ■▶

## INTELLECTUAL DISABILITY MENTAL HEALTH WRITING RETREAT

By Toni Abrahams

Divisional members and students were offered the welcome and needed opportunity to focus on research writing at a Writing Retreat held from 9 to 11 May. Prof Sharon Kleintjes, Vera Grover Chair and head of the division, with the support of Nikita Titus hosted the divisions' second such retreat at Schoenstatt Retreat and Conference Centre in Constantia.



Above (from Left to Right): Dr Siyabulela Mkabile, Sipheshile Zihlazi, Prof Sharon Kleintjes, Sandiswa Mashologu, Maryam Abbas and Maxeen Basson.

The 3-day retreat was a space to share and focus on writing goals with colleagues, all at different stages of their research journey. Being at different stages of the research process allowed us to inspire and guide each other and most of all, ignite (and in some instances re-ignite) the drive to do meaningful ID research. Having unfettered access to supervisors was also a luxury! As was meeting students and colleagues face-to-face and being able to put faces to the names we so often see on our Zoom and email screens. Being able to connect with

colleagues, often with packed schedules of clinical and academic responsibilities, was a welcome benefit, as was the peaceful time away with plenty of delicious sustenance. Fostering new collegial relationships and nurturing older ones is important for the cohesiveness of our division, as we all have our sights on research which can make a real difference to those with intellectual disabilities and their caregivers, both formal and informal. Thank you, Prof Kleintjes and Nikita! ■▶

## A TALK BY VALERIE SINASON

By Toni Abrahams

On the 22 March, the ID division hosted the Social Responsiveness lecture to commemorate Intellectual Disability Month. We had the privilege of esteemed ID psychotherapist (amongst the many other hats she wears), Dr Valerie Sinason speaking to us about working with trauma in a country in trauma and a time of covid-working through grief and loss to find resilience. Dr Sinason offered insights into how persons with ID became more vulnerable during the COVID-19 pandemic and how important it was to acknowledge our shared vulnerabilities during this time, as well as the not-so-helpful ways in which we try to cope with our anxieties. Drawing the false distinction between them and us, whether it be based on our professional roles or our abilities, creates a false sense of security and only exacerbates the difference felt by those with intellectual disabilities. She spoke of the need to acknowledge that a known danger is sometimes better than unknown danger, and our experience of a shared enemy during COVID-19. Working with traumatised individuals requires curiosity as we try to understand the person's world, and that even one meeting with someone who bears witness and validates the other's pain and suffering can be most powerful. Dr Sinason's words are often hard-hitting, thought-provoking but most of all inspiring, motivating and validating of the work we are doing in SA in the ID mental health field. We thank her for always giving generously of her time, expertise and wisdom. You can view the video [here](#). ■▶

## NEUROPSYCHIATRY

## TEA FOR TRANSFORMATION

By Kareema Poggenpoel

The HIV Mental Health Research Unit recently reinstated their monthly Unit get together, the “Unit Tea”, as it’s fondly referred to by everyone. The monthly get together was put on ice during lockdown, but with restrictions being eased colleagues were comfortable to get together in a small group for a snack and drink.



Above: Unit staff enjoying the get together.

This event aims to offer colleagues a social setting in which to get to know each other on a more personal level. Each Unit Tea is themed, to keep things interesting! Prof John Joska, head of the Unit, themed the first Unit Tea as a transformation conversation. Each colleague was to give a short history of their name, the meaning, their cultural naming traditions and so forth. This theme made for a very interesting conversation about cultural similarities and differences. ▶

## PSYCHOPHARMACOLOGY AND BIOLOGICAL PSYCHIATRY

## WELCOME TO DR ANNERINE ROOS

Dr Annerine Roos joined the division on Psychopharmacology and Biological Psychiatry in August 2021. She has been working in the field of psychiatry for 20 years. Annerine completed her studies at Stellenbosch University (SU). She ran the Near-Infrared Spectroscopy facility at SU that was her first hands-on assignment in brain imaging, acquiring her doctoral degree in 2011 under our HOD’s supervision using this brain imaging modality. Her research has since used MRI due to its larger scope. White matter is of special interest.



Annerine values a multidisciplinary approach to research with the belief that a problem or condition has different contributing factors. This belief has been honed by her work, during her time at SU, in the Departments of Psychiatry, Psychology, Chemical Pathology and Medical Physiology, and ongoing collaborations with different medical departments across universities. The coordination of the Mental Health Information Centre of SA was also on her plate, to steer the dissemination of mental health knowledge to professionals, the lay public and media. She also has a diploma in senior management through SU’s business school. Her aim was to improve her skills in leading research teams and projects.

Annerine’s research focus is on studies investigating the impact of prenatal insults to brain development. Of note, is a comparative paper on structural and functional connectivity in the neonate demonstrating

the fundamental effects that alcohol may have before environmental influence. Her work investigating the experiences of teachers and caregivers of young children in an impoverished community with prenatal substance exposure, provided much insight into the challenges but also strategies to overcome daily difficulties.

Imaging children can be a very interesting experience. It could involve either running up and down with a neonate who wakes up during a scan or, encouraging a 6-year-old who is willing but restless in the scanner. Viewing a movie during a scan is often a great incentive to lie still(er). Who knew that movement could have so much impact! One unforgettable moment involved an excited child jumping right out of the scanner, shouting 'When is the movie starting?'

Annerine also studies the brain of adults with psychiatric disorders. This work happens in collaboration with international consortiums who aim to understand brain and genetic biomarkers of psychiatric and neurological disorders using large, pooled samples. Collaborations such as ENIGMA is truly a career builder that produce many high-impact publications with promise to redirect treatment options, and that has valuable networking opportunities.

A considerable highlight of Annerine's career was the honor of being rated in the top young researcher category by the National Research Foundation in 2017. She says that, 'I surely hope to live up to the promise of becoming a world-class researcher who has a positive and lasting impact on the field, holding in high esteem the role that my colleagues play on my journey. Nobody can achieve in a silo'. ■▶

## PSYCHOTHERAPY

# FAREWELL TO NAEEMA PARKER

By Zareena Parker and Toni Abrahams



The division of psychotherapy bid farewell to Naeema Parker this year. Naeema is a UWC-trained clinical psychologist, having completed internship and community service at Lentegeur Psychiatric hospital. She has experience working at Childline and an ongoing private practice. She was a valued member of the division, with her work centred on teaching and training of undergraduate medical students in psychotherapy over the last few years. Naeem was also involved in the Patient Partnership Programme as well as the UCT Community Health Clinic Counselling Collaboration, which is an ongoing project at Vanguard clinic. Although Naeema has left the department, she continues her affiliation with UCT as a sessional psychologist at UCT student wellness. She is passionate about working with students and without doubt has injected this passion into her teaching activities. We wish her well for the next chapter and will miss her. ■▶

## PUBLIC MENTAL HEALTH

# FAREWELL TO MARGUERITE SCHNEIDER

By Roxanne Jacobs

When a colleague with a huge heart and loved by so many retires, it's an enormous task to summarise their greatness in a few short paragraphs. I am privileged to have worked with Margie in her last project years running up to her retirement and can honestly say

Margie has been a foundation of learning, support and compassion for all.

With a background in speech-language pathology and audiology, applied linguistics and disability studies, Margie's early career moved her into broader social science research where she made a huge contribution to the field of disability. She spent 5 years as a technical officer at the World Health Organisation (WHO) in Geneva in the Assessment, Classification and Epidemiology unit, before joining the Child, Youth, Family and Social Development (CYFSD) programme at the Human Sciences Research Council (HSRC) as a Chief Research Manager. Margie has consulted on disability studies for the World Bank, WHO, the National Department of Health and the Asia and Pacific Economic and Social Commission. Her involvement with the Washington Group Short Set Survey instrument supported the measurement of disability all over the world for over 20 years, and with her support the instrument was also included in our very own STATSSA's Census population survey.

She spent the last decade of her career as Deputy Director at the Alan J. Flisher Centre for Public Mental Health, where she was involved in projects like AFFIRM, ASSET and STRIDE. At the centre she has been an exemplar of leadership, support and capacity building and has mentored colleagues and students all over the world for over 40 years.

Everyone who has worked with Margie is forever changed by the way she genuinely connects and cares for each person. Colleagues know her as being incredibly humble while teaching all who had the privilege of working with her to find their voice and grow in excellence. Margie is genuinely one of the kindest people that has an endless source of faith in people. To capture her spirit, I borrow the words of one of her beloved colleagues, Prof. Leslie Swartz (CPMH): "She is loved here at our centre but she is loved all over the world. Disability studies is all about creating an environment within which people can discover their abilities and can participate fully. It is easy to talk about

this ideal, but Margie has lived this throughout her career – she helps us all to be our best and to find our ability".



Margie (top left corner), we at the CPMH thank you for your enormous contribution to public mental health and wish you a very happy retirement filled with all your favourite things! Road trips, quilting, exploring mountain passes. Happy retirement Margie! You will forever be a living inspiration to us all. Some describe retirement as a long coffee break...don't forget to add us to your coffee break once and a while! 🍵

## INSPIRING AND EQUIPPING AFRICAN PUBLIC MENTAL HEALTH RESEARCHERS AND PRACTITIONERS

By Claire van der Westhuizen

Programme ARISE (African mental health Researchers InSpired and Equipped) is a new capacity building programme funded through Fogarty International at the US National Institutes of Health. ARISE was initiated by the Alan J. Flisher Centre for Public Mental Health, which is a collaboration between the University of Cape Town (UCT) and Stellenbosch University. The programme builds on the Centre's track record of capacity building and the existing Masters and PhD



programmes, with the aim of strengthening and extending the postgraduate pipeline. To this end, ARISE will develop and deliver a PGDip in Public Mental Health tailored for clinicians, policymakers, NGO staff and academics on the continent. ARISE draws on the existing, diverse global mental health community to accomplish this goal.



Above: Workshop participants.

The exploratory formative and initial learning design work has been undertaken with African public mental health stakeholders, assisted by the Centre for Innovation in Learning and Teaching (CILT) at UCT.



Above: Workshop participants at Montfleury.

Part of this work has included a four-day workshop with faculty from five African countries, representing multiple disciplines, to develop content and delivery strategies for the PGDip in public mental health. This unique learning opportunity will be delivered remotely

to increase accessibility and engage a diverse student body. The PGDip will deliver public mental health content, including research and soft skills, using learning design techniques to engage students and develop our public mental health colleagues. Through this programme, the ARISE team plans to strengthen our global mental health community and ultimately contribute to addressing the large mental health treatment gap in Africa. ■

## UPDATE ON THE PERINATAL MENTAL HEALTH PROJECT

By Simone Honikman



The Perinatal Mental Health Project (PMHP) has had a busy and productive start to 2022, at the Hanover Park MOU, offsite in various locations and virtually through seminars, talks and webinars.

The PMHP mental health service at the Midwife Obstetric Unit (MOU) in Hanover Park is starting to resemble a working environment similar to that of pre-pandemic times: 3rd year nursing students from University of the Western Cape (UWC) and 4th year medical students from University of Cape Town (UCT) return as part of their practical training. Our Clinical Services Coordinator, Liesl Hermanus, orientates students to our service and to maternal mental health, introducing them to empathic engagement skills, particularly during labour, with vulnerable clients.



Above: Liesl with medical students.

Groote Schuur Hospital’s Maternity Unit hosted a Pregnancy Awareness Programme at Phoenix High School in Manenberg. The aim was to highlight important topics that promote a health pregnancy, including maternal mental health. Liesl facilitated a lively discussion with the pupils who spoke freely about mental health matters.



Above: Liesl with learners.

Since February 2022, our research team has been collecting data for the Community Health Intervention through Musical Engagement (CHIME) adaption project in South Africa. The project is a collaboration with researchers from Goldsmiths University, London,

Imperial College of London and Australian National University. The CHIME-SA project aims to investigate, develop, and prototype a community-based music intervention for maternal mental health in the South African context.



Above: Lele – CHIME.

There have been two key outputs arising from the USAID/WHO Maternal Mental Health Technical Consultation that took place late 2021, and for which our director was an invited speaker and advisory committee member. A report “The Silent Burden: a Landscape Analysis of Common Perinatal Mental Disorders in Low- and Middle-Income Countries” was published on the USAID MOMENTUM website. As our director was a key informant for the document, we were able to inform the content directly drawing on our two decades of experience and research. The second output has been an open access commentary piece published in the peer-reviewed journal, BMC Pregnancy and Childbirth, entitled “Silent burden no more: a global call to action to prioritize perinatal mental health”. We were able to include PMHP’s lessons in systems strengthening.

Our Director and our Clinical Services Co-ordinator, presented on the maternal mental health (MMH) webinar series hosted by the African Alliance for Maternal Mental Health and Global Alliance for Maternal Mental Health. This was directed at MMH advocates, researchers, practitioners, educators and policy makers, globally. Attendance was high with

participants from African countries as well as North and South America, India, UK and Europe.

National COVID-19 Clinical and Operational Guideline for Mothers, Newborns and Children: The National Department of Health invited us to lead the development of a chapter on 'Psychosocial care' for a new iteration of COVID-19 guidelines. The earlier edition had little mention of psychosocial health considerations. We thus included a range of issues including health worker mental distress and wellness, empathic engagement, communication and messaging, respectful maternity care, mental health conditions, gender-based violence, bereavement, adolescent pregnancy, poverty etc. ■

## CONGRATULATIONS



# CONGRATULATIONS TO OUR GRADUATES!

 <b>Dr Biksegn Asrat</b>	 <b>Bulelwa Mtukushe</b>	 <b>Nomakhawuta Moshani</b>	 <b>Dennis Chasweka</b>	 <b>Helen Gatley</b>
<p><b>PHD TOPIC</b> Depression and HIV/AIDS: adapting and piloting group interpersonal therapy for treatment of depressive symptoms for people living with HIV/AIDS in Northwest Ethiopia</p> <p><b>SUPERVISORS</b> A/Prof Margie Schneider, Prof Crick Lund &amp; Prof Fentie Ambaw</p>	<p><b>MPhil TOPIC</b> Common mental health disorders among adolescents accessing HIV treatment in Cape Town, South Africa</p> <p><b>SUPERVISORS</b> Prof Katherine Sorsdahl &amp; Prof Jackie Hoare</p>	<p><b>MPhil TOPIC</b> Indoda Iyanyamezela (a man perseveres): Exploring the perceptions, experiences and psycho-social challenges of Xhosa young men in the Western Cape who have transitioned from adolescence to manhood without present or involved fathers</p> <p><b>SUPERVISORS</b> Dr Claire van der Westhuizen &amp; Dr Carrie Brooke-Sumner</p>	<p><b>MPhil TOPIC</b> Mental health and antiretroviral therapy adherence among people living with HIV attending an HIV clinic in Blantyre, Malawi</p> <p><b>SUPERVISORS</b> Prof Katherine Sorsdahl &amp; Dr Claire van der Westhuizen</p>	<p><b>MPhil TOPIC</b> Exploring the experiences of adults with intellectual disabilities in accessing health and healthcare in a small, rural, South African town</p> <p><b>SUPERVISOR</b> Prof Leslie Swartz</p>
 <b>Dr Thandi Davies</b>	 <b>Dr Chido Rwafa</b>	 <b>Julieta Kavetuna</b>	 <b>Wellington Mhishi</b>	 <b>Seth Asafo</b>
<p><b>PHD TOPIC</b> When things fall apart and when they come together: tracing the processes of a task-shared intervention for perinatal depression in South Africa</p> <p><b>SUPERVISORS</b> A/Prof Margie Schneider &amp; Prof Crick Lund</p>	<p><b>MPhil TOPIC</b> Family experiences and the role of the family in the development of substance use in adolescents and young adults in Zimbabwe: a qualitative study</p> <p><b>SUPERVISORS</b> Prof Katherine Sorsdahl &amp; Dr Claire van der Westhuizen</p>	<p><b>MPhil TOPIC</b> Mental health in the workplace: exploring how mental illness is addressed in the Namibian public service</p> <p><b>SUPERVISORS</b> A/Prof Margie Schneider &amp; Dr Thandi Davies</p>	<p><b>MPhil TOPIC</b> The experiences of ex-offenders living with a mental disorder within three to twelve months following discharge from psychiatric prison care in Zimbabwe: A qualitative study</p> <p><b>SUPERVISORS</b> Prof Katherine Sorsdahl, Dr Petal Petersen Williams &amp; Dr Walter Mangezi</p>	<p><b>MPhil TOPIC</b> Understanding of mental illness and mental healthcare in Ghana: Opportunities for collaboration and challenges</p> <p><b>SUPERVISOR</b> Prof Leslie Swartz</p>

## AN UPDATE FROM THE COMMITTEE CHAIRS

By Nasera Cader-Mokoa and Toni Abrahams

As you may be aware, the departmental Social Responsiveness Committee's vision is to apply overt mindfulness to social history and content of the environment in order to increase public good. With this in mind, having a diverse committee to realise this vision is of importance. I would like to use the opportunity to welcome new members onto the committee. I am certain that their diverse contributions to our committee will be of utmost value.



Dr Amy Adams, a Senior Lecturer and Researcher in the Division of Addiction Psychiatry, recently joined the committee. Her interest in this committee extends from her work in the field of Addiction Psychiatry. She previously worked as a Clinical Psychologist in the Alcohol Rehabilitation Unit and the Opioid Substitution Unit at Stikland Hospital. She also lectured on Motivational Interviewing for behaviour change and CBT for addictions in the Post Graduate Diploma for Addictions Care at Stellenbosch University and UCT. Her current research interests include exploring interventions for patients with addictive disorders including mothers misusing substances. Other research interests are in the field of maternal and infant mental health, mother-child attachment and post-traumatic stress disorder. Her clinical, teaching and research work in addictions has highlighted the importance of the responsibility we have as clinicians and academics to respond to the needs of the vulnerable, less fortunate and the psychiatrically ill in our communities. Social responsiveness is therefore seen as playing a crucial role in addressing at least some of these needs in an impactful and significant way to improve the lives of those who need it most.

Cebokazi Ngcakani-Mtati joined the Valkenberg Male Acute team in January 2022 as a permanent Clinical Psychologist. After completing her Masters' in Clinical Psychology at the University of Western Cape, she gained her experience at GrooteSchoor as well as Valkenberg Forensics Unit. Cebokazi completed her community service at Khayelitsha District Hospital focusing on trauma-related therapy, consultation liaison as well as risk assessments. Cebokazi has since joined the Social Responsiveness Committee, where she will assume the role of co-editor of the newsletter. She brings a wealth of experience in this regard and we look forward to having her on the newsletter team.

Dr Jeanne Moolman qualified as a psychiatrist in 2007, having completed her registrar training at the University of Cape Town. Jeanne worked as a private practice psychiatrist in Cape Town for many years before taking on the role of District Psychiatrist in the Khayelitsha Eastern Sub-structure in 2019. She subsequently joined the team at Lentegeur Psychiatric Hospital in 2022, where she works in the General Adult Psychiatry service.

Dr Imtiaz Hoosen completed his undergraduate medical training at the UCT. He undertook his specialist training in psychiatry in the United Kingdom. Thereafter, he worked as a consultant psychiatrist in the National Health Service in the United Kingdom for several years. Imtiaz is a member of the Royal College of Psychiatrists. He also holds post graduate diplomas in Cognitive Behaviour Therapy and Occupational Medicine from the United Kingdom. He works part time at Lentegeur Psychiatric Hospital, and is also a senior lecturer in the department as well as having a private practice at Vincent Pallotti Hospital. Jeanne and Imtiaz will be taking over the Media Liaison portfolio from John Parker.



Above: John was celebrated by many at Lentegeur hospital as part of his farewell, and fittingly, a tree and Spekboom planted in the outpatient garden to honour him.

John Parker, consultant psychiatrist at the outpatient department at Lentegeur psychiatric hospital resigned early this year. John was a stalwart of the department and hospital, a longstanding, loved and respected champion for recovery, mental health, the environment and transformation. During the worst times of the COVID-19 pandemic, John and his team worked tirelessly to provide crucial mental health services to psychiatric patients doubly afflicted with COVID-19, in the most trying of circumstances. Before that John was pivotal in setting up the Spring Foundation at Lentegeur Hospital, a foundation using a range of psychosocial rehabilitation and outreach projects to re-establish a sense of hope and recovery through reconnection to the natural world and to community, identity and heritage. John is a charismatic speaker who compelled all to listen when he shared his insights, knowledge and anecdotes. He is a truly authentic human who colleagues and patients connected with in significant ways. Our committee was honoured to have him as a member, doing what he did best, bravely heading up the media liaison portfolio where few dare to go. The department and Lentegeur hospital are better for having had John working with them. Aluta continua John!

We also bid farewell to Delcia Liedeman-Prosch, clinical psychologist at Lentegeur Psychiatric hospital's Female Admissions Units who left earlier this year to work at Swellendam hospital. Delcia was the co-editor of the departmental newsletter, assisting with South African Psychiatry contributions and sourcing NGO news. We wish her well on her rural adventures!



Above (Left to right, back to front row): Psychologists Clinton Abrahams, Fatima Ismail, Lameze Abrahams, Toni Abrahams, Delcia Liedeman-Prosch and Zareena Parker at Delcia's departmental farewell at Lentegeur hospital. ■▶

## TRANSGENDER HEALTHCARE: A GENDER-AFFIRMING MULTI-DISCIPLINARY APPROACH

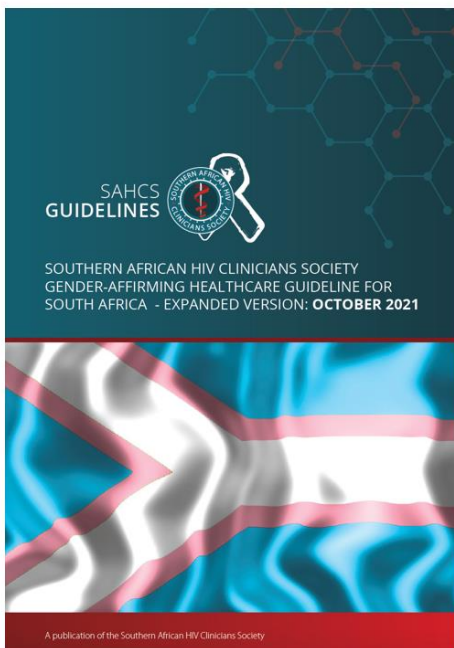
By Claudia de Clercq, Lisa Dannatt and Adele Marais

The Social Responsiveness Committee hosted a virtual CPD Symposium on 'Transgender Healthcare: A Gender-Affirming Multi-Disciplinary Approach'. The event took place on 24 May 2022. The symposium was offered by the multi-disciplinary Groote Schuur Hospital (GSH) Transgender Clinic Team.

Transgender and Gender Diverse (TGD) persons are a minority group who face significant prejudice, stigma,

and discrimination in society. The human rights and dignity of TGD persons are often undermined in interactions with institutions, including the healthcare system (for example, having their identities repeatedly scrutinised, questioned and pathologized, and being treated with paternalism by their healthcare providers).

The GSH Transgender team are committed to providing clinically sound and competent gender affirming healthcare services to the TGD community with the overarching goal of ensuring that a client's dignity and right to identity and expression is respected. Access to gender-affirming healthcare can have a powerful impact on the well-being and quality of life of those seeking it, beyond the immediate psychological and physical benefits.



The GSH Transgender clinic is recognised as a Centre of Excellence in gender affirming healthcare in Africa. The team follows best practice standards of care and has contributed to the development of the new national 'Gender-Affirming Healthcare Guidelines' recently published by the Southern African HIV Clinician's Society (SAHCS).

The GSH Transgender team has input from a range of disciplines: Clinical Psychology, Psychiatry (Adult and

Adolescent), Endocrine (Adult and Adolescent), Plastic Surgery, Gynaecology, Speech Therapy, Family Medicine, Sexology, Clinical Social Work, and includes representatives from both private and public sectors, as well as NGOs and advocacy groups. The team has seen over 350 clients since the clinic's inception in 2009.

This symposium served as an introduction to Gender-affirming healthcare from a multi-disciplinary perspective, and provided a solid foundation for a future symposium offering more specialist input across the range of disciplines.

The symposium speakers represented the full range of a multi-disciplinary approach to gender-affirming healthcare, and underscored the value of consultation and collaboration across disciplines in this field of work.

In the first session, Clinical Psychologist and ordained Reverend, and Chair of the Professional Association for Transgender Health in South Africa (PATHSA), Chris McLachlan, spoke eloquently (both from a professional and lived experience perspective) on "Que(e)ring Gender: Am I trans, cis, or gender-diverse?"

Associate Prof Elma de Vries, a Family Physician passionate about the right to access to healthcare for marginalized populations, gave an "Introduction to Gender Affirming Health Care (GAHC), and the role of the GP in the new GAHC guidelines".

Associate Prof Adele Marais, a Senior Clinical Psychologist in our department, and the Chair of the GSH Transgender Clinic, gave a comprehensive presentation on "Gender Incongruence in Adults and the Role of the Mental Health Care Practitioner". This included highlighting the changes in classification in the DSM 5, and ICD-11, and the implications of these changes. Prof Marais was a member of the WHO ICD-11 Working Group that made the revisions to the diagnosis of 'Gender Incongruence'. Prof Marais is also the chair of the GSH multi-disciplinary transgender team. Prof Marais summarised both international and local guidelines for mental health practitioners, and shared her clinical expertise with regards to client-centered

interviews, and areas to focus on in psychotherapy with trans and gender-diverse clients.

Clinical Social worker, Sexologist and academic at UCT, Ron Addinall elaborated on the “Psychosocial Care” of gender diverse individuals, their families and their environments. He emphasized supportive psychotherapy for young people in their process of gender “discovery and affirmation”.

In the second session of the symposium Dr Simon Pickstone Taylor, a Child and Adolescent Psychiatrist, shared his expertise with regards to “Gender Incongruence in Children and Adolescents and the role of the Mental Health Care Practitioner”. The audience appreciated the comprehensive outline on how to approach working with adolescents and their parents, and what should be included in the provision of psychoeducation.

The rest of the second session addressed gender-affirming medical and surgical interventions for trans and gender-diverse clients. Paediatric Endocrinologist at GSH, Dr Ariane Spitaels, carefully explained an “Approach to Hormone Therapy in Adolescents”, followed by Physician and Endocrinologist at GSH, Associate Prof Ian Ross, who discussed an “Approach to Hormone Therapy for Adults and the role of the Endocrinologist”. Thereafter, Plastic, Reconstructive and Maxillofacial Surgeon at GSH, Dr Kevin Adams, gave an informative and illustrative talk on the different types of “Gender-affirming Surgeries”.

The third and last session for the day included a range of interesting topics. Dr Tracey Adams, a subspecialist in Gynaecological Oncology at GSH discussed “The role of the Gynaecologist in screening and prevention”, and highlighted the importance of screening in primary healthcare settings.

Lindi Bester, a Speech-Language and Hearing Therapist at GSH, discussed gender-affirming voice and communication services for transgender and gender-diverse people. She shared some illuminating video-clips and spoke to the role of our voice in our identity.

Ron Addinall and Dr Deirdre Pieterse (a Consultant-Liaison Psychiatrist at Valkenberg Hospital-VBH) presented an Ethics talk on “Institutional policies and the Ethics of gender affirming care”. Dr Pieterse reflected on her team’s experiences of providing care to trans-clients at VBH, and the development of the VBH gender-affirming hospital policy.

Savuka Matyila, a gender non-conforming human rights activist represented the NGO ‘Gender Dynamix’, and discussed “Community Based Resources” available to transgender and gender-diverse populations. He highlighted the challenges that are faced by this population, and what some of the recommendations are for future research and practice.

Lastly, Landa Mabenga – a transgender educationalist, advocate, researcher and author, and PhD student at UCT – shared his inspirational lived experience as a transgender man in South Africa who received gender-affirming care and surgery from the Transgender Clinic at GSH.

The symposium was truly excellent, informative, engaging and very well-received. Almost 200 delegates attended the symposium online – with the majority being Clinical Psychologists and Psychiatrists (Adult and Child & Adolescent) from across the country. Attendees displayed a willingness to enhance their knowledge and skills in the field of gender-affirming care, and a commitment to being gender-affirming practitioners. The presenting team and organisers have received very positive and appreciative feedback for the input offered. Congratulations to all involved! 🏆

## LOREN LECLEZIO LECTURE

By Toni Abrahams



Above (Left to right): Dr Loren Leclezio and speaker, Prof Liz Pellicano.

Prof Petrus de Vries for the Social Responsiveness committee convened the 5<sup>th</sup> annual Loren Leclezio Lecture on 7<sup>th</sup> June. Dr Leclezio was a developmental neuropsychologist and researcher of Tuberous Sclerosis. Most significantly, she was a champion for working in collaboration with communities and using research as a tool for the empowerment of local communities. She passed away in 2018 due to cancer. This lecture is about honouring Loren and her legacy by highlighting continued research being undertaken across the world and in South Africa which exemplifies the spirit of community-based and participatory research.

Dr Liz Pellicano, an experimental psychologist and Autism researcher was invited to share her work on Autistic Flourishing. Prof Pellicano offered food for thought in terms of how we do research about people with Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) and whether such research helps or hinders people with ASD to have good lives. She drew on lessons learned during the COVID-19 pandemic which point to a need to change our approach to research on ASD. Her research uncovered truths about the need for social contact and connection in people with ASD which has been minimised or denied in previous understandings, and these insights could only be gained by asking people with autism

themselves. The key lesson is that human flourishing should be the fundamental goal in our research endeavours. Prof Pellicano shared the theory of autistic flourishing and 5 building blocks to promote this. Specifically, we need to move from the narrow and medically based focus on health to wellbeing, from other-defined to self-defined, from focus on the big to the small, from focus on the individual to the contextual and from researcher-led to autistic-led. Prof Pellicano then offered some research examples of how this was applied. To watch the full talk click [here](#). ▶

## FEATURED NGO: S-CAPE RESTORATION FROM EXPLOITATION



**s-cape**  
restoration from exploitation

**HUMAN TRAFFICKING IS SLAVERY.** It is the illegal trade of human beings. It is the recruitment, control, and use of people and their bodies for someone else's benefit. **21 MILLION PEOPLE ARE TRAFFICKED GLOBALLY. ONLY 1% ARE EVER RESCUED**

S-Cape, founded in 2010, is a faith-based, non-profit anti-human trafficking organization that works to address the sexual exploitation of women and children in South Africa. The organisation is a diverse group composed of both staff and volunteers from different continents, cultures, and backgrounds on a common mission to bring restoration to victims of human trafficking.

**Vision:** Seeing victims of Human Trafficking free and safe from exploitation, healed and restored,



empowered with life skills, and returning to a normal and sustainable life.

Mission: To offer a safe place which specializes in restoring women and children rescued from trafficking and sexual exploitation. By providing shelter and food, health care, skills development, discipleship, counselling, legal and migration assistance and future orientation.

Valkenberg (Psychology) has recently become involved in providing therapeutic support towards the victims of human trafficking.

For more information regarding the organisation:

<https://www.s-cape.org.za/>

Other ways to support: <https://www.notibutwe.com/> 

## FAREWELL TO DR JOHN PARKER

By Ereshia Benjamin

PsyTEC (Transformation committee) bid a sad farewell to John Parker at the On My Mind (OMM) on 8 March, following his resignation from the Department at the end of January 2022. This was a fitting space for his swansong as it was his brainchild and represents one of the many meaningful contributions John has made to the Department. John took over as chair of PsyTEC from Sharon Kleintjes in 2019 but was centrally involved in transformation processes in the department since 2013. He leaves a remarkable legacy of creating space for growth and nurturance, such as the OMM and the Lentegeur Hospital Spring Project. His dedication and passion in his clinical work, as well as in the transformation space in the department and the faculty, will be sorely missed! We wish him all of the best with his future endeavours, and hope that the road always rises up to meet him! 🌱

## STUDENT PSYCHIATRY SOCIETY UPDATE

By Ian Olivier



The UCT Student Psychiatry Society began the academic year faced with many challenges in the wake of the fourth wave of the COVID-19 pandemic. One such challenge has been providing our members with access to events and to the social aspects of a student society

during this time. To this end, we have continued with virtual events and are eagerly striving towards a return to in-person events later this year.

Strategy meetings and member recruitment took place online in January and February. Plaza Day was held virtually, and we displayed a video alongside a description of the society for potential members to view. This year, there was also some opportunity to advertise the society on campus.

We have further continued to engage with our members through social media, including virtual journal clubs, event advertisements, and mental health promotion efforts. We now have 418 followers on Instagram and 352 on Facebook (up from the end of last year at 355 and 347, respectively). We have also started a Twitter account this year which we hope will improve the accessibility of our content (@uctpsychsoc).



In February, we introduced our committee to our members by publishing a series on social media that included casual information and interesting facts about our team.

Shortly thereafter, we hosted our first virtual journal club meeting on social media. This included a discussion on the effects of war on mental health – a pertinent

issue, given not only current events but also the ever-present threat of war throughout human history.



Moving on to April, we started a pilot project where we offer help and advice to medical students writing their psychiatry case reports using the collated experience of our committee members.

In May, we hosted a talk by Dr Cossie, the Head of Clinical Unit of Acute Services at Valkenberg and Head

of Division of General Adult Psychiatry of the UCT Department of Psychiatry and Mental Health. This was an engaging talk wherein Dr Cossie shared his perspective on public and private mental health services, including descriptions of the structure of the District Health System and psychiatry, as well as the resources available in public and private mental health services. The talk was followed by a lively question-and-answer session where viewers were able to gain insights on some specific points of interest.


As we near the end of the first half of 2022, we are looking forward to hosting more in-person events for the enjoyment of our members. We have some exciting talks already lined up, including forensic psychiatry (by Dr Dyakalashé in mid-July), a clinical approach to suicide (in collaboration with UCT Internal Medicine Society), specialising in psychiatry/becoming a psychiatrist, Men's mental health (by Zamo Mbele), as well as a talk on sport and psychiatry by Dr James Burger towards the end of the year.

We are also collaborating with several other societies on future events in the coming months, including SHAWCO Health, UCT Cortex Club, and the South African Association for Child and Adolescent Psychiatry and Allied Professions (SAACAPAP).

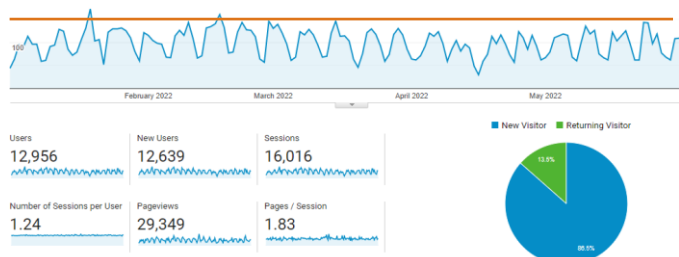
There are many interesting events to look forward. To stay in the know, follow us on social media: [Facebook](#) and [Instagram](#), or access our Vula page or our page on the departmental website by clicking [here](#).


We welcome any involvement with the UCT Student Psychiatry society, such as giving a talk, presentation or workshop, providing suggestions or ideas, or participating in planning and organising events. In addition, we are still looking for members to join our committee, particularly postgraduate students. Please email us at [UCT Psychiatry Society](#) to get in touch.

The 2022 committee consists of Ian Olivier (co-chair & secretary), Julia Dibakwane (co-chair), Salmaan Moosa (vice-chair & treasurer) and Tshepiso Mothibi

(outreach). The society continues to receive mentorship from Prof Dan Stein and Dr Bulelwa Mpinda. 

## HOW IS OUR WEBSITE FARING?



As shown in the graphics above, our website continues to see an increase in new visitors to the site from January to May 2022, with 86.5% users being new to the site. New and returning users have had 29,349 page views over 16,016 sessions. We hope new and existing users will continue to access our website for information, news and resources. If there are any queries or you would like to add/change anything to the website you are most welcome to contact [John-Joe Dawson-Squibb](#), [Deirdre Pieterse](#) or [Shuretta Thomas](#). 

## GSH STAFF MENTAL HEALTH AND WELLNESS

By Lane Benjamin

Prior to the onslaught of Covid-19, burnout and chronic stress were recognised as common experiences amongst healthcare workers. A range of stressors were identified in 2019 at GSH as contributing to staff's mental health: workload, difficult interpersonal relationship at work, management styles and stigma around mental health.

While Covid-19 may have been a catalyst, it was still a progressive move to prioritise the wellbeing of staff and create a team to implement support, including appointing a staff psychologist.

Staff mental health and wellbeing is too often seen as something that exists on the fringe of work or something to pay attention to when we are in crisis. However, it needs to be central to the way we approach our lives and our work.

There is a misperception that as a psychologist my work involves individual and group therapy only or if I use the term wellness, it conjures up ideas of mindfulness, yoga and eating salad. Having my roots firmly planted in clinical and community psychology, continuous traumatic stress and trauma-informed systems, I have learnt that mental health and wellbeing is deeply interconnected with brain, body, spirit, relationships, environment and history. Therefore our approach includes addressing individual and collective self-care, transformation and inclusivity, and historical and systemic trauma. It is necessary to integrate all these interdependent elements in developing the mental health and wellbeing strategy for the hospital and to be accessible to all staff who work at the hospital.

Along with Misha Naik (Mental Health OT), and a team of dedicated volunteers, we have identified key areas for evidence-based interventions and processes to

promote and support staff mental health and wellbeing, as well as highlight the toxic culture (such as bullying or inconsistent management practices) that may perpetuate poor wellbeing.

Four of the activities we have implemented to highlight are:

**Ongoing individual and group counselling:** Referrals are made through the GSH wellness team to me or to the two onsite metropolitan counsellors. These are individual sessions or group sessions that take place in the wellness centre or in the wards.

**Stress, trauma and wellbeing workshops:** Departments have requested support for teams due to conflict, team breakdown discrimination, burnout etc. After an initial assessment of the needs of the teams, we design specific workshops for the department. My mentor, Dr Bruce Perry (pioneering child neuropsychiatrist) has always promoted connectedness almost as a "vaccine" to poor mental health. Being connected fulfils our human need to belong, to feel respected, have autonomy and a sense of meaning. When this occurs, we see teams able to thrive not just survive. Some groups have seen the value of being more connected and have also requested ongoing reflective support sessions which take place monthly.

**Peer support Connectors:** A group of 25 volunteer staff have done 30 hours of training in trauma-informed peer support. These include allied health workers, consultants, nurses and admin staff who through the training have learnt to become more aware of the use and abuse of power and to support each other as humans without professional titles. The peer connectors provide defusing, debriefings and one-on-one support to their colleagues, and attend monthly group supervision with Misha and myself.

**Development of the GSH staff mental health policy:** We are currently developing a mental health referral flow and policy for the hospital which will also help to clarify the relationships between our wellness team, Labour Relations, Human Resources/People Management,

Occupational Health and the Incapacity Management Committee. Each of these departments play a key role in staff mental health and wellbeing.

Critical skills for leadership workshops: Leaders who lead by example and don't just pay lip-service to wellness, are critical to help reduce mental health stigma, and to enhancing positive work environments otherwise no amount of tools, strategies and techniques to prevent burnout, build resilience or reduce mental health problems will be effective. These workshops help to develop and sustain leaders who operate from a position of wellbeing in order to shift the culture. This is highlighted in the practice of Ubuntu where "I am well because WE are well." ■

## UCT HEALTH SCIENCE ORCHESTRA

By Sybrand de Vaal

*"If music be the food of love, play on" – Shakespeare, Twelfth Night*

Those who play a musical instrument can testify of the pleasure of making music together. I recently joined the UCT Health Science Orchestra (HSO) as a rusty French horn player, and would like to invite any old or new musicians to come join us!



The UCT HSO was started in 2018 by two 4th year medical students, and was endorsed by the late Prof Mayosi. The passionate Francois Botha has been their conductor for the past year. The orchestra is open to any health science faculty members (including support staff) and students. There is no minimum level of musical skill needed, although most members have been playing their instrument for several years. We are in particular need of string players (especially violins), bassoon players, and brass players, including horn and trumpet. Percussionists are also welcome, but you'll have to bring your own percussion instruments. If you are interested, please contact Mika Bunge at 082 436 4160. It's like 2 hours of free therapy! ■

## PASS STAFF NEWS

By GOB Administrative staff

*Africa Day*

Africa day was celebrated on 25th May. The GOB Admin in the psychiatry department got together for a small gathering and held an informative session on Africa day where one of our colleagues, Vuyo Mafanya gave a

presentation on her Xhosa culture “Ubuntu bam”. The event was self-funded and held at the Red Cross War Memorial Children’s hospital – Division of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry. Colleagues were intrigued and appreciated the culture share experience and insights. Africa Day promotes diversity and inclusion for anyone and the admin staff celebrated the differences and cultures of each other.



Above (Left to right, back to front row): Nikita Titus, Rehana Effendi, Sandra Swart, Vuyo Mafanya, Shuretta Thomas and Naiema Salie.

#### *CrazySocks4Docs: Caring for our carers*

On the 3rd June, the Faculty of Health Sciences raised awareness about mental health struggles, what our healthcare workers go through and reminded everyone that they are also human. The GOB admin staff shared their support by wearing their socks and shared the following photo of the event!



#### *Langa Fire – clothing donation*

In April, the City confirmed that 260 structures were destroyed and 767 individuals affected by the fire that broke out in Joe Slovo informal settlement, Langa, Cape Town. The GOB Admin staff made an effort to unpack their cupboards to gather some donations of clothing. Phumzile Nteyi from the Urban Rural Development and Capacity Building Project collected the clothing in May with much appreciation for what the staff have donated. Every little bit helps and the staff have opened their hearts to help in the smallest way they can.

GOB admin staff consists of (alphabetically listed) Rehana Effendi, Vuyo Mafanya, Riana Oliver-Pedro, Naiema Salie, Sandra Swart, Shuretta Thomas and Nikita Titus. ■▶

# LIGHTMIND

Just when you thought I was getting all cute & tame, you started to notice my **LONG TAIL**

WHO KNOWS WHERE I END?

ANXIETY (Apathy) NERVE PAIN IRRITABILITY SENSITIVITY

FATIGUE (Brain Fog) INTENSE CONFUSION (Nightmares) WEAKNESS (Slurred speech) POOR ATTENTION DEPRESSION INSOMNIA

**SOME NUMBERS**

- 530 Million Covid cases globally so far
- At least 10% will develop LONG COVID
- 1/3 of these will have SEVERE SYMPTOMS

**= 17.6 Million** with a potentially chronic, debilitating illness

⊙ This is more than ALL the people in the Netherlands

↑ Not able to work, dependent on care, suffering...

**CONSIDER "LONG COVID"**

- When a virus encounters a new host, it maximises ways to spread and perpetuate itself.
- With time, this can result in a virus that is more easily transmitted but causes a less severe illness — BECAUSE, this means the host survives & passes the virus on.
- Provided the virus can continue to spread itself, it is entirely **INDIFFERENT** to any persistent symptoms the host may have. (we cannot afford to be indifferent)

**"OMI-CUTIE"** (BUT... it's still me...)

LIGHTMIND by Joe Starke (June 2022)